

Motivation for Learning English Language among College Students at “Qassim University” in Saudi Arabia

Majed Mohamed Hasan Drbseh *

Department of English Language and Translation, Faculty of Science and Arts in Almethnub, Qassim University

Abstract

This study sought to investigate motivation for learning English language by college students in the faculty of science and arts at Muthneb “Qassim University”. The aim was to examine the relationship between their motivation and age. In so doing, a sample of 42 male students was selected randomly. The scale for measuring motivation was administered and the collected data were analysed using the following statistical tests: T-test for one sample, One-way analysis of variance, and Pearson correlation coefficient. Results revealed that motivation scores were higher among students. No significant differences were found on motivation attributed to class level, and there was no correlation between motivation and age.

Keywords: motivation, learning English, college students, ‘Qassim University’

INTRODUCTION

In fact, motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning English language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (Locke, 1996). Motivation, among other psychological variables, plays an effective role on academic achievement among students in general and English language learners in particular. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can work as driving force that affects students overall (Lukmani, 1972). That is to say; motivation alone cannot do without actual action and ability. In order to test motivation level among learners; there are many psychometric tools that should be employed so as to guarantee an accurate measurement for motivation. Many researchers concerned with motivation have conducted several researches and studies. The recent research is an attempt to study motivation and its importance in learning.

It seems from literature and the previous researches carried out on motivation among learners that there are many variables underlying students' motivation to learn English language. Student's motivation to learn English 'QU' in Saudi Arabia has to do with student's desire to participate in the learning process. However, it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of

their motivation to learn English as a foreign language may differ. Motivation plays an important part in improving and developing learner's communicative ability, however, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are many English majors who are aspiring to be part of English-speaking community. It might be true that a few of them have such desire, but the majority of English majors join the English departments because it is easier for them to get a job with a BA in English than in any other specialization.

Research Questions

This present research paper set the following research questions for testing.

- 1-What is the general trend of motivation among the research sample?
- 2-Is there any important difference on motivation among English language learners referring to class level?
- 3-Is there any important correlation between motivation and age?

Significance of Research

This research study is of prime importance on account to deal with an Area of Educational psychology. It is well-known that the research on motivation is expected to be beneficial for both teachers and learners and because of the central importance attached to motivation by practitioners and researchers alike, motivation has been the goal of a fantastic deal of research study during the past decades.

Objectives

This research study seeks to accomplish the followings: 1-To measure motivation among English language learners at Islamic University-Faculty of Science and Arts.

- 2- To classify the difference on motivation among students referring to class.
- 3- To test the correlation between motivation and age.

Hypotheses

- 1-College students were not motivated to learn English.
- 2-There was important statistical difference on motivation due to students level (first and fourth).
- 3-There was important correlation found between motivation and age.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Motivation is the driving force by which humans achieve their aims. Motivation is told to be intrinsic or extrinsic. The term is generally used for humans but it can also be used to describe the causes for animal behaviour as well. This article indicates to human motivation. Referring to various theories, motivation may be rooted in a basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure, or it may include specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, goal, state of being, ideal, or it may be attributed to less-apparent reasons such as altruism, selfishness, morality, or avoiding mortality.

Conceptually, motivation should not be confused with either volition or optimism. Motivation is related to, but distinct from, emotion (Harter, 1981).

What Is Student Motivation?

Student motivation naturally has to do with students' desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation may differ. A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity "for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes" (Lepper, 1988). An extrinsically encouraged and motivated student performs "in order to get some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself," such as grades, stickers, or teacher approval. The term motivation to learn has a slightly different meaning. It is defined by one author as "the meaningfulness, value, and benefits of academic tasks to the learner-regardless of whether or not they are intrinsically interesting" (Hermine Marshall 1987). Another note that is motivation to learn is characterized by long-term, quality involvement in learning and commitment to the process of learning (Carole Ames 1990).

What Factors Influence the Development of Students' Motivation?

Referring to Jere Brophy (1987) and Deborah Stipek (1988), motivation to learn is a competence acquired "through general experience but stimulated most directly through modelling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by important others (especially parents and teachers)." Factors influence the development of students motivation can be outlined as follows:

- 1-home environment
- 2-school-related success and failure
- 3-teachers, beliefs about teaching and learning
- 4-schoolwide goals policies and procedures
- 5-classroom climate

Advantages of Intrinsic Motivation

Candry and J. Chamber (1987); believed that students with an intrinsic motivation have strong desire and more effort than extrinsically motivated students who exert the minimal amount of learning activity to success. Intrinsic motivation among English language learners is an important agent to overcome challenging and difficult learning tasks.

Motivation to Learn English and How Can be Fostered among Students

Prophy(1987) points out the importance of classroom climate particularly when students feel a sense of affiliation, being valued and respected, consequently, they are more likely apt to engage actively in the learning process. According to Martin and Midgley (1991), to improve motivation to learn among students, educational policies should emphasize mastery learning which is a type of learning based on practice through which students shall be able to apply knowledge in the real world. 2.5 Causes of Poor Motivation among Students and Their Remedies What cause lack of motivation to learn in general and English in particular can be summarized as follows: 1-lack of interest in learning. 2- Poor academic aptitude.

Dissatisfaction of basic needs. 4- Psychological strain. 5- Parental expectations.

What can be done to help students with poor motivation is through these strategies: A process called ATTRIBUTION RETRAINING, which involves modelling, socialization, and practice exercises, is sometimes used with discouraged students. The goals of attribution retraining are to help students to (1) concentrate on the tasks rather than becoming distracted by fear of failure; (2) respond to frustration by retracing their steps to find mistakes or figuring out alternative ways of approaching a problem instead of giving up; and (3) attribute their failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or reliance on ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability at this point (Brophy 1986). Other potentially useful strategies include the following: portray effort as investment rather than risk, portray skill development as incremental and domain-specific, focus on mastery (Brophy 1986).

Theory of Motivation

a reward, tangible or intangible, is presented after the occurrence of an action (i.e. behaviour) with the intent to cause the behaviour to occur again. This is done by associating positive meaning to the behaviour. Studies showed that if the person receives the reward immediately, the effect is greater, and decreases as duration lengthens. Repetitive action-reward combination can cause the action to become habit. Motivation comes from two sources: oneself, and other people. These two sources are called intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, sequentially (Marshall, 1987). Applying proper motivational techniques can be much harder than it seems. Jones (1993) believed that when creating a reward system, it can be easy to reward A, while hoping for B, and in the process, reap harmful effects that can jeopardize the person's goals. Other theories of motivation include: Drive reduction theory (Seligman, 1990), Need theory (Maslow, 1970), and Goal-setting theory (Spike, 1981).

Educational Implications of Motivation Educational psychologists give motivation

special consideration owing to its great significance in learning process. Gardner & Lambert (1972) discuss that motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and they behave effectively towards different subjects. Motivation leads to increased effort and energy, enhances cognitive process, increases persistence in learning activities, and leads to improved performance.

Summary of Related Previous Researches on Motivation

There were several previous researches on motivation to learn English conducted worldwide: Richard (2006) confirmed that Hungarian students, motivation to learn English. He revealed the presence of a relatively classroom motivation. Vijchulata, and Lee (1985) examined students, were motivated for learning English in Malaysia; he found that students expressed a strong desire to learn English. Shaaban (2000) has investigated motivation of Lebanese students to learn English as a foreign language. The findings revealed that female students were more motivated than their male counterparts. Furthermore, Kris and Kobon (2006) have conducted a research in Slovenia regarding students’ motivation to learn English; the finding explored the relative importance of the different types of motivation.

METHOD

The Population

In fact, this research population represents college students in undergraduate stage at “QU’ Almuthneb College in Saudi Arabia, from which the sample was drawn.

The Sample The selected sample for the current research was drawn randomly comprising 42 male students who are learning English language at faculty of Science & Arts, ‘QU’ Almuthneb college-. They were selected as follows: level one, level three and four.

Data Collection Device

The researcher designed a scale for measuring motivation consisting of 15 items with five alternatives for answering (always-often-sometimes-rarely-never, See Appendix)

Reliability and Validity

The scale was detected for both reliability and validity as revealed on the following table. Table 1 Shows correlation coefficient for each item on motivation scale.

Table 1. correlation coefficient for each item on motivation scale

	Item Deleted	Item Deleted	Correlation	correlation	Deleted
Q1	37.3333	33.238	.075	.	.303
Q2	37.4667	35.981	-.087	.	.351
Q3	36.8667	35.981	-.032	.	.322
Q4	37.8000	33.600	.060	.	.308
Q5	38.0667	31.495	.448	.	.269
Q6	37.8000	31.171	.253	.	.243
Q7	37.2000	33.886	.463	.	.307
Q8	39.1333	38.410	-.260	.	.390
Q9	38.0667	29.924	.182	.	.257

Q10	37.4000	34.543	.024	.	.318
Q11	38.6000	28.114	.312	.	.197
Q12	38.0000	30.286	.201	.	.252
Q13	38.7333	30.067	.182	.	.258
Q14	36.8667	36.838	-.146	.	.339
Q15	38.1333	31.695	.128	.	.283

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Item Cronbach's	Base on Total N of item
0.632	0.654	15

It seems from the above table that scale is reliable statistically. Statistical tests used to analyse data were the followings:

1-T-test for one sample. 2-One-way analysis of variance. 3-Pearson correlation coefficient

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section deals with the result obtained for each hypothesis and its interpretation and discussion:

Hypothesis one

It was predicted that English language learners were not motivated to learn. To verify this hypothesis, the researcher used T-test for one sample as shown on the following table:

Table 3. The result of (t-test)

Test value =35						
95%confidence interval of the Difference						
	T	df	sig.(2-taild)	mean difference	lower	upper
Motivation	5.558	39	.000	8.30000	5.2997	11.3203

It seems from the tables that mean difference is important at (.000), this indicates motivation scores are high among the learners.

The result showed that students, motivation for learning English was high. It can be noticed that this finding was in line with the results of related studies conducted worldwide (Richard, 2006; Vijchulata & Lee, 1985; Shaaban, 2000; Kris, 2006). It was expected owing to the learners, on-going keenness and desire to learn and master English as foreign language. The popularity of English language might be one of the reasons why English language learners in different parts of the world are well-motivated to that end. According to researcher, student motivation to learn English in Sudan has to do with student's desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities.

Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation to learn English as a foreign language may differ.

Hypothesis two

It is hypothesised that there were important differences on motivation for learning English owing to class level. To test this hypothesis, the researcher used one-way analysis of variance as shown on the following table:

Table 4. The result of variance

	Sum of squares	df	means square	F	Sig
Between groups	498.724	3	166.241	2.009	.130
Within groups	2979.676	36	82.769		
Total	3478.400	39			

It seems from the table that no important difference on motivation due to student level (first and fourth).

The result of this hypothesis indicated that no important statistical differences were found on motivation scores due to class. Referring the researcher, students or learners are normally found in classrooms and each learner, regardless of his class, is supposed to be an active member in learning process. There are other factors that can contribute effectively to class motivation to learn English such as nature of learners, class environment, and extracurricular activities.

Hypothesis three

It hypothesized that no correlation found between motivation scores and learners, ages. To test this hypothesis, the researcher used Pearson's correlation coefficient as displayed on the following table:

Table 5. The result of the correlation

		Motivation	age
Motivation	pearson correlation	1	.108
	Sig.(2-taild)		.508
	N	40	40
Age	pearson correlation	.108	1
	Sig.(2taild)		.508
		40	40

It is clear from the table that there is no important correlation between motivation and age. It appears to the best of researcher’s knowledge that motivation to learn cannot be affected by learner’s age. That is why -for instance-children have also motivation to learn, and this may give an impression that motivation is a propensity or an instinct.

CONCLUSION

In details, this research study purposed at investigating motivation to learn English among college students at ‘QU’ in Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that the English

learners were instrumentally motivated. Moreover, the research paper showed that there was no important difference on motivation due to student level, and there was no correlation between motivation to learn and age. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that there were some limitations to this research. First, the limited number of the participants might not enhance the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the selected sample was male students only. To conclude, what cannot be disputed is the fact that motivation is an important variable when examining successful second language acquisition. It should be realized that making learners recognize a real need to accomplish learning goals and providing them with the motivation to learn is one of the best steps we can take to facilitate effective learning. Thus, future researches in Sudan are needed to shed more light on motivation to learn from different perspectives as only the iceberg has been discovered.

This research study is limited by both time and location. It is carried out on undergraduate students at the faculty of science and arts, Almuthneb- 'QU' in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the year 2017.

According to the results obtained, the researcher suggests the followings:

- The research wants to promote student's awareness towards learning process.
- The researcher wants to keep learners in touch with modern English language teaching methods.
- The effect of motivation on academic achievement among college students is very significant.

REFERENCES

- Ames, Carole A. (1990). Motivation: What Teachers Need to Know. *Teachers College Record*, 91, 3, 409-21.
- Condry, J., & J. Chambers. (1978). Intrinsic Motivation and the Process of Learning. In M. R. Lepper, & D. Greene (Eds), *The Hidden Costs of Reward*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Cordova, D., & Lepper, M. (1995). Intrinsic Motivation and the Process of Learning: Beneficial Effects of Contextualization. *Personalization, and Choice*.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Harter, S. (1981). A new self-report scale of intrinsic versus extrinsic orientation in the classroom: Motivational and informational components. *Developmental psychology*, 17(3), 300.
- Kyriacou, C., & Kobori, M. (1998). Motivation to learn and teach English in Slovenia. *Educational studies*, 24(3), 345-351.
- Locke, E. (1996). Motivation through Conscious Goal Setting. *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 5, 117-123.

- Lukmani, Y. M. (1972). Motivation to Learn Language Proficiency. *Language Learning*, 22, 261-273.
- Maehr, M. L., & Midgley, C. (1991). Enhancing student motivation: A schoolwide approach. *Educational psychologist*, 26(3-4), 399-427.
- Marshall, H. H. (1987). Motivational strategies of three fifth-grade teachers. *The elementary school journal*, 88(2), 135-150.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Raffini, J. P. (1993). *Winners without losers: Structures and strategies for increasing student motivation to learn*. Allyn & Bacon, 160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02194.
- Richard, C. (2006). Motivation, Self-confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Language Learning*, 44, 417-448.
- Seligman, M. (1990). *Motivation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Shaaban, K. A., & Ghaith. G. (2000). Student motivation to learn English as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33, 632-644.
- Stipek, D. J. (1998). *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Vijchulata, B., & Lee, G. S. (1985). A survey of students' motivation for learning English. *RELC Journal*, 16(1), 68-81.
- Weiner, B. (2000). Interpersonal and Intrapersonal theories of motivation from an attributional perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, 12, 1-14.