# TYPES OF MOTIVATION OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS STUDENTS OF ESMERALDAS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN 2013

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## **RESUMEN**

En una investigación reciente de Chalak y Kassaian (2010) se estudian las actitudes y la motivación de los estudiantes de universidad para aprender inglés como lengua extranjera. Los resultados del estudio muestran que los alumnos de la carrera de traducción en inglés están intrínseca y extrínsecamente motivados y orientados de manera instrumental e integrativa.

El presente estudio se basa en el que llevaron a cabo Chalak y Kassaian (2010) y tiene como finalidad investigar los tipos de motivación de 45 estudiantes de la carrera de Lingüística aplicada mención enseñanza del inglés de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Esmeraldas (PUCES-E). En el marco de esta investigación, se asume que la conexión entre motivación y aprendizaje de un idioma es un punto de discusión no desarrollado en la enseñanza del inglés en Esmeraldas.

Para el propósito de esta investigación se aplica un cuestionario con ítems relacionado con cinco campos diferentes: 1) Interés en lenguas extranjeras, 2) Intensidad de motivación, 3) Orientación integrativa, 4) Deseo de aprender inglés, 5) Orientación instrumental.

Los resultados muestran que los alumnos de la carrera de Lingüística Aplicada, mención enseñanza del inglés, están altamente motivados, tanto integrativa como instrumentalmente, quieren aprender inglés para lograr un mejor empleo y ser capaces de comunicarse con personas que hablen inglés.

Afirman también estar muy interesados en aprender lenguas extranjeras, en este caso inglés, y les gustaría ser capaces de hablar varios idiomas de forma fluida. Por todo ello se puede decir que están intrínseca y extrínsecamente motivados.

Palabras clave: motivación intrínseca, motivación extrínseca, motivación instrumental, motivación integrativa, adquisición de lenguas extranjeras, adquisición de segundas lenguas.

## **ABSTRACT**

In a recent work by Chalak and Kassaian (2010) the motivation and attitudes of university undergraduate students towards learning English as a second language is studied. The results of the study show that students in the English translating career are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated as well as integrative and instrumentally oriented.

The present study is based on the one conducted by Chalak and Kassaian (2010) and aims to investigate the motivation of the 45 students in the career of Applied Linguistics in Teaching English of the Pontifical University of Ecuador Esmeraldas Headquarters (PUCES-E). In this study, it is assumed that the link between language motivation and language learning is a missing point of discussion among researchers of English teaching in Esmeraldas.

For the purpose of this investigation a questionnaire containing items related to five different domains is used: 1) Interest in Foreign Languages, 2) Motivational Intensity, 3) Integrative Orientation, 4) Desire to Learn English, 5) Instrumental Orientation.



The results show that all the Applied Linguistics students are highly motivated, both integrative and instrumentally, since they affirm to want to learn English in order to get a better job and be able to communicate with English language speakers. They also state to be very interested on learning foreign languages, in this case English, and they would like to be able to speak several languages fluently, it can then be said that they are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

**Key words:** intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, foreign language acquisition, second language acquisition.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning languages has become extremely important in the last couple of decades. The English language is one of the most studied foreign/second languages in the world since it has become the communication instrument among different language speaking countries all over the world in social life, politics and business. The term L2 is commonly used to refer to second language and foreign language (Tomlinson, 2011), in this study, it is used to refer to second and foreign languages.

According to Crystal (2003), L2 learners may feel uncomfortable and at a disadvantage in the learning process, they may start learning the language feeling very motivated, since it will allow them to communicate with more people, but they may also end up resenting the effort that it entails. The idea of making a big effort in order to be able to communicate using a language that is not the mother tongue (L1) may make the learner wonder why his native language is not the global language, seeing native speakers of English as having an advantage over other languages' speakers.

Chalak and Kassaian (2010) claimed that motivation "...is the driving force that makes people act", in other words, motivation is the main reason people do what they do. Ortega (2009) states that L2 motivation refers to "the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it". Motivation is what inspires people to learn a second language and continue making an effort to achieve the desired results.

## INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Different types of motivation have been distinguished, which could be divided into two dichotomies: intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and instrumental/integrative motivation. According to Chalak and Kassaian (2010) the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation dichotomy refers to whether the motivation comes from the inside of the learner or from some exterior influence. Intrinsic motivation refers to the one that comes from inside the learner, which means that there is no external reward for the learner, only the learning itself. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is based on the idea of receiving an external, the learner is motivated by an outer element rather than from an inner desire of learning the language.

Chalak and Kassaian (2010) state that both types of motivation are important for the learning process, that is to say, the presence of motivation can make the learning behavior more adequate for successful learning. Motivated learners will learn better than those who are not motivated, and the level of success may vary depending on the type of motivation the learner experiences.

## **INSTRUMENTAL AND INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION**

Instrumental/integrative motivation is related to the use of the language as means of communication. If a person learns an L2 in order to get a job or satisfy academic requirements, she is instrumentally motivated, in other words, English is used as a tool or instrument in order to get something. Ortega (2009) defines instrumental motivation as a situation in which "pragmatic and utilitarian reasons are important, such as getting a better job or pursuing a higher level of education in the L2" (pág.173). Motivation is a tool for the learner to gain better professional opportunities.

Integrative motivation, on the other hand, is associated with being accepted by another community. It is defined as "the desire to learn L2 to communicate with the members of the second language society and find out about its culture" (Chalak & Kassaian, 2010,

p.39). The learner acquires English, in this case, with the aim of being accepted by an English speaking community. The main goal of the learner is to integrate himself within the culture to become part of it. They are said to show "aspects of motivated behaviour such as effort, an expressed desire and enjoyment in the process of learning" (Lamb, 2003, p.4). Not only do they show a favorable view of the speakers, but of the process of learning the language too.

It is important to emphasize that these two dichotomies do not exclude each other. Some learners may experience a better learning process, including better results, if they are integratively motivated, others if they are instrumentally motivated, and others may take advantage of both types of motivation. This last group would be interested in learning a language to get a better job, but at the same time being interested in the language's community and culture.

It is important to take into account that motivation changes with time, which is dependent on "...mental processes and internal, external influences that the learner is exposed to" (Chalak & Kassaian, 2010, p.40). These authors also stated that both internal and external changes may influence the level or type of motivation of the learner in a specific moment of his life.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT ESMERALDAS (ECUADOR)

The city of Esmeraldas is situated in the north-western part of the country. It is located on the coast of the homonymous province. The province of Esmeraldas occupies 15.371 km², while the city covers 1.348,4 km². This province is one of the poorest areas of the coast and the country. Due to that lack of economic resources, its people suffer from insufficient budget for education, inadequate infrastructure for schools and other institutions, high level of illiteracy and early dropping out of school, etc. One of the most common problems of the city in relation to education is the lack of qualified teachers for primary and secondary education, even in higher educational institutions the situation seems to be similar.

Among higher educational institutions, the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas (PUCE-SE) is the only on-campus learning private university in the city. The students that attend the institution belong to a group of people who, with much effort, can afford paying for the tuition. As publish by the Esmeraldas Decentralized Autonomous Government (GADPE, n.d) lack of resources is a general problem in the city, since 76.04% of the inhabitants live in a poverty that does not even include the basic necessities.

Due to the difficulties that some families have to pay for tuition, some of the students also work as English teachers, storekeepers, receptionist at hotels, etc. All these factors may affect students' willingness, their motivation towards learning a second language, and the results they obtain.

There are several specialization areas at PUCE-SE (Environmental Management, Nursing, Systems Engineering, Computer Science, Information Technology, Education, etc.). All of them have either six or eight levels of English as a foreign language (EFL) as a requirement for students to graduate. This study is going to focus on students majoring in Applied Linguistics in Teaching English. The school of Applied Linguistics has twelve teachers; most of them specialized in Education in Teaching English, but not in linguistics. This is a serious problem, since teachers are qualified to teach English, but they do not have the necessary knowledge of linguistics to transmit it to students in a successful way. Although, they have knowledge of the different methods and techniques for teaching EFL, which can help students acquire the language properly.

## PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As it has been said before, English is the leading foreign language and considered to be a global language all over the world. Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) state that "...there are many factors that might cause the students' low proficiency in English" (pág.30), that is, many factor may affect the learning speed of students.



In the case of Ecuador, English is neither a national nor an official language, but, as in most places in the world, it is the most commonly taught foreign language in the educational system. In Esmeraldas (Ecuador), students start learning English at different ages, depending on the institution they are studying at. Also, the amount of hours they receive of English classes per week varies. However, the dilemma is that the majority are far from attaining the desired level of proficiency in oral skills, both receptive and productive, that is, they are unable to maintain a simple conversation in English. This has been a subject of discussion among educators, but there is no actual research on the topic in Esmeraldas. Although there is no research in the field in this specific area of Ecuador, there is an awareness of the low levels of English of both students and teachers that provokes an interest to discover the possible motives and solutions for the problem.

As most debates about learning a L2 focus on the effectiveness of teaching methodologies, not much importance is set on the contextual factors that affect students from Esmeraldas. Some authors, for example Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), see motivation as one of the most important factors influencing the rate and success of L2 attainment and claim that "... it provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (pág.203). As they state, motivation is what originates learners' interest on learning a L2 and later helps them continue with the learning.

Littlejohn (2008) affirmed that it is most common to find student experiencing extrinsic motivation when they are not in a directly connected to English education, that is, when the subject is obligatory for them without being able to choose. On the other hand, he stated that intrinsic motivation is usually found in a small percentage of learners (pág.215).

Chalak and Kassaian (2010) looked at the attitudes and motivation of Iranian university students majoring in English translation. In the case of this paper, the inquiry is about Ecuadorian students majoring in Applied Linguistics in Teaching English in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas (PUCE-SE). Assuming that students' low proficiency in English might be related to learners' motivation, and taking into account their direct educational relationship with English, which could be understood as students being more intrinsically motivated, the main goal of the present paper is to answer the following research questions:

- 1. Are the students of Applied Linguistics in Teaching English at PUCE-SE highly interested in or motivated towards learning EFL?
- 2. Are the students of Applied Linguistics in Teaching English at PUCE-SE intrinsically or extrinsically motivated towards learning EFL?
- 3. Are the students of Applied Linguistics in Teaching English at PUCE-SE instrumentally or integratively motivated towards learning EFL?

It is expected that the results show that PUCE-SE students are instrumentally and integratively motivated. Also, students to be extrinsically, but not intrinsically, motivated is expected. These expectations are made after seeing the slow improvement that students make in their English language skills, which may be an indicator of the lack of intrinsic motivation to learn the language.

## **METHODOLOGY**

## Instruments

The purpose of the present study is to identify the students' motivation in learning the English language. In order to fulfill the aim of this study, a questionnaire will be used. A 6-point Likert Scale format was used, based on the questionnaire used by Chalak and Kassaian (2010), that was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985), ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. The AMTB is known as reliable and valid (Gardner, 1985, as cited in Chalak & Kassaian, 2010).

The questionnaire consisted of 38 items. Since the level of knowledge of English of some of the students taking part in the research is low, the questionnaire was administered both



in English and Spanish, in order to give them the opportunity to choose the language or clarify the vocabulary doubts that might appear. The AMTB items used in the present research are made up of 5 different domains:

- Interest in foreign languages
- Desire to learn english
- Integrative orientation
- Instrumental orientation
- Motivational intensity

## **Participants**

For the purpose of this study, 45 students majoring in Applied Linguistics in Teaching English at PUCE-SE during the academic year 2013 were selected as participants. These students are the ones that form the 3 different levels of the career that are active this semester (second, fifth and sixth) and all are local; they were raised up in Esmeraldas and have no experience of being in an English-speaking country.

## **Procedure**

Participants were tested in groups. A questionnaire based on Gardner's (1985) AMTB will be administered. Participants filled in the questionnaire during one of their classes, which was a familiar area where they feel more comfortable. This also helped the study to have more participants, since many of the students work and study at the same time, using the class hours assured that they participate in the study, collecting that way as much information from the sample as possible.

As it has been previously mentioned, the level of knowledge of English these students have ranges from low to high. That is why the questionnaire will translated and administered both in English and Spanish, in order to give students the opportunity to have contact with the language, but at the same time assuring the understanding.

After the data collection, the results were statistically analyzed using excel in order to get the proper analysis that will help reach the correct interpretation of the collected data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The students' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics using Excel. They were classified in groups for the five different domains existing on the questionnaire. The data was basically nominal and based on frequencies. Therefore, percentages for all the domains were calculated.

|  | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people  | 0                    | 0                      | 4,44                 | 11,11             | 20                  | 64,44             |
| Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.   | 0                    | 0                      | 0                    | 2,22              | 22,22               | 75,56             |
| Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English. | 6,67                 | 0                      | 0                    | 15,56             | 13,33               | 64,44             |

**Table 1.**Percentage of answers for domain 1.

Source:

Reguero, A., 2014

Table 1, containing 3 questions related to integrative orientation, shows that 64,44% of the students agreed that they are interested in learning foreign languages, since a foreign language helps them meet people from different places that speak English. Summing up the results of the three highest agreement levels, a percentage over 82 in the three questions is obtained.



Strongly Moderately Slightly Slightly Moderately Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree 4,44 I wish I were fluent in English. 0 0 0 2,22 93,33 I have a strong desire to know 0 2,22 4,44 6,67 35,56 51,11 all aspects of English. I want to learn English so well 0 0 0 0 6,67 93,33 that it will become natural to me. "If it were up to me, I would spend all of my time learning English." 0 2,22 4,44 22,22 35,56 35,56 I would like to learn as much 0 0 0 17,78 82,22 English as possible.

**Table 2.** Percentage of answers for positive statements in Domain 2.

Source: Reguero, A., 2014

In the case of *Table 2*, results show that for the positive statements related to the desire to learn as much English as possible and to English feeling natural to them, 100% is obtain adding up the two highest answer option. For the "strongly agree" option related to fluency and feeling natural speaking English, answers reach 93,33%.

When asked about spending their time off learning English the disagreement options get 6,66% of the answers, which corresponds to three participants.

|  | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| I don't really work hard to learn English.   | 51,11                | 4,44                   | 8,89                 | 13,33             | 8,89                | 8,89              |
| Knowing English isn't really an important goal in my life.   | 75,56                | 8,89                   | 2,22                 | 2,22              | 6,67                | 4,44              |
| I sometimes daydream about dropping English.   | 64,44                | 8,89                   | 13,33                | 4,44              | 4,44                | 2,22              |
| Studying English is not important because it will not enable me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life. | 82,22                | 13,33                  | 2,22                 | 0                 | 0                   | 0                 |
| To be honest, I really have no desire to learn English.  | 93,33                | 6,67                   | 0                    | 0                 | 0                   | 0                 |

**Table 3.**Percentage of answers for negative statements in Domain 2.

Source: Reguero, A., 2014

Table 3, containing negative questions for the domain related to English learning desire, indicates that the highest percentage (93,33%) rejects the idea of not having any desire to learn English. It is also pointed out that some of the students (31,11%) agree in the highest levels with the statement of not working hard.

|   | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| I would really like to learn many foreign languages.                            | 0                    | 0                      | 4,44                 | 8,89              | 17,78               | 68,89             |
| I wish I could read newspa-<br>pers and magazines in many<br>foreign languages. | 0                    | 0                      | 11,11                | 8,89              | 24,44               | 55,56             |
| I enjoy meeting people who speak foreign languages.                             | 0                    | 0                      | 0                    | 13,33             | 20                  | 66,67             |
| If I planned to stay in another country, I would try to learn their language.   | 0                    | 0                      | 2,22                 | 0                 | 22,22               | 75,56             |
| I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.                          | 0                    | 0                      | 6,67                 | 11,11             | 20                  | 62,22             |

**Table 4.** Percentage of answers for positive statements in Domain 3.

Source: Reguero, A., 2014

In relation to the positive statements in domain 3, interest in foreign language, Table 4 shows that 100% is obtained in the results for students' desire to meet foreign language speakers. Among the negative answers for these statements, it was noted that 11,11% do not agree with wanting to read magazines and newspapers in foreign languages, still there does not seem to be a strong disagreement with the statements.

|   | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Most foreign languages sound crude and harsh.   | 57,78                | 13,33                  | 17,78                | 8,89              | 2,22                | 0                 |
| I really have no interest in foreign languages.   | 84,44                | 8,89                   | 2,22                 | 2,22              | 2,22                | 0                 |
| It is not important for us to learn foreign languages.  | 82,22                | 11,11                  | 2,22                 | 0                 | 0                   | 2,22              |
| Studying foreign languages is not enjoyable.  | 62,22                | 20                     | 8,89                 | 4,44              | 0                   | 4,44              |
| I would rather see a TV program dubbed into our language than in its own language with subtitles. | 64,44                | 15,56                  | 8,89                 | 6,67              | 2,22                | 2,22              |

**Table 5.**Percentage of answers for negative statements in Domain 3.

Source: Reguero, A., 2014

In Table 5, which contains 5 negative questions related to interest in foreign languages (Domain 3) the highest percentage of answers (over 71%) are found in moderate and strong disagreement with the statements related to interest in foreign languages. All the answers for these statements illustrate a high motivation in learning foreign languages, since all of them get almost 90% of the answers expressing positive attitudes towards learning English.

|  | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.                       | 11,11                | 0                      | 20                   | 31,11             | 17,78               | 20                |
| Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.             | 0                    | 0                      | 0                    | 4,44              | 20                  | 75,56             |
| Studying English is important because I will need it for my career                         | 0                    | 0                      | 0                    | 0                 | 17,78               | 82,22             |
| Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English. | 15,56                | 13,33                  | 20                   | 28,89             | 8,89                | 13,33             |

**Table 6.** Percentage of answers for statements in Domain 4.

Source: Reguero, A., 2014

Items related to Domain 4, instrumental orientation, are shown in Table 6. In most cases they show agreement with the statements in more than 68% of the answers, except for the last statement, in which we find a balance around 50% in agreement and disagreement. This shows that the environment is not motivating for them, as they do not get more respect from other people after they learn English.



Strongly Moderately Slightly Slightly Moderately Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree I bother checking my assign-35,56 35,56 ments when I get them back 0 4,44 24,44 from my English teacher. I can't be bothered trying to understand the more com-0  $\cap$ 0 15,56 40 44,44 plex aspects of English. I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every 0 4,44 22,22 28,89 33,33 8,89 When I am studying English, 0 2,22 11,11 28,89 46,67 I ignore distractions and pay 11,11 attention to my task. I make a point of trying to un-0 derstand all the English I see  $\cap$ 0 2,22 26.67 71.11 and hear. When I have a problem understanding something in my 11,11 4,44 20 13,33 37,78 11,11 English class, I always have my teacher for help.

Table 7.
Percentage of answers for positive statements in Domain 5.

## Source: Reguero, A., 2014

In *Table 7* it is important to point out that, when speaking about the positive statements in relation to motivational intensity, in spite of having a high motivation showed in other items, there is no daily work on English. In contrast, another item that does not depend on the student, but on teachers' support in the classroom, and that has similar distribution of the responses is "When I have a problem understanding something in my English class, I always have my teacher for help". It obtains a percentage over 30% in the disagreement responses.

|  | Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Disagree | Slightly<br>Agree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| I'm losing any desire I ever had to know English.  | 22,22                | 15,56                  | 15,56                | 22,22             | 17,78               | 6,67              |
| I put off my English homework as much as possible.   | 33,33                | 26,67                  | 11,11                | 11,11             | 15,56               | 2,22              |
| I don't pay much attention to<br>the feedback I receive in my<br>English class.                                | 62,22                | 17,78                  | 6,67                 | 4,44              | 4,44                | 4,44              |
| I tend to give up and not pay attention when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something. | 55,56                | 17,78                  | 4,44                 | 15,56             | 4,44                | 2,22              |

Table 8.
Percentage of answers for negative statements in Domain 5.

## Source: Reguero, A., 2014

In the case of *Table 8*, which contains four items related to motivational intensity (Domain 5), the first two items have a more leveled distribution of answers than other items in this test. The question "I'm losing any desire I ever had to know English", sums up 46,6%, in answers that indicate a loss of desire since the beginning of the learning process, even though other items in the test indicate high levels of motivation.

This study aimed at investigating the motivation of the Applied Linguistics career students to learn English. After presenting the main results of the 38 items of the AMTB chosen for this research, it may be concluded that in general terms participants are highly motivated in learning a foreign language, in this case English, both integratively and instrumentally. This means that their goal is to learn English in order to get a better job and to be able to integrate themselves in an English speaking community if they need to, which can be understood as students being both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. The motivation

they experience comes both from inside them, and as a requirement of the environment to get a better job.

Despite obtaining such good results, it cannot be ignored that there are answers indicating that students are conscious of the difference between effort and motivation, as can be seen in items that ask about their daily work in the subject and their effort to learn English.

In relation to the context, it can be understood that students do not feel more respected by other people in their environment after learning English as a L2, which can be related to the absence of speakers of English in Esmeraldas. Also, another aspect that is related to the context and does not depend on students' motivation is that teachers do not help them when they need it, making it more difficult to improve in their level of English. It is known that the learning process needs a facilitator, especially taking into account that the teacher is a key element in the process, because, as it has previously been said, there is a lack of English speakers in their context.

These variables may help explain the decrease of desire that students express in their answers about learning English as a L2 from the time when they started learning the language, as the 46,6% obtained in the item "I'm losing any desire I ever had to know English" shows. Results indicate that, despite the high motivation level obtained in general terms, there is a need for the context to change, mainly teachers' support, because they are a key factor in the learning of the language.

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