

Investigating UTHM Undergraduates' Motivational Level in Learning English as a Second Language

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the paper is to investigate the UTHM undergraduates' motivational level in learning English as a second language. Data were collected from the respondents using questionnaire, involving 136 respondents. A modified motivational survey of 28 items adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used. The results indicated that undergraduates' motivational level are high ($M=6.33$, $SD=0.84$, $M=6.06$, $SD=0.87$). The findings of the present study might be useful to lecturers and teachers in helping them to plan the instructional approach in enhancing students' motivation to learn English.

Keywords:

Integrative motivation, Instrumental motivation, AMTB

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1. Introduction

Motivation is one of the significant variables to be measured in the process of language learning [7]. Motivation is important in second language acquisition as it is a key factor in achieving and completing any activity [6]. In helping students to have the strength in a particular language, it is essential to know their motivation as the teachers would be able to prepare suitable activity or approach in class. English has been exposed to the child at a very early age. The process of learning English continues at primary and secondary schools and they receive a formal English education for approximately eleven years. Therefore, English is considered as a second language in Malaysia.

1.1 Background

Universiti Tun Hussein Onn is one of the public universities in Malaysia. It is located at Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor. There are eight faculties with approximately 16000 students enroll for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Four English courses are taught and students need to pass Malaysian University English Test (MUET) with band 3 before they graduate. Unfortunately, the number of students who are unable to achieve band 3 is increasing year by year. A lots of effort has

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been done in helping the weak students such as having writing clinic and preparatory MUET classes by the Centre for Language Studies. Even though much efforts has been done, their results are still unsatisfactory. There are many undesirable behaviour which demonstrate that they are lack of motivation to learn English and score well in their MUET.

It is essential to know the students' motivation to learn English. The measurements of their motivation is useful in getting better understanding of their motivation, thus will help the university works towards the enhancement of language learning achievement.

1.2 Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to determine students' motivation in learning English as a second language.

1.3 Research questions

What is the students' integrative motivation towards learning English?

What is the students' instrumental motivation towards learning English?

2. Literature Review

Students learn a language for several purposes such as to get better career promotion, and this is known as for instrumental reason [2,5]. Another reason, which is integrative reason, is students learn a language as they would like to establish relationships with the people who are using the language [10]. These two major motivation orientations for language learning were developed by Gardner and Lambert [3], where integrative motivation is well-known with positive attitudes towards the target language group while instrumental orientation is directing to the functional reasons for learning a language.

Many studies were conducted to examine students' motivation in learning a language. Wimolmas [12] found that students from Thammasat University are slightly more "instrumentally" in learning English. However, Siriluck Wechsumangkalo and Sirithip Prasertanadecho [11] revealed that there is no different in instrumental motivation between high proficiency and low proficiency level of students in learning English. In a local context, Nidana Yahya [8] exposed that students of Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor are integratively motivated in learning this second language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 136 undergraduate students, selected randomly from all faculties in the university.

3.2 Research Instrument

This study employed a seven point Likert Scale which was adapted from Gardner's Attitude / Motivation Test Battery (AMI), ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree [4]. There are two parts of this survey; demographic information and items on attitudes towards learning English, integrative and instrumental motivation.

3.3 Data collection

The questionnaires were prepared using Google form and the researchers distributed to the students using WhatsApp platform.

3.4 Data analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS version 23. Some of the items need to be recoded and the students' demographic information were calculated and presented in percentage. The integrative and instrumental motivation items were calculated and categorized into three categories; high, moderate, and low. The range of categories was based on *(the highest – the lowest)/3*.

4. Results and Discussions

In reporting the findings, the researchers divided the questionnaire answers into two parts: 1(demographic information of the respondents and 2) motivation of the respondents.

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. As shown in the table, female respondents were found dominant the study with 90 respondents (66.2%). Most of the respondents are Malay with 73.5% while Chinese, other races and Indian are 16.9%, 8.1% and 1.5% respectively.

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Respondents (n = 136)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	46	33.8
Female	90	66.2
Race		
Malay	100	73.5
Chinese	23	16.9
Indian	2	1.5
Others	11	8.1

4.2 Motivation

This section explains the details of the findings on motivation. Table 2 displays the integrative motivation of the students. There are four questions measuring the integrative motivation of the students.

Table 2
 Integrative motivation according to categories (n=136)

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
low	3	2.2	2.2
moderate	19	14.0	16.2
high	114	83.8	100.0
Total	136	100.0	

The table above explains that majority of the students are highly motivated with 114 respondents (83.8%), followed by moderate (14%) and remaining 3 respondents are having low motivation. The next table is showing the respondents' instrumental motivation.

Table 3
 Instrumental motivation according to categories (n=136)

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
low	8	5.9	5.9
moderate	39	28.7	35.4
high	89	65.4	100.0
Total	136	100.0	

Table 3 displays the instrumental motivation of the respondents. The respondents remained high motivated for the instrumental motivation with 65.4%. However, the number of respondents who are having moderate and low instrumental motivation is higher than the integrative motivation with 35.4%. The final table is a comparison table on integrative and instrumental motivation of the respondents.

Table 4
 Comparison between Integrative and Instrumentation Motivation (n=136)

Motivation	Mean	Std. Deviation
integrative	6.3327	.83669
instrumentation	6.0588	.87201

Table 4 presents the comparison between integrative and instrumentation motivation. Findings show that the integrative motivation is higher than the instrumentation motivation, where $M=6.33$, $SD=0.84$, $M=6.06$, $SD=0.87$. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the respondents of this study are having high motivation for both types in learning English as a second language.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, this study revealed that the students are having high motivation in learning English as a second language. Therefore, the research questions of this study are answered. Results also revealed that the students are having higher integrative motivation as compared to instrumental motivation. Findings of this study is consistent with the study carried out by Nidana Yahya [8], Obeidat [9], and Ahmed [1]. However, it is contradict with studies by Wimolmas [12], Adila [1], and Wong [13], where they found students are having higher instrumental than integrative motivation. It is essential to know the students' motivation as it can bring benefits to their learning-language proficiency and effectiveness. This study provides useful data for UTHM to improve the language courses offered by the university.

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