

# The Status of Motivation in Learning English at the Undergraduate Level

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**Abstract:** *The demand of English as a language of communication in today's world is on the ever - increasing rise across the globe. The same scenario is evident in India for learning English as a second language. Several factors are responsible for choosing English Major at the undergraduate level. Language learning motivation as a psychological variable is one of them. For this reason, this study attempts to know whether language learning motivation among the learners of English Major program is affected by gender in West Bengal. This study focuses on which type of motivation is preferred most by the students of English Major undergraduates. The results show that the learners of English Major are both instrumentally and integratively motivated to choose English Major. It is also found that gender remains statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) in relation to language learning motivation.*

**Keywords:** Language Learning Motivation, English Major, Second Language, Gender

## 1. Introduction

To learn a second language or several languages apart from one's own mother tongue has been in the limelight for many global issues. Since the rapid development in the unprecedented technological advancements and commercial transactions has been on the roll in the twenty first century, communication, courteous demeanor, etiquettes have become important for all global citizens. Therefore, learning a second language is no longer an option but a mandate specially for the third world countries to communicate with the first world countries to embrace the beneficial changes from the field of academics, commerce, medical science to research and development projects. Here lies the significance of learning English as a second or a foreign language. But learning it from the scratch is not as easy as always portrayed. Many psychological variables create their influences on a learner and one such variable is undoubtedly motivation. In the parlance of psychology, motivation is described as a process which stimulates one's actions to fulfill a goal. Similarly, motivation also stimulates learners to learn a second or a foreign language. In the context of second language learning (SLL), the construct motivation is comprised of instrumental orientation, integrative orientation, learning anxiety, parental encouragement, teacher evaluation etc. (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Gardner and Lambert in 1972 developed an instrument called Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to measure Canadian nationals' motivation to learn French as a second language, since French is the official language of Canada. Later, they made their theories on motivation in the field of L2 and second language acquisition (SLA). In this paper, an attempt has been made to take two important scales - instrumental orientation, integrative orientation out of the AMTB developed by Gardner and Lambert. In the context of L2, instrumental orientation means using the target language for professional benefits like increase in salary and higher job roles, whereas integrative orientation means learning the target language in order to communicate with the target community and know their culture and thus feel integrated with them (Dornyei, 1990). Therefore, this paper tries to

uphold the role of motivation in the context of L2 in terms with instrumental and integrative orientations. This study attempts to know the following objectives -

- 1) To find out the most preferred type of motivation.
- 2) To compare language learning motivation under the categorical variable gender.

Therefore, the following research question and hypothesis have been formulated in line with the above stated objectives.

**Research Question:** Which is the most preferred type of motivation that propels a learner to enroll on English Major Program?

### Hypothesis:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There exists no statistically significant difference in between male and female English Major under - graduates with respect to their language learning motivation.

Hence, the significance of this study lies in detecting the status of motivation in learning English major at the undergraduate level across the categorical variable gender. This study also reports the most preferred type of motivation among the students. For this reason, this study will be helpful for the English teachers who teach students in India in the context of ESL. The target teachers will also be able to apprise themselves of how motivation works in pursuing English Major program at the undergraduate level. This study is delimited to the undergraduate English Major students of Birbhum, Hooghly, Kolkata, East Burdwan, West Burdwan, South 24 Pargana districts in the state of West Bengal only.

## 2. Literature Review

- 1) Oxford and Shearin (1994) found motivation an important variable in the realm of learning English as a second language. They administered an essay writing test to 218 American high school students to know the reason for learning Japanese. The finding showed that

most of them were driven by instrumental and integrative orientations.

- 2) Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) found that categorical variables like gender and levels of study held an impact on students' motivation to learn English as a second language. The AMTB was administered to 180 Arabic students. Even the instrumental and integrative orientations were significantly positively correlated but with low magnitude.
- 3) Ushida (2005) investigated students' attitude and motivation within a socio - educational framework. The researcher took a total of 30 subjects from Elementary French, Elementary Spanish, and Intermediate Spanish Online course. The data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The research reported students' motivation and attitude towards French and Spanish learning with statistically significant differences using ANOVA. Here the patterns of motivation and attitude differed across the three courses.
- 4) Zanghar (2012) found in his study that the Libyan students were more integratively motivated than instrumentally. The research also reported that there was no relationship between the student's motivation and their achievement in English as a foreign language.
- 5) Gholami et al. (2012) found that the dominant type of motivation among the high school students was instrumental motivation. But the higher achievers were integratively motivated.
- 6) Hong & Ganapathy (2017) in their case study reported that Malaysian students were more instrumentally motivated than integratively in the context of ESL. They also found that instrumental motivation had a great impact on students' learning English.
- 7) Daniel et al. (2018) found that motivation had an impact on learning English as a second language. They administered the inventory to 233 undergraduate students. Motivational Intensity, the desire to learn English, attitude towards learning English, student's perceived parental encouragement towards learning English were reported statistically significant across the course, program, and the year of university. They were also significantly positively correlated with each other with low but marked magnitude.
- 8) Marosan and Markovic (2019) reported that the first - year medical students were instrumentally motivated. Besides, they also had preference for integrative motivation which is slightly lower than the instrumental motivation in the context of ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

### 3. Problem Definition

Motivation as a psychological variable suggests an impetus to pursue one's desired goals. English as a second language or as a course at the undergraduate level has achieved its eminence due to several factors. Here motivation, being one of them, drives learners to study English for achieving career related benefits, achievement in society, communicating with the speakers of English, achievement in higher education etc. Therefore, motivation plays an important role among the learners of English to choose English for shaping up their bright future. In other words, language learning

motivation is linked with success in achieving learners' desired goals through choosing English Major program in this context.

### 4. Methodology

The Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner and Lambert was used to collect data from the undergraduate English Major students. A total number of eight statements were taken from the AMTB, English Version. Four statements from instrumental motivation and another four from integrative motivation were taken to prepare the mini version of AMTB. Each statement was measured with a five - point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All the statements were positively worded. In addition, the score of the scale ranged from 40 (highest) to 8 (lowest). All the statements were kept verbatim from the original AMTB and not a single item was reworded. The reliability of the scale was found .717 using Cronbach Alpha. A total number of 177 undergraduate English Major students was the participants of this study. The present study involves the paradigm of descriptive survey research. The participants of this study were randomly selected from colleges in different districts of West Bengal. Hence, this study involves simple random sampling. While the inventory was administered, the participants were given 15 minutes to give their responses. The scoring of the scale ensues 5 marks for strongly agree, 4 marks for agree, 3 marks for neutral, 2 marks for disagree, and 1 mark for strongly disagree. After checking the visual statistics through histogram, QQ plot, box plot and normality tests, the Shapiro Wilk test shows significant result. It reports that the variable motivation is not normally distributed. Therefore, this study does not meet the assumptions of normal distribution. For this reason, this study employs median statistics and non - parametric test like Mann Whitney U test for checking the impact of gender on language learning motivation. At first, the collected raw data were tabulated on MS - Excel - 2016 and later it was analyzed using IBM SPSS software, Version 26.0.

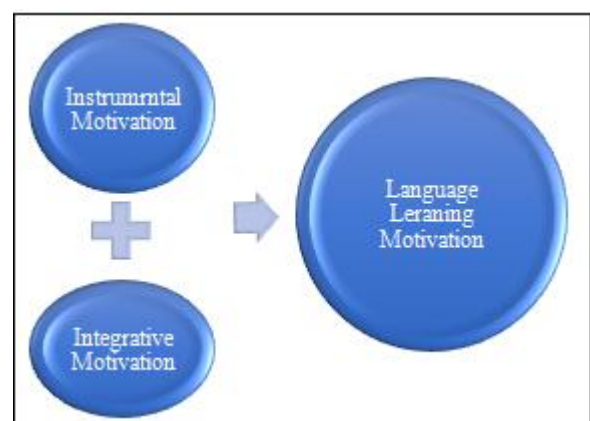


Figure 1: Two types of Motivation

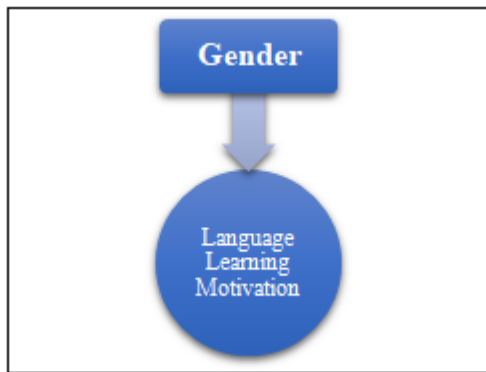


Figure 2: Impact of Gender on Language Learning Motivation

## 5. Results & Discussion

**Research Question:** Which is the most preferred type of motivation that propels a learner to enroll on English Major program?

Table 1: Descriptivist at Instrumental & Integrative

Report		
	Median	N
Instrumental	17.00	177
Integrative	17.00	177

Analysis: The table above shows that the median of both instrumental and integrative motivations is 17, which is same. Therefore, it shows that the learners of English Major program prefer both motivations.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There exists no statistically significant difference in between male and female English Major under - graduates with respect to their language learning motivation.

Table 2: Mann - Whitney U test Motivation Gender

Totmotive	
Mann - Whitney U	2653.500
Wilcoxon W	5354.500
Z	- 3.419
Asymp. Sig. (2 - tailed)	.001

Analysis: To evaluate the comparison between male and female English Major Undergraduates with respect to their language learning motivation, Mann Whitney U test was utilized. The test showed significant result between male (Median=33, N=73) and female (Median=34, N=104) English Major undergraduates with  $U=2653.500$ ,  $Z= - 3.419$ ,  $p=.001$  ( $p<0.05$ ),  $r= - 0.26$ . Hence,  $H_{01}$  was not supported. In other words, there exists a statistically significant difference between male and female English Major undergraduates with respect to their language learning motivation.

Regarding the formulated research question on the preference for types of motivation, the median statistics clearly show that both instrumental and integrative motivations are preferred by the learners of English Major program. Therefore, the learners are equally instrumentally and integratively motivated to pursue English Major program in West Bengal. The finding of the study related to the preference of motivation is consistent with the findings of Oxford and Shearin, 1994 but inconsistent with Zanghar,

2012, Gholami et al., 2012, Hong & Ganapathy, 2017, Marosan and Markovic, 2019. In connection with  $H_{01}$ , the test result shows significant difference between male and female English undergraduates with respect to their language learning motivation. It means that female undergraduates are more motivated than their male counterparts in learning English Major program. The effect size in this case is  $- 0.26$ , which is very low (Cohen, 2013). This finding is supported by Shaaban and Ghaith (2000). Hence, gender creates an impact on language learning motivation according to this study.

## 6. Conclusion

This study focuses on language learning motivation and checks whether it is affected by categorical variable like gender. It also brings to the fore the most preferred type of motivation prevalent among the learners of English Major undergraduate. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to check whether language learning motivation across gender reports any statistically significant difference. Finally, the results report that the English Major undergraduate students are both instrumentally and integratively motivated to enroll themselves on English Major program. Here the implication behind it is that they want to utilize English for their career as well as integrating with the speakers of English. Secondly, female learners' motivation is higher than male learners in pursuing English Major program. This difference has been even statistically significant. The implication regarding this is that female learners prefer English Major program to other undergraduate programs. Here male learners are less motivated to choose English Major program. From this study, professors of English will be able to understand that both instrumental and integrative motivations work within their students behind choosing English Major program. Therefore, they should teach their students both language and literature in equal proportion. At the undergraduate level, emphasis is given too much on literature. In reality, today's job market demands soft skills like operating a computer, good communication skill, official writing etc. All these are fully connected to learning English language. Instrumental motivation is concerned with using English as an instrument of career upliftment. Integrative motivation, on the other hand, deals with getting integrated with the culture of the target community. For this reason, syllabus designers of English Major at the undergraduate level should incorporate papers on improving linguistic skills into the syllabus. It will increase the probability of selection of English Major undergraduates in different job roles like content writing, reporting, teaching, translating, data interpretation etc. Regarding the limitations of this paper, this study has only focused on a few districts of West Bengal and included a few sampled - out colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta and University of Burdwan. Since this study has been done under descriptive survey research, it does not well uphold the power of mixed method research, which corroborates data both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## 7. Future Scope

The future scope of this study on motivation may include various categorical variables like locale, different age

groups, academic achievement for studying their impact upon motivation. Besides, researchers may also check different levels of motivation and whether different levels of motivation create any impact on four linguistic skills, second language learning, academic achievement etc. The nature of relationship between motivation and learning environment, in addition, may be studied in the context of second language learning. Thus, this study may be furthered by the involvement of various psychological variables and their individual as well as combined effect on motivation may be studied.

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