

Motivation in Learning English as a Foreign Language: The Case of Congolese Students

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Abstract

Motivation is a widely debated topic in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) or in Foreign Language (FL) learning. The interest in studying motivation is that it impacts positively or negatively the learning process. Most studies developed theories according to which learners of English as a foreign Language (EFL) have instrumental motivation; and only very few researches diverge from this view. Such research has not yet been conducted on EFL learners whose main subject is English be it literature or linguistics, and most importantly never in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where English is also taught as an FL. This in fact is the purpose of the present research paper, where both integrative and instrumental motivations have been found to be high almost at the same level in all the students whose major subject at college is English.

Keywords: motivation, integrative, instrumental, EFL

INTRODUCTION

This article is a contribution to the studies of motivation in language learning in the field of Applied Linguistics and Second/Foreign Language Acquisition. It endeavors to discuss the types of motivation that learners have in learning English as a Foreign Language. Learning a language is one thing but mastering it is another thing, and one of the most determining factors is motivation that learners have.

This paper will particularly focus on Kisangani and Bukavu, two cities in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For an alert observer, Kisangani offers a prototype of multilingual cities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is the only place where two national languages (Swahili and Lingala) compete, unlike the other big cities in DRC, where only one of the four national languages (Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili or Tshiluba) is mostly used at a time. In Kisangani, besides Lingala and Swahili, many other vernaculars are spoken. In Bukavu, however, apart from the vernaculars, the only national language widely spread is Swahili, Palma (2008) refers to this city as an illustration of the urban multilingual mode of communication. As a reminder, over 400 dialects are spoken in DRC (Ilunga, 2010).

Another aspect worth mentioning is the fact that in the Tshopo Province, whose capital city is Kisangani, there are Bantu and non-Bantu language speakers. The Bantu

community is by far the most important due to the size of its population (Bokula, 2005, pp 14 – 25). The population of South Kivu province, whose capital city is Bukavu, is entirely Bantu. They all have French as a Second Language, which means that they are all learning English with equal level with regard to English knowledge background.

It is to be mentioned, however, that French has squeezed the national languages with regard to written material for the reason that DR Congo has been colonized by Belgians, who used French as a Lingua Franca in order to communicate with local people, and therefore French was adopted as the official language (used in Education, administration, court, etc.) of the country. The other reason is the lack of clear policy on local languages, and this is what Palma (2008) says when she states that:

But probably because the language policy has not been comparatively considered a priority as urgent as other more vital national concerns, or probably because the problems posed by multilingual societies are extremely difficult to solve, the different administrations seem to have, on the whole, obviated the multilingual reality of the country.

It would not be therefore surprising that one can speak more than two local languages in addition to French, which is taught in DRC as Second Language.

On the one hand, French is the language of education, and, above all, it is highly used in written materials as stated above. On the other hand, local languages though not developed in writing format, they are widely used by the whole folk population– layman, farmer, schoolteacher, lawyer and university teacher – in private and some official settings to an extent. These national languages are often used even in the school courtyards.

Meanwhile English is introduced in high schools as one of the different compulsory subjects. In many fields of study, it is almost allotted as many hours as the French course. English has now been given a lot of space in schools, colleges and Language centers. The reason for this rise of the English language is motivated by exchanges of all sorts, including a growing demand for translation and interpreting in this globalization era (Ilunga B., 2010: 2).

It is to be noted that, apart from the learning that takes place in formal settings (schools), many language centers have been created where people go to learn English as a foreign language. This widespread learning of English has enhanced its use by Congolese; mainly the younger generation.

As previously stated, this article attempts, through a survey, to determine the type of motivation the learners have while learning English and what kind of output can be expected from them. Knowing that there are two types of motivation in second language learning, notably integrative and instrumental, the present article seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) Are Congolese learners of English as the main subject integrative or instrumentally motivated?
- (2) What relationship between the two types of motivation in these EFL learners?

As hypotheses to the above queries, I may assume that

(1) Though the targeted groups are learners of English as Foreign Language, they display both integrative and instrumental motivations.

(2) given that these students are basically French speakers, instrumental motivation will be by far the most prevalent in the surveyed groups.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Motivation is a widely debated factor in language learning, and researchers agree on the fact it is a complex concept as it can be explained through many facets. Romando (2007) defines motivation as “an internal drive that activates behavior and gives it direction. The term motivation theory is concerned with the processes that describe why and how human behavior is activated and directed.” Quoting Keller (2010, p. 3) Molae and Dortaj write that motivation is referred broadly to what people desire, what they choose to do and what they commit to do. On his part, Krashen (1981, p.26) defines integrative motivation and instrumental motivation in the following terms:

Integrative motivation is the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language, is predicted to relate to proficiency in terms of the two functions. The presence of integrative motivation should encourage the acquirer to interact with speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. . . [and] instrumental motivation as the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian, or practical reasons, may also relate to proficiency. Its presence will encourage performers to interact with Second Language speakers (l2) in order to achieve certain ends.

In short, motivation in learning perspective is the type of tasks learners would like trainers to perform in their interest so that they can like what they are learning for their own benefit, be it instrumentally or with integrative incentives. This view well matches that of Molae and Dortaj who discuss the approaches that bring about changes in learners' motivation. Discussing motivation in the pedagogical perspective, Keller designed a model known as Keller's ARCS Motivational Model, where motivation is here broadly viewed as incentives for learners as may be seen below:

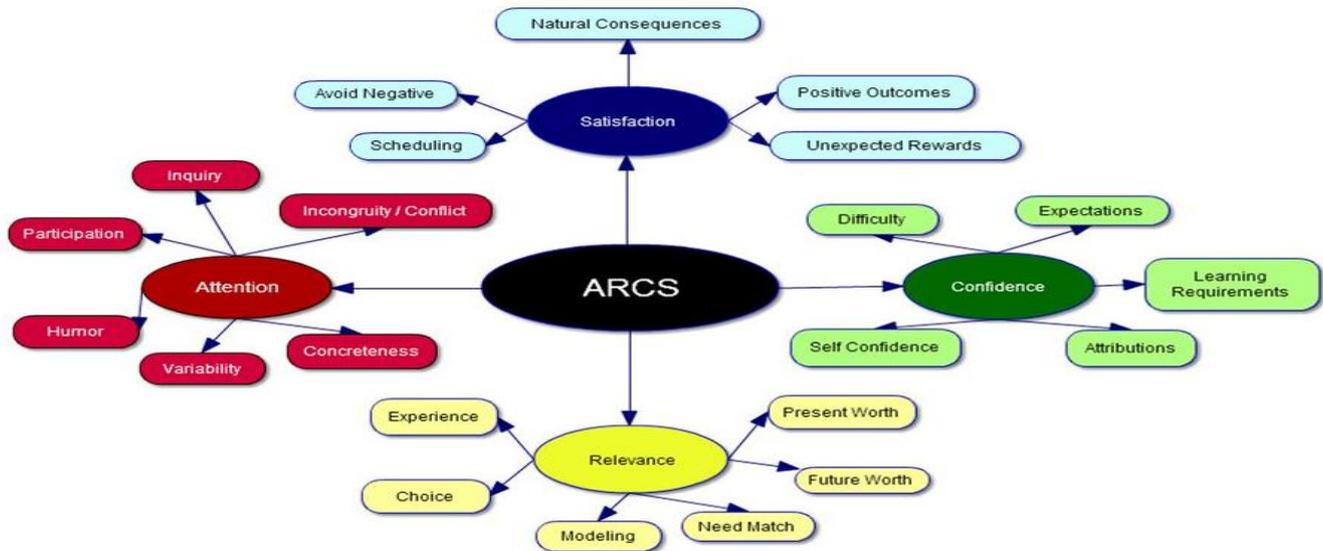


Figure 1. ARCS Motivational Model borrowed from Keller

This view of motivation is too broad and does not directly correspond to the type of motivation to be discussed in the present article. The models that fit in this paper are the ones proposed by Gardner (1994) on the one hand and that of Deci, and Ryan (1991) on the other hand.

Gardner discusses the types of orientation in the learning process that he calls goals which match the dichotomy he makes between two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Orio (2012/2013) quotes Dornnnyi (1994, p. 274) who states that “Gardner motivation construct has often been understood as the interplay of the two components, integrative and instrumental motivations.” Integrative motivation means that the learner views positively second language group whom he takes as model and will be eager to learn to equate himself to the target language members as if he/she is part of the community. Instrumental motivation is directly related to external incentives, as Garcia (2007) puts it, learners who are instrumentally motivated appear to be more driven by external aspects, which are believed to be less stable (Othman & Shuqair, 2013).

Deci and Ryan (1991) have proposed two types of motivations which are either intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to external incentives such as rewards (job, business, school marks) or because the learner wants to avoid punishment. Intrinsic motivation is learning a language because the learner likes it and this learning procures him/her a feeling of pertaining to the language community. Pemberton et al (2007, p. 124) quote Deci and Ryan (1985, p. 25) state that,

Intrinsic motivation is evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energize their learning. When the educational environment provides optimal challenges, rich sources of stimulation, and a context of autonomy, this motivational wellspring is likely to flourish. This quotation also emphasizes the importance of setting where learning takes place as a determinant factor to success.

After several criticisms on the bipolarity between integrative and instrumental motivations in the learning of English, many other researchers worked on an ideal L2 self and on an ought-to L2 self and came to the conclusion that ideal L2 self, corresponds in one way or another to the integrative motivation and that ought-to L2 self, is what can be referred to as instrumental motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda). The least that can be said on the comparison between these two taxonomies of motivations is that intrinsic motivation is what Gardner calls integrative motivation while extrinsic motivation is related to instrumental motivation.

Yu and Downing (2011) studied integrative and instrumental motivation and second language proficiency in two groups studying Chinese in China. They conclude that Asian students displayed instrumental motivation while non-Asian students had integrative motivation, and though the two groups reported no significant difference in academic adaptation, with regard to sociocultural adaptation, integrative motivation was found to be the reason for this adaptation rather L2 proficiency. Hong and Ganapathy (2017) conclude that in ESL, instrumental motivation plays a greater role than integrative motivation. Their study was conducted in Malaysia with English language students attending the Chinese school in Malaysia.

In his dissertation on motivation and second language acquisition, de Smet (2016, p. 29) finds that “a significant positive correlation was found between integrativeness and oral proficiency. This suggests that there is indeed a relation between motivation and second language oral proficiency.” Zanghar also studies the two types of motivation on the EFL Libyan students and his conclusion is rather different and states that “his findings of the study showed that Libyan EFL students had a high instrumental and high integrative motivation to study English.” (2012, p. 46).

As previously stated, the purpose of this study is to identify the types of motivations students have in learning English a Foreign Language and compare the results to the investigations on the topic made by previous researchers, and thereafter predict the possible input the learners are readily willing to receive.

METHOD

Participants

The participants are the students in the Department of English at the university of Kisangani (UNIKIS), the students of the English Department at Kisangani Teacher Training College (ISP), and the students at the Public University of Bukavu (UOB) during the 2018 – 2019 Academic Year. This means that I had a sampling of 69 students in total distributed as follows:

Table 1: Surveyed colleges

College	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	Total	Mean age
UNIKIS	16	11	10	1	0	38	25
ISP	0	0	0	9	1	10	30
UOB	5	5	5	3	3	21	23.5
TOTAL	21	16	15	13	4	69	26

Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 405) state that “It is commonly believed that children are better language learners than adults in the sense that young children typically can gain mastery of a second language, whereas adults cannot”. Age is not, however, going to be taken into account as a factor in language learning in this analysis. It is, however, worth noting that the mean age of the 69 respondents is 26. This figure represents the whole population of learners at these levels, except for three students who were absent. I worked with the whole population because they are not so numerous.

The table shows that there were 76.81% male participants and only 23.19% female. The respondents are distributed as follows: University of Kisangani represent (55.1%), Teachers’ Training College (14.5%) and 30.4% for the Official University of Bukavu.

It is also worth noting that, with regard to the levels of studies, the distribution is quite pyramidal: 23.2 % for first level students, 23.2% for second level; 21.7% for third level; 18.8% for level four, and 13% for level 5 students. The Teaching training college students are more aged compared to the other 2 groups. This can be understandable because most of these students are workers and at times, they are sometimes forced to pause during some year before resuming their academic activities.

The study included students who had already attended courses like applied linguistics and Second Language Acquisition, where problems of performance and motivation are raised. It did not however take into account students who receive a 30-hour English course per year with English as a minor subject; the language of education being French. Including them in the assessment would have biased the results. In short, all the targeted students are in the English Department.

Data Collection

The participants were given a questionnaire to answer anonymously. Before they could answer the questions, they had to fill in the top part of the page that included the age, sex, occupation, Education level prior to choosing English as the main subject, name of the institution where English is now learnt, current level in English (levels 1,2,3,4, and 5).

The questionnaire comprised of 16 questions with several suggestions where the target group had to pick only one suggestion. As will be seen later, the questions were divided into two categories of 8 questions each in order to measure instrumental motivation for one category, and the rate related to integrative motivation for the other category. The questions tested, among others, the reason why the participants chose to learn English, how many levels (out of the five) they intended to complete, the reason why they could/ not learn the language on an extended period beyond the five levels, the motivation if they could have to learn English in case UN agencies and NGOs would no long recruit in DR Congo, and which levels of language (vocabulary, pronunciation, writing, speaking, etc.) they would like the facilitator/teacher to insist on.

As may be noticed, these questions herein diverge a bit from the questions adopted by Dörnyei and Ushioda, as they are discussing L2 motivational self, a theory somewhat differently elaborated than the simple question (herein developed) to answer whether the motivation in a group is integrative or instrumental. This questionnaire, though short,

corresponds to the long questionnaire used by Don August G. Delgado while discussing the types of motivations in Thailand.

DATA ANALYSIS

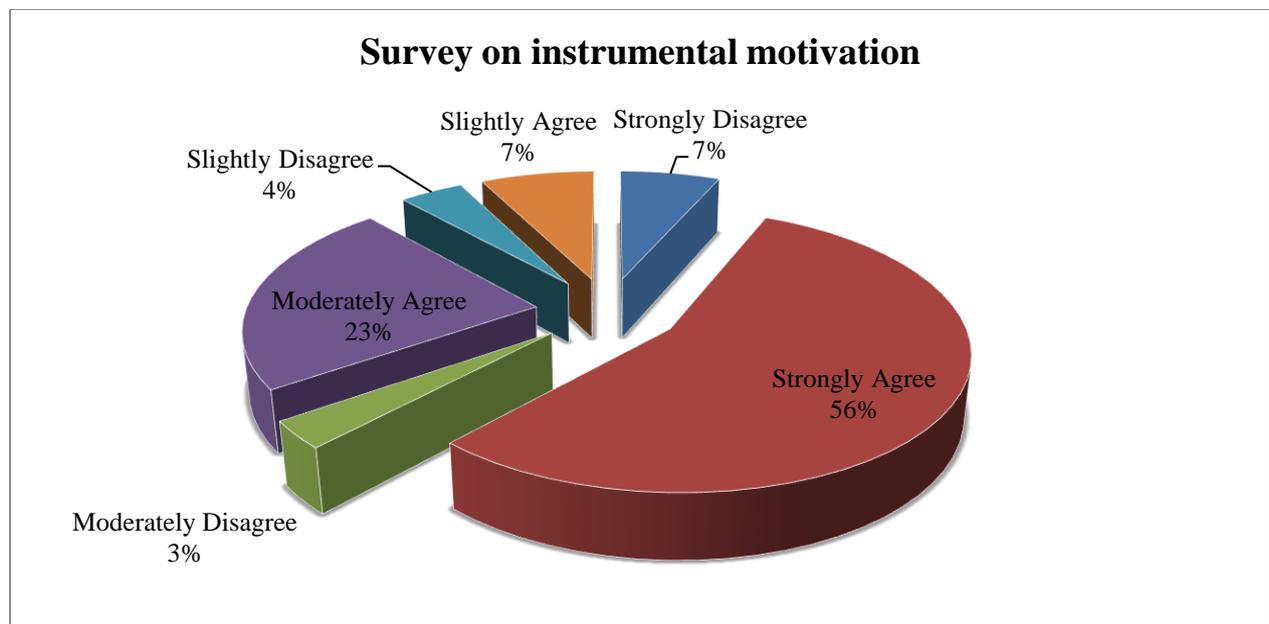


Figure 2: Instrumental motivation trend

From figure 2, we note that more than 50% of the participants chose “strongly agree” (56%) which expresses their strong desire to learn English for immediate reasons, economical, employment, business, etc. This instrumental motivation was slightly expressed at the rate of 7% and moderately ranked with 21%. These results are an evidence that the participants see the English language as a direct or indirect generator of employment or an incentive in business growth.

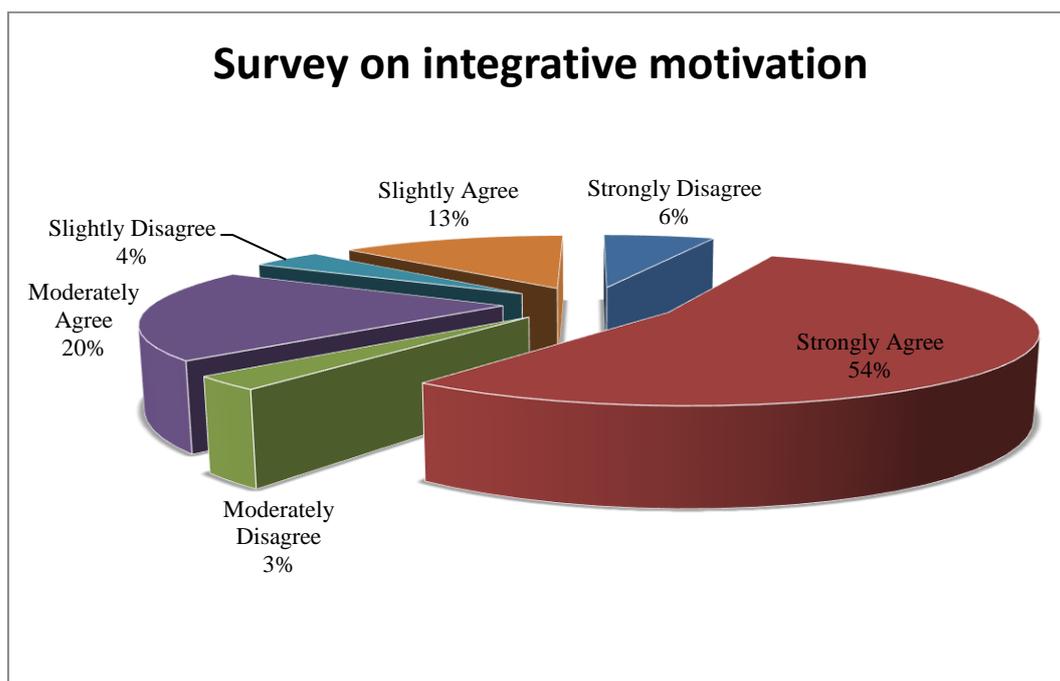


Figure 3: Integrative motivation trend

The above graph is related to integrative motivation. The results indicate that 54% of the surveyed participants opted for “strongly agree”; 20% percent moderately agree while 13% slightly agree. Most participants believe that, deepening knowledge in the English language in order to be part of the English-speaking world is more important than other reasons in spite the fact that DRC is the biggest French-speaking country in the world.

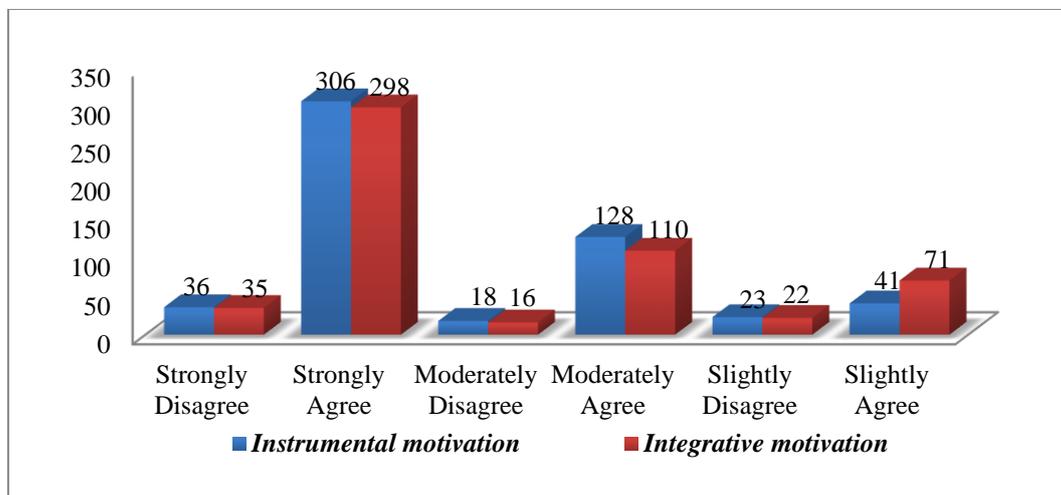


Figure 4: General trends of Instrumental and integrative motivations

Figure 4 is a comparison of the two trends: Instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The graph clearly shows that more than 50% of the participants have chosen “strongly agree” in both trends, with of course, the instrumental trend scoring slightly higher than the integrative motivation. The results show there is no major difference in the different modalities, except for « slightly agree” that has been chosen more by far in integrative motivation compared to instrumental motivation (71/41).

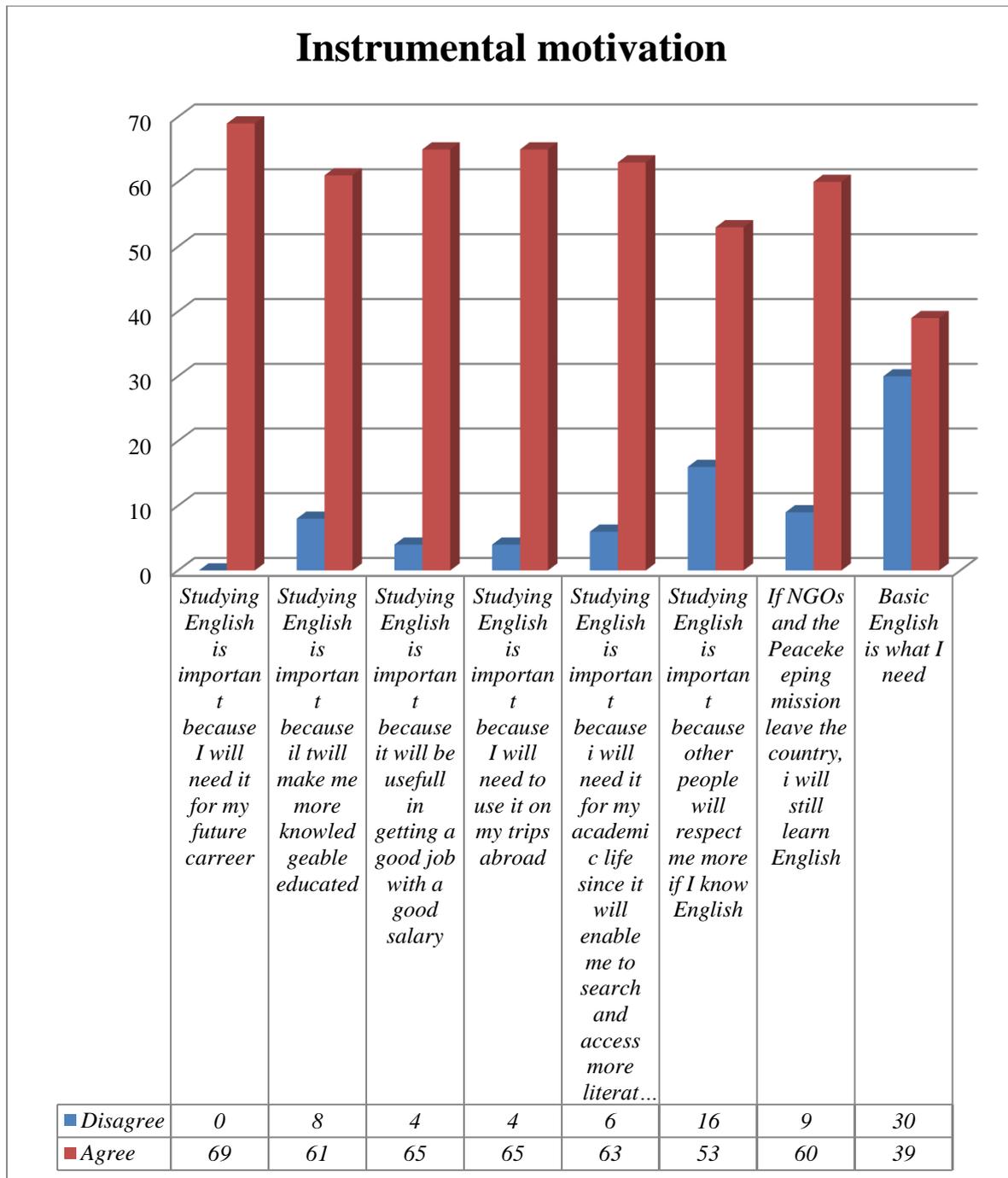


Figure 5: Degree of Instrumental motivation

From the figures above, it can be noted that 100% of the participants agree that learning English for a future career is important. It is however also important to mention that the high choice of “disagree” is situated at the choice that was suggested stating that basic English is all they need (43.8%). An important note on this graph is that more than 55% of the survey population chose “agree” on all the variables related to the instrumental motivation trend. This continues to highlight the evidence of the instrumental motivation in the participants.

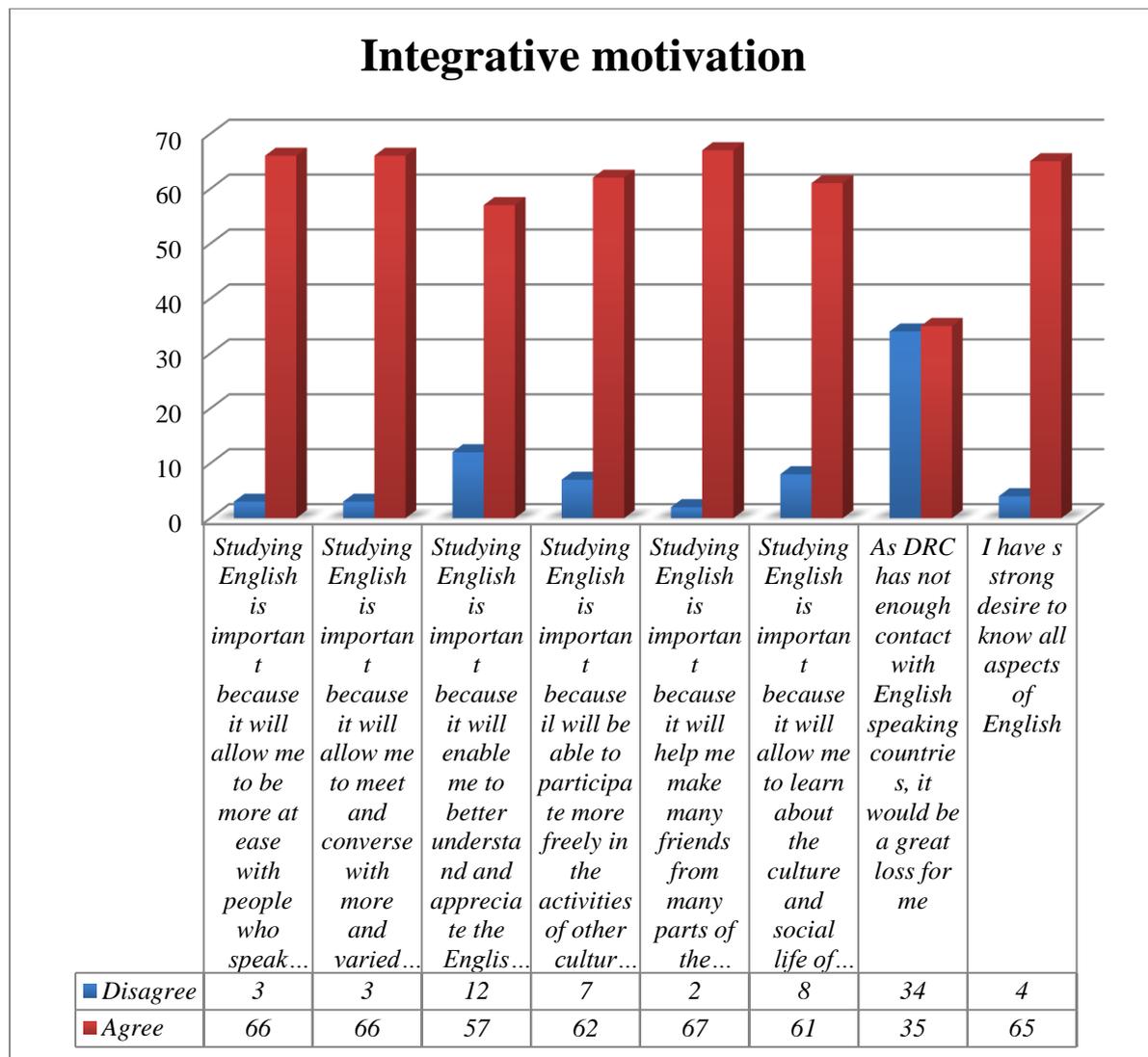


Figure 6: Degree of Integrative motivation

The graph above shows that more than 50% of the surveyed population chose “agree”. The highest level of preference for “agree” in relation to integrative motivation is 97.1% against 2.9%. Another important fact to be noted here is that 49.3% of the survey population think that learning English will not be important if NGOs and the Peace Mission Keeping leave the country. This in fact means that International NGOs much weigh in the choice of English language learning.

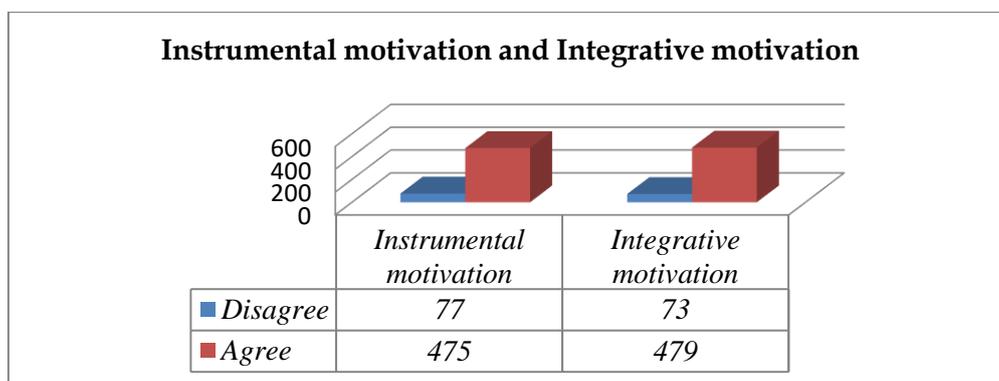


Figure 7: Comparison between Instrumental motivation and Integrative motivation

The figure shows that more than 80% of the participants chose “agree” in the two types of motivation. The “disagree” option is slightly higher in instrumental motivation than in the integrative one, and vice versa with the “agree” option.

Table 2: General trend for the instrumental motivation: Disagree and Agree

Variables	Disagree	Agree
<i>Studying English is important because I will need it for my future career</i>	0%	100%
<i>Studying English is important because it will make me more knowledgeable educated</i>	12.6%	88.4%
<i>Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job with a good salary</i>	5.8%	94.2%
<i>Studying English is important because I will need to use it on my trips abroad</i>	5.8%	94.2%
<i>Studying English is important because i will need it for my academic life since it will enable me to search and access more literature resources and reading materials</i>	8.7%	91.3%
<i>Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English</i>	23.18%	76.82%
<i>If NGOs and the Peacekeeping mission leave the country, i will still learn English</i>	13.04%	86.96%
<i>Basic English is what I need</i>	43.48%	56.52%

A short analysis of the table shows that the participants opted more for “agree” than for “disagree”. For instance, the importance of English for future career has been chosen by all the participants (100%). At the same time, they disagree at the rate of 43.48% with the idea that basic English is all that they need. Compared to the “agree” option on the same proposition of ‘basic English’ (56%), the ‘disagree’ option is lower. This is also an evidence of instrumental motivation in the participants.

Table 3: General trend for integrative motivation: Disagree and Agree

Variables	Disagree	Agree
<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English</i>	4.35%	95.65%
<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people</i>	4.35%	95.65%
<i>Studying English is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English art and literature</i>	17.4%	82.6%
<i>Studying English is important because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups</i>	10.14%	89.86%
<i>Studying English is important because it will help me make many friends from many parts of the world</i>	2.9%	97.1%
<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to learn about the culture and social life of English-speaking people</i>	11.6%	88.4%
<i>As DRC has not enough contact with English speaking countries, it would be a great loss for me</i>	49.28%	50.72%
<i>I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English</i>	5.8%	94.2%

From this table, we note that “Agree” was widely preferred by the participants because they wish to have many friends all over the world (97.1%). On the other hand, the preference of the “Disagree” by the participants probably because they did not

understand well what the question meant. It is not understandable that students who exhibit a so high degree of integrative motivation in all the questions should opt for “disagree”.

Statistical test of the relationship between variables: Chi-squared test

The objective of this test is to analyze the relationship between the level of study and the selected variables. Tables 5 and 6 provide the results of the explanatory variables estimation of the level of study using the chi-squared test. The significance of the relationship between a variable and the level of education is accepted if its probability is less than 5%.

Table 4: Chi-two test between variables for instrumental motivation

Variables	Pearson's Chi-squared test	Associated Probability at 5%
<i>Studying English is important because I will need it for my future career</i>	5.92	0.657
<i>Studying English is important because I will make me more knowledgeable educated</i>	31.7	0.52
<i>Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job with a good salary</i>	16.45	0.422
<i>Studying English is important because I will need to use it on my trips abroad</i>	13.72	0.619
<i>Studying English is important because i will need it for my academic life since it will enable me to search and access more literature resources and reading materials</i>	33.4	0.31
<i>Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English</i>	29.52	0.78
<i>If NGOs and the Peacekeeping mission leave the country, i will still learn English</i>	22.42	0.318
<i>Basic English is what I need</i>	18.23	0.572

Estimates of the bivariate analysis in this table show that the opinions of the participants are independent of their education levels, mutatis mutandis the membership of a student at a given level does not influence the choice of the suggested answers for all variables.

Table 5: Chi-squared test between variables for integrative motivation

Variables	Pearson's Chi-squared test	Associated probability at 5%
<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English</i>	8.72	0.727
<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people</i>	16.58	0.413
<i>Studying English is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English art and literature</i>	16.439	0.689
<i>Studying English is important because it will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups</i>	33.482	0.30
<i>Studying English is important because it will help me make many friends from many parts of the world</i>	11.44	0.782

<i>Studying English is important because it will allow me to learn about the culture and social life of English-speaking people</i>	17.318	0.632
<i>As DRC has not enough contact with English speaking countries, it would be a great loss for me</i>	28.8	0.92
<i>I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English</i>	24.061	0.24

Given that all the probabilities associated with Pearson's Chi-square are less than 0.05, this table illustrates that the relationship between educational attainment and all the variables that define the integrative motivation are insignificant. This means that the choice of the statements proposed on the questionnaire does not depend on the participant's level.

Link test between two variables

This test was able to measure the degree of connection between Instrumental motivation and Integrative motivation via “Disagree” and “Agree”. The results bring us to table 6:

Table 6: Correlation Test

		Agree	Disagree
Agree	Pearson 'Correlation	1	-1,000**
Disagree	Pearson 'Correlation	-1,000**	1

The correlation is significant at the threshold of 0.05

Table 6 shows that the coefficient is equal -1; thus, indicating a perfect negative correlation. This means if “Agree” increases, “Disagree” decreases by the same proportion and vice versa. In other words, instrumental motivation is perfectly correlated negatively with integrative motivation.

DISCUSSION

The investigation has shown that the learners display both types of motivation with equal high incidence, i.e. they have integrative motivation at 86.6% and instrumental motivation at 86.02%. These results confirm the first hypothesis according to which these EFL learners have the two types of motivation. The results, however, invalidate the second hypothesis according to which, being EFL learners, the targeted groups will be by far instrumentally motivated. The degree of motivation in fact systematically brings the two types of motivation together with a slight increase in integrative motivation. The first hypothesis was different to the hypothesis by Zanghar (2012) who predicted instrumental motivation in Libyan students based on former theories according to which EFL learners are basically instrumentally motivated. The two researches (Zanghar's and this one), however, come to the same conclusion according to which these EFL learners have both types of motivation with the integrative one being a lit bit higher.

Zanghar attributes these surprising results due to the change in the attitude of Libyans for certain political reasons, and that the situation may stabilize later. For the students in this investigation, the reason may be that of positive attitude as well, but most importantly, these Congolese students are studying English both as a language for communication and as a Linguistic/literature main subject. They are different from other

groups that can be surveyed who have other major subjects (Economics, Medicine, Law, Etc.) but learn English to reinforce their main subjects' opportunities.

In the same line, this research is in contraction with Hong and Ganapathy's research (2017) who conclude that Chinese students are instrumentally motivated. Once again, he asserts that the learners have a negative attitude to the English language and culture. The learners are not in the English Department; therefore, English is not their main subject; which is different from the students I investigated. They mention environment as one of the reasons why the learners lose integrative motivation. This is correct, but also the students I investigated live in the same conditions but exhibit integrative motivation.

Other researches on Congolese learners of English may certainly lead to opposed results depending on whether the learners are doing business, jobs in other areas of life, or when their main subject is not English. Nonetheless, there is good reason for the students of the English Department to highly display both types of motivation.

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