

# MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ENGLISH AMONG THE STUDENTS OF SOUTH EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

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**ABSTRACT:** Motivation is one of the main influential factors of success in developing a second or foreign language. It is a complex phenomenon which includes instrumental, integrative, long term, short term, intrinsic and extrinsic varieties. The current study aimed to examine which type of motivation influences ESL students of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka the most and it examined whether there is a relationship between the students' ability (high and low ability learners) and the type of motivation. To reach the objectives of the research, the study was conducted among 60 third year Faculty of Arts and Culture students of academic year 2013/14. To examine the relationship between the students' ability and the type of motivation, 30 students from low ability learners and 30 students from quick learners were selected as samples. This study adopted both quantitative approach (through employing a questionnaire among the samples) and qualitative approach (through interview among selected students). The findings of the research show that both high ability and low ability students of the SEUSL are motivated by instrumental and integrative purposes. 40% of high ability students do not agree for some of the extrinsic factors. The research shows that there is a strong relationship between instrumental and extrinsic motivations and integrative and intrinsic motivation. The current research helps identifying the components that influence student's motivation in language learning and proposes ways in which teachers, material designers can improve levels of motivation in the classroom and the extent to which these measures are effective.

**Keywords:** motivation, instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, extrinsic

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The level in which a student is motivated plays a central role in their foreign or second language learning and acquisition. Motivation is more important for second language learning students because some researches (Lambert (1963), Gardner (1985) and Dornyei (1994,1998)) have shown correlation between motivation and second language acquisition. Additionally, motivation plays a major role in all aspects of our lives. For instance, if you are a teacher, you cannot do your job perfectly if you are not motivated enough to do your job as great as you can.

Though to classify motivation is difficult, generally, there are two types of motivation; namely, instrumental and integrative motivations which are indisputably fundamentals of success in second language learning.

### 1.1 Research Problem

There are enough literatures which talk about motivation and types of motivation. Some researches focus whether the students are motivated for integrative purpose or instrumental purpose. Some test whether there is a relationship between gender and types of motivation. Some of them discuss about motivation and attitude together. Along this line, the researcher wanted to check whether the students are motivated to learn English in the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. There is a gap to be filled that whether the students' ability level influences the motivation type. However, in this

survey, the researcher methodically studied what motivation is and how it plays a vital role in the learner's achievement with the help of literature.

## 1.2 Objectives

This paper aims to check whether the students are motivated in ESL classroom at SEUSL, to identify whether they are motivated towards integrative or instrumental motivation and to investigate the relationship between students' ability and motivation type.

## 1.3 Research Questions

- 1) Are ESL students motivated at SEUSL?
- 2) Are they integratively or instrumentally motivated?
- 3) Is there a relationship between students' ability and motivation type?

## 1.4 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out among 60 third year students of Faculty of Arts and Culture of the academic year 2013/14. To examine the relationship between the students' ability and the type of motivation, 30 students from low ability learners and 30 students from high ability learners were selected as samples. The data for this study are obtained through a questionnaire administered to the total number of 60 students and an interview with some selected students from both ability levels.

## 2. Literature Review

Motivation is considered as one of the key factors among age, personality, experience, cognition and native language that influence the rate and success of second/ foreign language learning (Shoebottom, 2007). In Lambert's (1963) *social psychological model*, he has emphasized cognitive factors such as language aptitudes and intelligence as well as affective factors such as attitudes and motivation. Further, in his model he proposes that the extent to which an individual successfully acquires a second language will depend upon ethnocentric tendencies, attitudes towards the other community, orientation towards language learning and motivation.

Harmer (1991, p.3) explains the meaning of motivation as the "internal drive" that pushes somebody to do something. If we think that our goal is worth doing and attractive for us, then we try to reach that goal; this is called "the action driven by motivation". Another pioneer in this field, Gardner (1985), defines L2 motivation as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p:10); more specifically, motivation is conceptualized to subsume three components, motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and an attitude towards the act of learning the language. Besides, motivation determines "the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning" (Oxford & Shearin 1994, p. 12). That is, motivation provides "the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Dörnyei, 1998).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) classified learning motivation into two major groups: integrative and instrumental motivation. According to Krashen (1998) integrative motivation occurs when there is a

desire to be a member or part of the community that speaks the second language. It is based on the sole interest to assimilate into that community. For example, you work hard to learn English as you have a strong desire to interact with the English family next to you and you are attracted by the British culture.

Instrumental motivation is described as a desire to acquire a language for utilitarian or external reasons such as getting a better job or higher salary. Though Dornyei (1994) mentions that job or salary related motives, instrumental motivation is actually very often not too relevant to school children; it is obvious among undergraduates who seek jobs once they finish their degree. Dörnyei (1994) cites Gardner and Tremblay that ... these two motivational components are not antagonistic counterparts but are often positively related, and are, in fact, not even the only components of L2 motivation.

The classifications of motivation were far more complex when motivational research developed. According to educational psycholinguists the terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are more popular than integrative and instrumental (Stribling, 2003). Intrinsic motivation finds its basic principles on the assumption that humans are active beings in need of autonomy and with an innate curiosity (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ushioda, 1996; Ushioda, 2003). Intrinsic motivation is present when learners actively seek out and participate in activities without having to be rewarded by materials or activities outside the learning task. Therefore, it does not have negative impacts. Extrinsic motivation involves engaging in a task due to external factors. This can mean working for money and food, or it can involve taking actions to avoid harm. As Dornyei (1994a) mentions, "...extrinsic motivation refers to behaviors that 'the individual performs to receive some extrinsic reward' such as getting good grades, being praised by the teacher or to avoid punishment". As students are motivated through external rewards; it can bring negative impacts on students. For example, students perform well in the English examination paper because they want to get higher scores. However, if the grades are not counted for their GPA, they will not care about the exam.

All these motivation types are interconnected to one another. It can be seen clearly that integrative and intrinsic motivation share some same components while instrumental and extrinsic motivation share some similarities, in both cases students are driven to perform as a reaction to some external objective (personal gain, reward, etc.) (Noels, et al. 2003). For example, when students are internally interested in English because of their interest to the culture, they are integratively, as well as intrinsically, motivated. However, when students are only learning the second language because they want to get better grades, so that they can join a good university with a scholarship, followed by getting a high-paying job, their motivation is extrinsic and instrumental.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Sample**

The population of the study focuses on all students in the Faculty of Arts & Culture of SEUSL. The sample of the study was 60 third year students of the academic year 2013/14. To examine the relationship between the students' ability and the type of motivation, 30 students from low ability learners and 30 students from ability group were selected. Among them five students from each group were interviewed.

### 3.2. Instrument

A questionnaire adopted from the Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985) was modified and it has five questions for each four types of motivation namely instrumental, integrative, intrinsic and extrinsic to collect the quantitative data. A 5-point likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' was used to analyse the data. The following twenty questions under four topics give the reader an understanding of motivational types.

<b>Integrative motivation</b>
Studying English helps me be more comfortable with English speakers.
Studying English helps me talk to more English speaking people.
Studying English helps me have more friends.
Studying English enables me to participate in activities of other cultures.
Studying English helps me understand & appreciate art & literature in English speaking cultures.
<b>Instrumental motivation</b>
Studying English is important because I need it for my future career.
Studying English is important because it will help me learn more new things.
Studying English is important because it will help me get a good job.
Studying English is important because it will help me study in an English speaking country.
Studying English is important because people will respect me more if I know a foreign language.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>
English lessons, materials and activities are great fun. (I really enjoy learning English.)
I always look forward to the day when we have English class.
I would like to try to use the English which I have learned.
I hope that we have more English lessons.
My English teacher motivates to learn English.
<b>Extrinsic Motivation</b>
I will be punished if I don't do the homework.
I will get better grades if I study English.
I will be rewarded if I score more marks in English.
The teacher will praise me if I perform well in English.
I study English to impress others or to avoid feelings of guilt or failure.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sample students were asked to indicate on a five point scale. Both high and low ability students answered for all questions. It shows that all the students are motivated to learn English whether for integrative, instrumental intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. This trend answers the first research question 'whether students are motivated?'. The focus was on four types of motivational orientation. The students' responses to the questionnaire were analysed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. As we can observe in the Table 1 below, there is no significant difference between types of motivation (integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic) among the students.

They are motivated in all four ways. Though the researcher hypothesized that high ability group students would have strongly agreed to the first five questions which elaborate intergrative motivation while the low ability students would have strongly agreed to instrumental purpose, students did not have any different views regarding the types of motivation.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Studying English will help me be more comfortable with English speakers	60	3	5	4.58	.530
Studying English will help me talk to more English speaking people.	60	3	5	4.40	.558
Studying English will help me have more friends.	60	3	5	3.67	.572
Studying English will enable me to participate in activities of other cultures	60	3	5	3.57	.673
Studying English will help me understand & appreciate art & literature in English speaking cultures.	60	1	4	2.12	.585
Studying English is important because I need it for my future career.	60	3	5	4.40	.558
Studying English is important because it will help me learn more new things.	60	3	5	4.45	.565
Studying English is important because it will help me get a good job.	60	3	5	4.57	.563
Studying English is important because it will help me study in an English speaking country.	60	3	5	3.68	.596
Studying English is important because people will respect me more if I know a foreign language.	60	3	5	3.67	.572
English lessons, materials and activities are great fun. (I really enjoy learning English.)	60	3	5	3.65	.577
I always look forward to the day when we have English class.	60	4	5	4.67	.475
I would like to try to use the English which I have learned.	60	4	5	4.67	.475
I hope that we have more English lessons.	60	3	5	4.62	.524
My English teacher motivates to learn English.	60	3	5	4.63	.520
I will be punished if I don't do the homework.	60	1	2	1.37	.486
I will get better grades if I study English.	60	3	5	4.40	.558
I will be rewarded if I score more marks in English.	60	3	5	3.67	.572
The teacher will praise me if I perform well in English.	60	3	5	4.40	.558
I study English to impress others or to avoid feelings of guilt or failure.	60	1	3	1.73	.710
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Table 1 ( Descriptive statistics of the quantitative data for 60 students)

There is not a significant difference among the types as we can see from the descriptive analysis above and the Table 2 below. Table 2 shows the total number of mean value for each question under each type. It does not show a very high difference in the total number beside for the type 4 in question 1 and 5 which are negative questions via students disagree with them. Therefore, it shows us that there is not a significant difference among the types of motivation.

Mean value	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Question 1	4.58	4.4	3.65	1.37
Question 2	4.4	4.45	4.67	4.4
Question 3	3.67	4.57	4.67	3.67
Question 4	3.57	3.68	4.62	4.4
Question 5	2.12	3.67	4.63	1.73
Total	18.34	20.77	22.24	15.57

Table 2 (Mean value of each question for all four types of motivation with its total mean value)

The interview with selected samples describes that the students are motivated to learn English. Most of them learn English at university level as it is a compulsory credit carrying course. As ELTU is very much strict to mark the students' attendance to the classroom they regularly attend the class. Those who are interested to learn English always attend the class without fail. Some of them suggested the researcher to use more visual aids to learn English. Both low and high ability students agree to all four types of motivation namely instrumental, integrative, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. 40% of high ability students do not agree for some of the extrinsic factors.

## 5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research was conducted to provide some insights into the level and type of motivation of the third year students of FAC at SEUSL. The findings of the research show that both high ability and low ability students of the SEUSL are motivated by instrumental and integrative purposes.

The study provides useful knowledge and information for the institute to select the materials, teaching aids, method of teaching and learning to improve the students' eagerness to learn English effectively. Although the data of the study may not correspond to all other student group, the researcher is still confident that the results will give a relative representation and be of a great value to authorities or researchers concerned.

Clear definitions and an understanding of motivation can assist both students and teachers achieve their goals. Students with adequate motivation will become efficient language learners.

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