Reasons behind English Language Learner Motivation at the University of Sindh: Intrinsic or Extrinsic motivation

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Abstract

This paper discusses the reasons behind L2 motivation of the students of International Relations and Physics departments at the University of Sindh. The methodology used for this study is Mixed-method; using both questionnaires and interviews to complement each other. The research focuses intrinsic and extrinsic dichotomy of motivation (discussed in literature review section). The research proves the choice of this dichotomy useful. It is found that the learners in the target situation are more extrinsically motivated. The paper considers the effectiveness of each of these motivations- intrinsic and extrinsic in L2 learning. It also argues on the efficiency and use of each of the mentioned orientations of motivation in the target situation. The study recommends further research on motivational issues in the target situation.

1. Introduction

'Motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue facing teachers today' (Scheidecker and Freeman, 1999:116). One thing that remains there in past, in present and in future is the importance of motivation in the practice of education and the need of more and more research in the same (Maehr and Meyer, 1997; Mari et al. 2011; Pathan et al., 2010; Shahriar, 2011; Shahriar et al., 2011; Rind, 2015; Rind, 2016; Rind and Kadiwal, 2016).

This research paper is a part of a research project conducted at the Departments of International Relations and Physics at the University of Sindh. The project aimed at finding out the reasons behind learning English in the target situation and whether the learners of English language in Pakistan experience motivational change and if so, why? It also aimed to find out the differences in the motivational change between the students of Physics (Natural Science Faculty) and International Relations (Social Science), if any. This paper is one of the series of papers published to discuss the findings of the project (see Shahriar, 2014; Shahriar, Mari and Umrani, 2015; Shahriar et al., 2015).

This research paper aims at discussing the following research questions.

- Why do the students learn English language at the departments of IR and Physics at the University of Sindh?

  a. What are their intrinsic motivations?
  b. What are their extrinsic motivations?
  c. How effective is each type of motivation in the process of language learning?
  d. Which of the two types of motivation is more active in learners in the target situation?

This paper is divided into six sections, including the review of literature, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Dörnyei (2001a) considers motivation to be an abstract, hypothetical concept used to explain the reason or motive behind human thought and behaviour. Again, Dörnyei and Clément (2001) call human motivation, a complex phenomenon, involving diverse individual and situational sources. They acknowledge the role of the social and academic environment in addition to that of past experiences in developing motivation.

Other major research contributions in the field of motivation, besides those of Dörnyei, are from Gardner and his Canadian associates. They agree with Dörnyei on the importance of the concepts of choice, persistence and effort in relation to motivation research. Gardner (1985:10) defines second/foreign language learning motivation as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". Tremblay and Gardner (1995) note that this definition mentions three components: (a) effort taken to learn, (b) a desire to learn, and (c) satisfaction achieved in learning which are assessed with Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn the Language, and Attitudes toward Learning the Language scales of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985). Gardner (1985) and Tremblay and Gardner (1995) propose that all three components are interdependent and that they are major components of motivation.

Language learners are motivated by different factors related to their respective individual nature and their domestic, academic and social environment. Various factors affect motivation at the same time, resulting in different reasons the same learner can have at one time for learning a second/foreign language. Therefore, the reasons behind learner motivation can also be understood from various different aspects; and the factors affecting motivation can be characterised in a variety of different ways. Dörnyei (2000) compares motivation with a net and observes that various shapes can result from lifting up the net through holding various different knots at different times (by different scholars), so the issue is to decide which knots should be held to make the most sensible shape i.e. which factors should be given the key role.

Integrative and Instrumental are the two commonly known divisions of language learning motivation. During the late 1950s and early 1960s Gardner and his colleagues mentioned that integrative and instrumental motivations are two main reasons behind second language learning. Later on, Cook (1996) also noted that language learning is comparatively difficult for learners without either of these two orientations. However, by the end of the last century researchers (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993; Ushioda, 1996) agreed to some extent that integrative and instrumental is a static division of motivation (agrees Bradford, 2007).

There has also been research in other motivational orientations, besides integrative and instrumental (Noels, 2001; Graham, 1985; Dörnyei, 1990; Moise, Clément and Noels, 1990; Crookes and Schimdt, 1991; Kraemer, 1993; Clément et al., 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994). Therefore, the other dimension to the motivation construct is that of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These two present the internal and external pressures, both positive and negative, faced by a learner for learning a second/foreign language as any learner, in general, faces for the performance of any activity. The integrative/instrumental division overlaps the intrinsic/extrinsic division. Both the types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, comprise integrative and instrumental motivation each. The two in combination cover almost all of the reasons for learning

a second/foreign language, as Ehrman et al., (2003) write that the total learner motivation is mostly a combination of the learner's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The most important work in the field of intrinsic-extrinsic motivation is the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (2000; see also, Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Intrinsic motivation results from a personal desire and a willingness to achieve a certain goal—something that the individual is ready to take effort for. Extrinsic Motivation, on the other hand, refers to learning for external gain (see Shahriar, 2014, for a detailed discussion on Intrinsic Extrinsic Dichotomy and an argument on how integrative and instrumental motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic).

3. Methodology

The last section discussed the relevant theoretical issues, and this section will be discussing the research methodology including the general research perspective, ethical issues, instrumentation, sample, data procedure, etc.

Especial care is taken through the research process on the following four issues mentioned by Dörnyei (2001b) as of particular significance to L2 motivation research:

1. Self-selection of participants.
2. Instructions on the questionnaire.
3. Generating positive attitude towards questionnaires
4. Confidentiality

The administrative, availability, willingness issues related to the sample, the explanation of the instructions to the participants (as Dörnyei mentions that most pupils do not read the instructions so they should be read to them) and the matters related to the consent of the participants and the verification of the data were given due consideration during the processes of data collection and analysis.

The research is based on the need to understand the relationship between motivation and the language learner from within; therefore *interpretivist approach* is adopted (Cohen et al., 2007) along with an insider's perspective. The rationale for using this paradigm is that this research aims at understanding and interpreting the problems considering the participants' frame of reference; it aims at understanding the phenomenon going on in the world inside the participants in relation to the world outside. The study starts with the individuals and is set out to explain a particular situation they are confronted with.

Following the nature of the research problem here, 'Mixed methodology' is chosen for the purpose of this research (Dörnyei, 2007). The data was collected through two different instruments (questionnaires and internet-based interviews). I preferred questionnaires because, as Dörnyei (2003) notices, they are time, effort and resources efficient when compared to other instruments of research. Thus, they are *cost effective*. In addition, they "enable the researcher to collect the data in field settings, the data themselves are more amendable to quantification than discursive data such as free form field notes, participant observer's journals, the transcripts of oral language" (Nunan 1992:143). They are the common source of collecting quantitative data, which, according to

Ushioda (2001), is the dominant paradigm in SLA research especially in motivation. The questionnaires collected quantitative data through *Likert scale*.

Due to the realisation of the shortcomings of the questionnaire data, I used another source of data as well (interviews). And Dörnyei (2003c) quotes Brown et al. (2001), Creswell (1994) and Gillham (2000) on favouring a *two-phase design* consisting separate quantitative and qualitative phases of data. He also mentions that these researchers support the interview data as complementary to the questionnaire data.

4. Findings

In the University of Sindh, the students securing highest percentages in their matriculation, intermediate and the university pre-entry tests prefer to get admissions following their choices, yet hardly any would opt for the Faculty of Social Science due to its less demand in the job market. That is why students with the lowest accumulative scores are given admission in this faculty by the university.

The **motivation** towards learning, in general and English language learning in particular, vary from faculty to faculty. Also, it seems to be changing during the two years of their study of the language.

a.   Reasons behind learner motivation

Statements from 1 to 10 in the questionnaire dealt with the issue of reasons behind learner motivation. These, along with the responses in the interviews to interview question 1, provided evidences for the first research question, "Why do students learn English language?"

It is found that students did not have very different reasons for learning English. An interviewee notes, "If you are interested in something then only you can achieve that", he was surely talking about the significance of intrinsic motivation, be it integrative or instrumental. When analysed, the questionnaire responses showed that students had very strong reasons for learning English. They agreed to all ten statements asking about the reasons behind learning English in a great majority. The most important reason for them for learning English was 'to become more educated', followed by 'getting a good job'. An interviewee reported that all the knowledge in the present day world can be accessed only if one has a command over English language. Most of the interviewees mentioned the importance of English in the job market. One interviewee said, 'People in Pakistan are worried about getting good jobs, they do not get good jobs because they do not have good English'.

The most uncommon choice for the respondents to the questionnaires was statement 9 (I want to learn English because I want to go abroad); the maximum range of neutral remarks for any statement among those under consideration is 55, chosen in case of statement 9. Only 42% (88 out of 205) respondents agreed to this statement. An interviewee remarked that going abroad is day dreaming which 'the troubled nation' has already come out of.

4.1 Reasons behind Learner Motivation
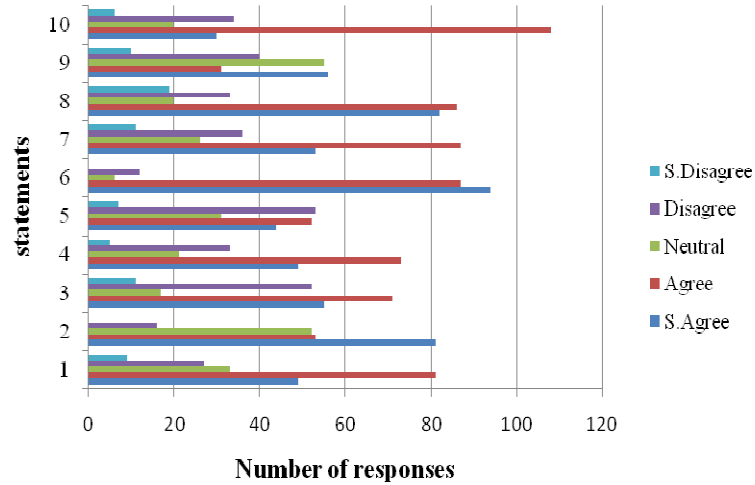
Strong disagreements are very rare in case of all these questions. It seems as if, except with statement 3 (I want to learn English to read novels, watch movies etc) and statement 5 (I cannot expect to succeed in life without learning English), the student did not have many options to disagree with. The frequency of disagreement with these two questions is 63 and 60 respectively. For a more detailed analysis of the responses, see chart 4.1 above.

The calculations widely vary in case of Part-I and Part-II students when considering the statement related to passing English exam (statement 10). Part-I students of both IR (91%) and Physics (100%) agreed to statement 10 whereas Part-II students, of especially IR (20%), also Physics (69%), show much interest towards the issue of exams attached to the learning of English. Statement 10 makes exams as point of variation among the Part-I and II students.

Only 16 from IR Part-I students disagreed with statement 2 (I want to learn English to be like British/Americans). None of the students in the other three classes chose 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

The ratio of strong disagreements is generally very low in all the ten questions when compared to the rest of the variables; yet nobody strongly disagrees to statement 2 (I want to learn English to be like British/Americans) and statement 6 (I am learning English to become more educated).

The findings on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation separately are presented in the following subsections.

i.   Intrinsic motivation

The questionnaire data (see table 4.2 for details) reflects significant intrinsic motivation among students of both the departments to learn the language. The responses to both the statements related to integrative intrinsic motivation (statements 1, 2) are highly tilted towards the side of

agreement (i.e. sum of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' from the responses). One of the interviewees very fondly mentions that English should be learnt for its own sake, not for any external rewards and another acknowledges the importance of personal interest in any learning, which is true for language learning as well. In case of instrumental intrinsic motivation (statements 3, 4, 5) also the frequencies and percentages of 'agree' are higher than 'disagree.'

More than 50% students of each of the four classes agreed to statement 1 (I want to learn English to be like English speaking Pakistanis). The maximum range of agreement is 35 out of 48 by Physics Part-II, and the minimum range of agreement is 28 out of 54 by Physics Part-I. The maximum range of disagreement is 16 by IR Part-I and the minimum range of disagreement is 00 by Physics Part-I. The calculations on the range of agreement and disagreement of Physics Part I on this statement show that 48% of its students chose 'neutral' option.

4.2: Frequencies and Percentages of Agreement and Disagreement for Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation	Integrative				Instrumental					
Statement	01		02		03		04		05	
Valid	gree	isagree	gree	isagree	gree	isagree	gree	isagree	gree	isagree
Count										
IR-I	2 0	6 0	6 9	6 0	5 6	6 0	5 7	5 8	6 0	6 9
IR-II	5 0	0 0	1 2	0 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	1 2	1 2	6 2
Physics-I	8 2	0 0	2 8	0 0	1 7	7 1	2 9	7 3	4 4	8 5
Physics-II	5 3	0 1	5 3	0 0	4 1	5 0	1 4	5 1	5 2	0 2

In case of the second statement on integrative intrinsic motivation (I want to learn English to be like British/Americans), none of the classes except IR Part-I show disagreement. The range of agreement of IR Part-I is also low when compared to other classes. This seems to be an idiosyncrasy. Overall, more than 25% students chose 'neutral'. One interviewee states that Americans or British speak English as their language, as we speak Sindhi, that is why there is nothing about 'being like' them.

Statement 3 (I want to learn English to read novels, watch movies etc.) has quite higher ranges of agreements than disagreements, except in case of IR Part-II where an equal number of students agree and disagree. An interviewee's remark needs to be especially quoted here, as it has the significance of cultural variation between the target language (English) and the target culture (Eastern Muslim culture in Pakistan). The response is, "Watching English movies is not good because they promote wrong thinking". When asked to explain, the interviewee clarifies that English movies are unethical.

The responses to statement 4 (I want to learn English for getting better status) show comparatively greater agreements. Some of the interviewees, also, mentioned that English has become a status symbol. An interviewee remarked that learning English is essential for raising ones standard; whereas another calls it social deterioration and maintains that English should not be considered as the standard of greatness in the society.

It is very strange in case of statement 5 (I cannot expect to succeed in life without learning English) that, 49% students of IR Part-I disagreed to the statement and 30% agreed. The rate is also noteworthy in case of Physics Part-II. A respondent mentioned this statement to be among few negative statements in the questionnaire and recommended to avoid them in future. Another interviewee brought my attention to the negative connotation of this statement and suggested that similar view can be looked for through a different statement without any negative connotation. It can, thus, be assumed that many respondents disagreed with it because of the communication problem with the statement.

ii.　Extrinsic motivation
The role of extrinsic motivation seems greater than that of intrinsic motivation in the learning of English in the target situation, especially when the findings of statements 6 to 8 are considered (see table 4.3 for calculations).

The most common reason behind learning English is 'to become more educated' as asked through statement 6. 181 students agreed to it with a maximum range of 54 in case of Physics Part-I (Strongly Agree: 21; Agree: 33). Responding to the first interview question, a respondent expressed the wish to develop a personality like her English teacher so that she could move respectfully in the society and be considered among the educated class.

Statement 7 receives similar positive response as statement 6. Most interviewee's remark on the social significance and approval the language receives.

The data shows that in the target situation instrumental extrinsic motivation is not the only motivation for learners for learning English, as it is otherwise believed. But the significance of English in the job market is undeniably accepted by a vast majority, including the interviewees. Besides, the exams of English are a reality that the students of English language have to face before everything else and they are not unaware of that. Overall, 168 students agreed to statement 8 and 143 agreed to statement 10 (out of 205).

4.3: Frequencies and Percentages of Agreement and Disagreement for Extrinsic Motivation

	Extrinsic Motivation																			
Motivation statement	**Integrative**								**Instrumental**											
	06				**07**				**08**				**09**				**10**			
Valid count	Agree		isagree		ree	Ag	isagree		gree		isagree		gree		isagree		gree		isagree	
R-I	2	0	5		1	8	6	0	8	1	0	0	7	1	2	3	6	7	7	3
R-II	1	2	7	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
hysics -I	4	00	0	0	7	0	7	1	0	4	2	2	7	1	1	0	4	00	0	0
hysics -II	4	2	0	0	3	9	5	1	5	4	3		9	0	9	0	3	9	8	7

The number of students agreeing to statement 9 is smaller than any of the others among the reasons though, yet few of the interviewees showed strong desire to go abroad to study.

5. Reasons behind learner motivation

Having discussed the research problem and reviewing existing literature around it, we presented our findings in the last section, and are going to discuss them in this. The findings show that English is generally accepted as a sign of an educated person. Although one of the interviewees mentions that English should not be considered as a symbol of prestige yet the questionnaire responses to statement 6 and the interview question give a clear indication that English has become a symbol of literacy and prestige in the target community. By giving supreme importance to this, the respondents show **the significance of social approvals in Pakistani society**. Statement 4 also shows similar reasons and that is why it is the most commonly chosen among the intrinsic instrumental motivation.

The other most common reason for learning English is its importance in the job market in the local community. **Finding a good job is a reality that a common Pakistani has to face** for his survival and that is why, he is ready to do as much as he can during the days of student life to get a job later to cope with the common problems of inflation and rise in the cost of living, in a country where there is dearth of suitable jobs for everyone.

Findings show that the learners, like Chambers (1999) respondents, are not really willing to go to the countries where the target language is the first language. But the reason with Chambers' respondents is different from those in the present study. His respondents plan to go to more developed countries than Germany but the respondents under this research are students of a public university with a majority from rural background, and they, therefore, do not expect to go abroad, rather, they work and aspire to gain accepted standards of living in their own country. **Going abroad is only a dream which has no real value in the everyday life of the ordinary folk** in the country. People here seem to try to make both ends meet through all possible means and they are

looking at English from this perspective as well. The number of neutral remarks on this statement shows that the respondents do not find it worth answering even. And the interview remark about calling it day dreaming which the troubled nation has already come out of, lays the last brick to the argument.

The reasons are discussed in this section under two headings, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, each of which discusses the integrative and instrumental motivation.

Intrinsic motivation
The responses show that getting integrated into the target community is an important goal to be achieved and the target community is either English speaking Pakistanis or the British/Americans themselves. Students equally wish to be like English speaking Pakistanis, or British/Americans. Stronger agreements in case of statement 2 indicate that **the majority aspire to gain native-like**

Proficiency level.
The strong disagreements to the idea of reading English novels or watching English movies have to do with the issue of ideological difference in the two communities. The **socio-cultural variation between the two communities** can be easily determined through the interview responses. On the other hand, the strong disagreements to statement 5 are also visible, but the cause is misunderstanding of the statement as the interviewees mentioned since it does not seem to be worded in the best possible way.

Opting for the 'neutral' choice has made data interpretation difficult by the students of Physics-I in case of statement 1 and IR-II in case of statement 2. The one-to-one ratio of agree to disagree in case of the statement 3 by IR-II is also troublesome when explaining the findings. The comparison between the percentages of 'agree' to 'disagree' of IR-I for statements 2 and 5 are also indecisive.

Extrinsic motivation
The findings show that the learners, in target situation, are **more extrinsically than intrinsically motivated.** This conclusion is made possible through the choice of intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy for this study. As I mentioned in the literature review that most of the learning that an individual undergoes is not due to his personal interests or intrinsic motivations but due to the demands as an individual in his domestic, academic and social roles. One of the interviewees also mentions that he/she has to learn English despite unwillingness due to its demand. Therefore, parents, teachers and the society in general play their role in motivating learners in a third world country like Pakistan, where learning a second/foreign language is not a hobby or an entertainment but **the need of the time**, where people do not have time for leisure and entertainment.

Pakistani students, in a public university, where they are unable to pay for its fees and living expenses, do not commonly look forward to going abroad and therefore, no learning English for that reason; rather they aspire to get good job through learning English, as explained in an earlier section of the present chapter. The data evaluation, in this case, becomes unmanageable because more than one fourth respondents to the questionnaires chose the option 'neutral' on the issue of going abroad.

The frequencies and percentages of IR Part-II show strange peculiarities in case of the statements 9 and 10. In both cases the number of students agreeing with the statements is lower than that of

disagreeing, which is unlike the other responses to the two statements. The reason is unclear and needs deeper probing into the issue through further research.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this small scale research was to explore various reasons behind learner motivation in the learning of English at the University of Sindh, Pakistan. Learner Motivation is a vast field of interest in present day research. The scholars commonly believe that motivation is one the two most important factors for the success of a learner, along with aptitude. Certain studies prove that regardless of aptitude, learners can succeed on the basis of their strong motivation. Motivation research has observed the process from various different perspectives. Yet the one adopted for this study is the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, each of these is further sub-divided into integrative and instrumental. The literature review provides the reasons behind choosing this dichotomy and the discussion chapter mentions its usefulness in the target context.

The research findings show strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation prevailing among the students of the target situation for both integrative and instrumental reasons, with a few exceptions. The importance that English language is enjoying in the modern world is undeniably accepted by the majority. Learning English language is considered as a symbol of being educated in the target situation. It is considered essential due to its significance in the job market.

Although, the results are encouraging and provide initial information on English language learners' motivation, there is a need for more research in the target situation on various motivational orientation, using different methodologies.

This research is conducted in the context of a public-sector university in Pakistan, and the findings can be applicable to other public-sector universities in Pakistan and other similar contexts throughout the world.

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