

Motivation towards Learning English Language: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students in a Pakistani Engineering University**Quratulain Talpur¹**

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Abstract: *English has got two fold status of being official and academic language in Pakistan. To cope with current global needs, English has been the medium of instruction in the curriculum from primary level to the higher education. Engineering discipline also has several subjects of English however; it is observed that engineering students have mindset that technical subjects are of great significance than general language subjects. This paper investigates the types and level of motivation towards learning English language by engineering students. Motivation is measured as proposed by Gardner (1985) on the basis of three motivational constructs: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and personal motivation. The data collected through Questionnaire from engineering undergraduate students of Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Campus Khairpur Mirs' Pakistan. The findings show that students of Mehran UET SZAB Campus are instrumentally motivated to learn the English language as a subject.*

Key Words: *English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Engineering discipline, Motivation, ESL, Second language acquisition (SLA)*

Introduction

Language is the means of communication to share ideas, thoughts, and opinions. It has no boundaries; one can communicate beyond color and cultural differences. English language is an international language and has become world *lingua franca*. Since last three decades, English has undergone through major changes from traditional teaching methodologies to a modern language learning strategies. Moreover, English language has a paramount importance in the colonial countries more specifically in Pakistan. It is used as an official medium of communication and instruction in Pakistan. The role of English has also been widely explored by

many authors. It has become the language of military, government, and higher education (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

Teaching English to engineering undergraduates lies in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It can be defined as 'the branch of English language education which focuses on training in specific domains of English to accomplish specific academic or workplace tasks' (Orr, 1998). More specifically, English has become compulsory subject for engineering undergraduates up to the 3rd year of their education. The significance of English language has been clearly showed by Kim (2013) in his industrial survey that 'practical English or language related subject is the most useful subject to get a job among the 'Specialized General Curriculum Subjects' in the accreditation system'. Another example which shows the importance of English for engineering undergraduates is 'English is an essential tool in the engineering education and, therefore, integrating English into engineering, science and math courses is an effective way to improve the performance of engineering undergraduates in oral and written communication' (Pendergrass, 2001, p. 1).

The importance of English language for engineers is also been asserted by Gupta (2013) that improved English language skills will facilitate them to attain job and also create long term opportunity for engineering undergraduates to meet challenges in the working environment at national or international level. She is also of opinion that good English language skills of engineers will also benefit industrial organizations because they will not only get better representative for their companies but also an important asset to negotiate with multinational companies.

In Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Campus Khairpur Mirs' (UET SZAB Campus), the English subject for engineering undergraduates have been included up to 3rd year such as 'Functional English' which is part of first year syllabus in various disciplines of engineering. Communication Skills is also being taught in second semester, where as Technical Writing & Presentation skills is included in 2nd and 3rd year respectively in various disciplines. As engineering students have practical oriented approach, so they give less priority to the English language. They consider it as a minor subject. Because of their low English language proficiency, they face lots of problems to capture a job market. There can be plenty of reasons behind their low language proficiency, but the most important is their lack of motivation.

Dornyei (1998) mentioned that 'high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions'. Alex (2012) states in his research paper that 'other factors to L2 learning might be influenced by the teacher, learning materials, learning interest, social need or even parental background.' Motivation creates lots of influence to become committed and determined to attain huge goal with the strong vision. L2 motivation has been studied by many researchers during past decades. 'Without sufficient

motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement' (Dornyei, 1998). Furthermore, it is explained by Gardner (1985) that 'L2 motivation is 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'.

Objectives of Study

This study aims to examine the role and level of motivation towards learning English among undergraduate students of engineering at Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Campus Khairpur Mirs'. It will also be investigated that what type of motivation is the most popular among engineering undergraduates of Mehran UET SZAB Campus.

Literature Review

This section provides the concise overview of background of motivation, what actually motivation is and work related with this research topic. The exploration of research on "motivation" and "language learning" was first started by two most famous Canadian researchers Robert Gardener and Wallace (1972, 1985), who attempted to explore the answer of the question "*why some people can learn language more easily and quickly while others cannot?*" Gardener (1972) developed 'attitude/motivation test battery' to investigate the role of attitude and motivation among learners of English language. Currently most of the researchers use this tool as a primary source for research on language learning.

What is Motivation in Language Learning?

Traditionally in the past decades, motivation was not given enough importance in the language learning acquisition. Henmon (1929, as cited in Alex, 2012) considered that 'intelligence was the most important variable indicator of success in language learning.' Root (1990) pointed out Gardner's framework (1985) as 'the beginning of language research in that area.' Furthermore, Dörnyei (1994) worked on a motivation model in the context of foreign language.

Motivation is a very complex process to comprehend. There is no any single and concrete definition of it, but all researchers agreed on the specific factors based on it. It is elaborated by oxford dictionary as "A reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way". Walker (1952) expressed that "Motivation - which I take to mean methods, devices, appeals by which we persuade our students to work at writing, reading, or speaking for their own good". On the other hand, Dornyei (1994) is of view that Motivation is the chief source of English language learning process. Woolfolk (1998, as cited in Rehman, 2014) opines that 'motivation is an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior' (p. 372). Wlodowski (1985) explained motivation as 'the processes that can (a) arouse and instigate behavior, (b) give direction or purpose to

behavior,(c) continue to allow behavior to persist, and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior'. In addition to above definitions, Ellis (1994), in an overview of research on motivation, simply asserted 'motivation affects the extent to which language learners persevere in learning, what kinds of behavior they exert, and their actual achievement.'

From the above mentioned aspects of motivation, it is clear that motivation is the main factor that works best to get success in the process of learning a language. As discussed in Alex (2012), on the basis of Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) work, motivation is comprised of two different factors which are classified as 'instrumental' and 'integrative' orientation 'the dichotomy of instrumental orientation proposed that learning a language was for the basis of academic and career advancement while integrative orientation are steered towards social and cultural purposes.'

Gardner and Lambert (1992) identified instrumental orientation as one of the strategy to get social and economic reward though second language learning process. Whereas Gardner and Masgoret (2003, cited in Rehman, 2014) refers to the integrative orientation as "an openness to identify at least in part with another language community". A successful and committed language learner usually applies combination of both above mentioned types. McDonough (1983) elucidates 'motivation of the students is one of the most important elements influencing their success or failure in learning the language.' Wong Fillmore (1991, cited in Rehman, 2014) considered three conditions necessary for second language learners:

- a) The need of motivated students to learn target language.
- b) Native speaker's support to learn L2.
- c) Contact between native speaker of target language and learners.

From the above definitions, it is explicit that the importance of motivation cannot be underestimated. Same view is elucidated by Gardner (2006, p. 241) that 'students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels.' Furthermore, he remarked 'if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc'(Gardner, 2006, p. 243).

Related Studies

Most of the researchers has explored, reviewed and presented this topic since many years in different contexts. Some of their investigations are discussed here, which concludes that instrumental motivation is higher among students as compare to the integrative and personal

motivation (Gashoa, 2006; Vaezi 2009, Al-Tamimi, 2009; Choorsi, 2011; Rehman, 2011; Rehman, 2014).

Rehman (2014) reported a study to investigate the role of motivation in the process of learning English language for Pakistani learners. The study of Rehman was quantitative in nature. The primary source of data collection was Questionnaire based on Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The participants that Rehman chose were 50 intermediate students from a private colleges of Sarghoda, Pakistan. His group was divided into 25 male and 25 female participants in the data collection procedure. His Questionnaire comprised of 20 questions, 1 to 10 is of integrative motivation and 11 to 20 questions were based on instrumental motivation. Out of 50 questions, 47 questions were answered by students whereas 3 questions were unanswered. The results of Rehman's questionnaire are shown below:

70 % students replied that they study English language because

- a. They are interested to get good marks and good job.
- b. They want to apply for higher education.
- c. It would benefit them in their future career.

24% students are of opinion that they learn English language because

- a. They love English language.
- b. It is the language of upper class.
- c. They want to go abroad.

And remaining 6% students did not show their consent.

70% students showed their strong agreement towards instrumental motivations. On the other hand, 24% of students showed their consent towards integrative motivation in Pakistani context for L2 learning. In the last, Rehman suggested to the readers that in order to motivate L2 language learners, instructors should have productive and interesting lesson plan which compel students to play their part with full attention. It is also suggested that Pakistani teachers should use interesting texts and activities to enhance motivation level among Pakistani students.

Al-Tamini explored level of motivation and attitude among Petroleum engineering students towards English language learning process. He expressed level of motivation based on Gardener's (1985) and Cooper and Fishman's (1977) works comprised of three motivational

constructs: Instructional, integrative and personal motivation. Al-Tamini chose 81 students from Hadhraout University of Sciences and Technology (HUST) for his research sample. For data collection procedure, Al-Tamini selected questionnaire and interviews. Whereas to investigate the learner's attitude, he identified 1) "the use of English in the Yemeni social context", 2) "the use of English in the Yemeni educational context", 3) "the English language" and 4) "the culture of the English speaking world were identified." To conclude the result of motivational research, Al-Tamini is of opinion that students are motivated towards learning English language by instrumental construct of motivation including utilitarian and academic reasons as compare to the integrative and personal constructs. Students had given priority to the personal motivation in the English language learning process. On the other side, as per students survey results learning English for the sake of culture is of no importance to attain motivation among engineering.

Chauhan also investigated the three motivational constructs and learners attitude of undergraduate students of Bachelor of Business Administration towards English language. His research sample consists of 81 BBA students from undergrad colleges of Indore. Data was collected using Questionnaire and interviews. The researcher wanted to examine that which type of motivation: Instrumental, Integrative or personal is the main factor towards learning of English language among Business undergraduate students of Indore. Furthermore, he has explored that learners' attitudes regarding: a) the use of English in social context, b) the use of English in educational context, and c) the English language were identified. To conclude the analysis of data, Chauhan used eight statements in his questionnaire out of which four were based on instrumental motivation, whereas two on personal and integrative motivation respectively. Along with it, to measure attitudinal factors he included eight statements to get students response towards attitude on learning English language. His research findings shows that instrumental motivation got highest mean score. Besides Instrumental motivation, personal motivation comes at the second priority in terms of learning English language among business students of Indore.

His research findings also concludes that business students study English language for both 'utilitarian' and 'academic' reasons, there should be implementation of English for Occupational purpose (EOP) and English for Academic Purpose (EAP).

Research Methodology

This research was based on the quantitative data collection tools of questionnaire and interviews. These were mainly used to determine the role of motivational orientations among the engineering students of Mehran UET SZAB campus Khairpur Mirs'. Creswell (2002) explains this type of design, that uses different research methods to investigate the same issue, is called a 'triangulation mixed method design' Furthermore, Tellis (1997, cited in Al-Tamini, 2009) remarked that 'the need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity and reliability of the process.'

Participants

In this research study, 130 undergraduate engineering students participated. 43 undergraduates were third year students of Department of Electrical Engineering out of which 02 were girls, who are currently learning subject of Technical Writing & Presentation Skills, 40 were second year students of Department of Petroleum & Natural Gas Engineering and have Technical Writing subject in current semester whereas remaining 47 students were first year engineering undergraduates Department of Electrical Engineering having subject of Functional English in their curriculum.

Data Analysis and Results

130 students were given questionnaire comprised of 28 questions total in number (see appendix). Out of those 08 questions lie in the category of 'instrumental motivation', 08 questions were of 'integrative motivation' whereas rest of the questions were based on 'personal motivation'. Those items were:

Items based on students Instrumental Motivation

1. I learn English because it facilitates to get job in the multinational companies
2. I learn English because it helps me to get high grades/ marks
3. I learn English because it is helpful in the academic life to understand text books
4. I learn English to get prestigious job like CSS(Central Superior Services) in Pakistan
5. I learn English to get better understanding of Science and Technology
6. I learn English because it helps to attain higher education (National/International) level.
7. I learn English because I need to use it on my overseas trip/visit
8. I learn English because it is part of syllabus.

Items based on students Integrative Motivation

1. I learn English because it helps me to communicate with the foreigners
2. I learn English to know western culture and English speaking people
3. I learn English because my teachers and parents force me to do so
4. I learn English because my classmates believe that learning English make us proficient in study
5. I learn English because it will raise my status in society
6. I learn English because it helps me to understand English music, movies
7. I learn English because it helps me to make new friends from different cultural background
8. I learn English because that it is an international language

Items based on students Personal Motivation

1. I learn English for personal grooming
2. I learn English because of literary taste
3. I learn English because I like to know many languages
4. I learn English because I like English language
5. Learning English language makes me feel competent
6. Learning English will increase my status among my friends
7. I experience proud while speaking in English language
8. I learn English because I experience enjoyment while learning it.

Questionnaire Results

130 students were given a questionnaire regarding the “Reasons of Learning English” to identify their level of motivation. The questionnaire showed the following results:-

Reasons of learning English	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Applicable	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It facilitates to get job in the multinational companies	61	55	12	02	03
For personal grooming	43	49	27	09	05
Because it facilitates in the academic life to understand text books	55	59	15	01	03
To get high grades/marks	32	52	30	13	06
Learning English helps me to get prestigious job like CSS (Central Superior Services) in Pakistan	81	33	14	04	01
To communicate with the foreigners	52	55	12	02	05
Because I like to know western culture and English speaking people	15	43	43	23	09
For a literary taste	15	53	42	18	05
I learn English because my teachers and parents force me to do so	14	15	31	40	33

Because I like to know many languages	25	48	36	17	07
I learn English because my classmates believe that learning English makes us proficient in study	22	65	24	15	07
To get better understanding of Science and Technology	42	66	15	09	01
Because it will raise my status in society	29	43	25	19	09
It helps to attain higher education (National/International) level	61	58	12	02	00
Because I like English Language	22	51	37	11	10
To understand English music or movies	22	37	32	25	16
It helps me to make new friends from different cultural background	23	45	37	18	09
I learn English because it is an international language	36	68	18	05	02
I experience proud while speaking in English	22	50	31	18	09
I learn English because I experience enjoyment while learning it	20	45	42	17	05
Because it is part of syllabus	30	52	25	15	07
Because English is important to use it on overseas trips/visits	30	58	29	09	03
Learning English language makes me feel competent	44	51	25	05	04
Learning English will raise my status among my friends	12	34	37	30	17

Eight questions of Instrumental motivation were asked from 130 students. 33.26% answered ‘Strongly Agree’, 41.05% ‘Agree’, 14.9% ‘Neutral’, 7.11% ‘Disagree’, and 3.65% remarked ‘Strongly Disagree’. Above mentioned ratio is shown in the following figure:-

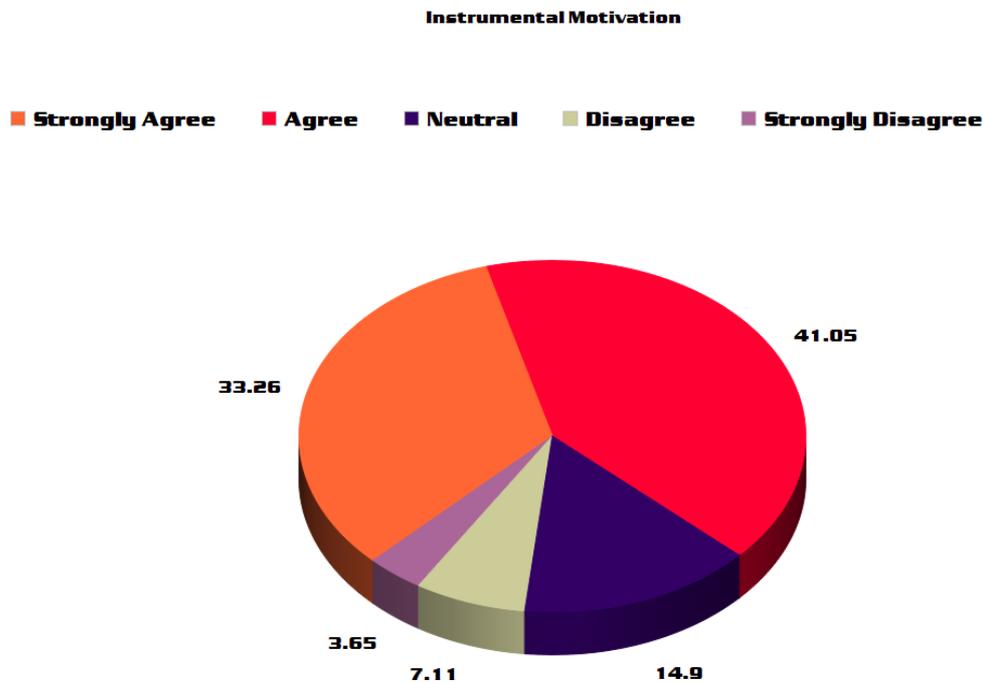


Figure 1.1: Student responses regarding Instrumental Motivation

Besides ‘instrumental motivation’, eight questions were also included of Integrative motivation. 23.04% answered ‘Strongly Agree’, 40% ‘Agree’, 21.08% ‘Neutral’, 10% ‘Disagree’, and 5% ‘Strongly Disagree’. Above mentioned ratio is shown in the following figure:

INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION

■ STRONGLY AGREE
 ■ AGREE
 ■ NEUTRAL
 ■ DISAGREE
 ■ STRONGLY DISAGREE

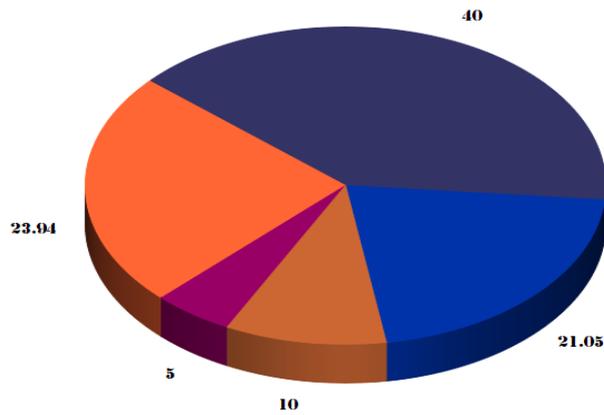


Figure 1.2: Student responses regarding Integrative Motivation

There were also eight questions of Personal motivation. 21.03% answered ‘Strongly Agree’, 34.13% ‘Agree’, 22.11% ‘Neutral’, 14.61% ‘Disagree’, and 8.07% ‘ Strongly Disagree’. Above mentioned ratio is shown in the following figure:

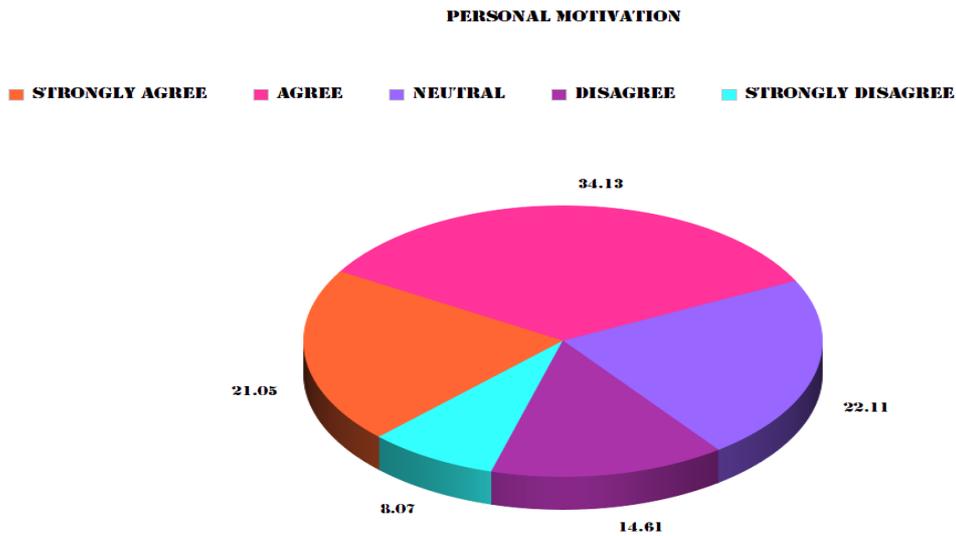


Figure 1.3: Student responses regarding Personal Motivation

Conclusion

The major aim of this study was to examine the level of motivation towards learning English among undergraduate students of engineering at Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Campus Khairpur Mirs'. It was also the aim to investigate what are the main reasons which are most popular among engineering undergraduates.

Findings of the study show that the English language learners at undergraduate level at a technical university in Pakistan learn English language mostly to get a prestigious job, to get a prestigious position in society. Their learning of the English language will facilitate them to learn and understand textbooks in higher education more rapidly and easily. It will help them to get high marks/grades in examinations and to get better understanding of science and technology. It increases student's self esteem and makes them feel proud and important. It makes them feel competent and at the end it will enhance the overall status of the learners.

It can be concluded from the above findings that technical student's motivation for learning English language is mainly 'instrumental' as well as 'integrative motivation' on the second number and hence proves and supports the earlier studies conducted on these lines.

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