

***On the relationship among motivation, orientation, and
the English language proficiency***

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Abstract :

The role of motivation and attitude in L2 learning and their relationship with kinds of orientation which is specific to the social context has been a point of investigation for decades. This study was conducted to find the kinds of orientation (English learning reasons) specific to the social milieu of Iran on the one hand, and their relationship with motivation and the English language proficiency among the Iranian Undergraduate English Major Students (IUEMS), on the other hand.

The results of this study indicate that there are four major kinds of orientation. Among these orientations, a new orientation, i.e., anti-integrative/instrumental or anti-integrative, is specific to the context of Iran. Moreover, the results indicate that the most related variable to the English language proficiency is motivation, while the other

variable, i.e., kinds of orientation, is related more to motivation than to the L2 proficiency.

Introduction

Over the years there has been an increasing interest in looking at aspects of learners' motivation in learning an L2 language and the kinds of orientation associated with it.

For the last twenty years, much research on L2 learning motivation has focused on integrative and instrumental orientation. Recently questions have been raised about other possible kinds of L2 learning orientations.

Review of literature

Research on attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition was initiated by Gardner and Lambert (1959). In this study, they found a significant positive correlation between scores on the Orientation-Index and French achievement indicating that integratively oriented students were more proficient than those who were instrumentally oriented.

Based on this study, they (1972) conducted another research the result of which confirmed that attitudes and motivation were associated with achievement in a second language. Study in this field was continued by Gardner and his associates (Gardner, et al. 1983; Gardner 1980, 1983, 1985, 1988; Gardner et al. 1997; Gardner and Smyth 1981; etc.) for about twenty years leading to his socio-psychological model of L2 learning and its development.

Some other researchers tried to check Gardner's model, completely or partially, in a second language context (Spolsky 1969; Oller et al. 1977a, 1977b; etc.) Some of them confirmed Gardner's theory and some others rejected it.

To investigate if Gardner's model could be applied in FL contexts, some researchers examined it in FL contexts (Dornyei 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Lukmani, 1972; Kraemer 1993; Clément, Dornyei, and Noels, 1994). What was common in all of these studies was that any specific social context provokes specific kinds of orientation.

The present study was conducted to find out about kinds of orientation (learning reasons) and their relationship with motivation and the English language proficiency in the context of Iran.

The study

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in the IUEM students' motivation at different levels of the English language proficiency?
2. What is the construct of orientations (reasons) among the IUEM students for learning the English language?
3. Is there any significant difference among these kinds of orientation?

4. Is there any significant difference in the degree of motivation of the IUEM students with different kinds of orientation?
5. Which of these kinds of orientation is the most related one to motivation?
6. Considering motivation and kinds of orientation, which one is more related to the English language proficiency?

Method

Participants

A total number of 629 subjects from four different universities (Tehran, Azzahra, Allameh Tabatabaiee and Shahid Beheshti) participated in this study. From this total who took part in the MICHIGAN test, 166 subjects did not fill their questionnaires and were excluded from the study. The subjects who had both taken part in the test and filled the questionnaire completely or partially were 463 from freshman to senior who were considered as the final participants in the present study.

Instrumentation

Two measuring instruments were used in this study: a standard proficiency test and a questionnaire.

The proficiency test consisted of a written proficiency test (MICHIGAN, 1979) with 100 items: 40 grammatical structure items, 40 vocabulary items and 20 reading comprehension items.

The other measuring instrument was a questionnaire including 72 items in two parts which elicited motivation and kinds of orientation.

Since the definition of motivation in this study was considered the same as it was defined by Gardner, the first part of the questionnaire, including the three components of motivation, i.e., desire to learn the language, motivational intensity, and attitudes toward learning the English language, were derived from Gardner's AMTB but translated into Persian. Some of the translated items in this part were used from Dastgheib's (1996) study. It is worth mentioning that some of Gardner's items in this part were modified to make it appropriate for the present study.

The other parts of the questionnaire, i.e., kinds of orientation was devised by the researcher, based on a pilot study, to match the purpose of the study.

The first 20 items of the first part of the questionnaire, i.e., motivation were presented in the form of multiple choice questions each consisting of three choices. Other items followed the Likert-scale format. Each item was answered on a 5-point scale ranging from strong disagreement (1), to strong agreement (5).

Design

The design of the present study is ex-post facto. In other words the researcher has tried to find factors that seemed to be associated with

certain occurrences, or conditions. In the present study three main variables are investigated: motivation, kind of orientation, and the English language proficiency of the subjects.

Procedure

Every subject received a test and a questionnaire. To encourage the subjects to do their best in the test and to make the data valid enough, before administering the test, the subjects were told that the study was going to be administered in four different universities at the same time and the result of their proficiency test would be compared. The time for the test was 75 minutes according to the test instruction. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and the demographic section asking for their sex, age, major, job, etc. at home to make sure that they had enough time to answer the questions precisely.

Scoring Method

Each individual's score in two parts, i.e., motivation (1-30) and kinds of orientation (1-42) was computed. Since the number of items in each part differed, the scores were converted into percentage for standardization.

To avoid "Halo" effect, some of the items which were negatively stated, were scored in a reverse order.

Data Analysis

In order to have a clear picture of the participants' English language proficiency and motivation, the participants were classified into four categories on the basis of their SD and mean scores in their motivation and English scores.

1. Low motivation/proficiency: The lowest score in motivation/proficiency to one SD below the mean.
2. Low intermediate motivation/proficiency: Scores between one SD below the mean and the mean.
3. High intermediate motivation/proficiency: Scores between the mean and one SD above the mean.
4. High motivation/proficiency: One SD above the mean to the highest score in motivation/proficiency.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to check a null hypothesis, i.e., there is not any significant difference among four different degrees of participants' motivation as far as their English language proficiency is concerned as the answer to the first question.

The result (Table 1) indicates that there is a significant difference (sig $f=0.000$) among the four groups. The post-hoc Sheffe test indicates that there is a significant difference (sig $f=0.006$) in the level of proficiency between low motivated subjects and highly motivated ones, and also a significant difference (sig $f= 0.007$) between

participants with low intermediate motivation and high motivation in the English language proficiency.

In other words, there is a positive correlation between the degree of motivation and the English language proficiency. The more motivated the participants are, the higher level of proficiency they have.

Table 1. An ANOVA of Subjects' Proficiency Scores Among Four Groups of Motivation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.234	3	5.745	6.212	.000
Within Groups	337.520	365	.925		
Total	354.753	368			

To answer the second question, i.e., the construct of participants' kinds of orientation, a varimax rotated factor analysis was conducted. Since there were five kinds of orientation, based on the participants' responses to an open-ended questionnaire in a pilot study, a five-factor solution was performed.

The result indicates that there are five basic categories in participants' kinds of orientation:

1. Factor one tends to explain general instrumental orientation which reflects the general utilitarian value, e.g., when the learner wants to learn the English language to get familiar with another culture, to be able to read magazines or newspapers in the English language, etc.

2. Integrative orientation is mainly explained by factor two. According to this orientation, the learner has a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture of the L2 community so much that he wants to identify himself with the L2 community.
3. Anti-integrative/instrumental orientation is tended to be explained by factor three. This orientation reflects another utilitarian value of the English language learning but this time for the interest in one's culture and the desire to preserve it rather than to identify oneself with the L2 culture, e.g., to develop my country's culture, to fulfill the aims of Islamic Revolution of Iran, to propagate our religion, Islam, by translation, etc.
4. Anti-integrative orientation is the dominant construct in factor four. On the basis of this orientation, the learner does not have a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture of the L2 community.
5. Financial instrumental orientation which reflects the financial value of learning, e.g., to get degree, to earn more money, to get job, etc., is explained by factor five.

To answer the third question, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to check the related null hypothesis, i.e., there is not any significant difference among these kinds of orientation.

The result (Table 2) indicates that these orientations differ significantly ($\text{sig } f=0.000$) from one another. The post-hoc Sheffe Test indicates that all of them differ significantly except anti-integrative

and anti-integrative/instrumental (sig $f=0.779$). Moreover, the means indicate, the lowest mean belongs the integrative orientation and the first highest mean is for the general instrumental orientation and the second highest mean belongs to the anti-integrative/instrumental orientation.

Table 2. An ANOVA of Subjects' Kinds of Orientation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	340161.994	5	68032.399	328.891	.000
Within Groups	529546.053	2560	206.854		
Total	869708.046	2565			

Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to check a null hypothesis, i.e., there is not any significant difference in the participants' degree of motivation as far as different kinds of orientation are concerned, as the answer to the fourth question.

The results (Table 3) indicate that there is a significant difference (sig $f=0.000$) among participants with anti-integrative/instrumental orientation and general instrumental orientation on the one hand, and different degrees of motivation on the other hand. A post-hoc Sheffe test indicates that there is a significant difference (sig $f=0.000$) between low motivated and high intermediate; and low motivated and highly motivated ones with anti-integrative/instrumental orientation. Also, there is a significant difference (sig $f=0.001$) between low intermediate and highly motivated ones and a significant difference (sig $f=0.002$) between low intermediate and high intermediate ones with general instrumental orientation. In these two kinds of

orientation, i.e., anti-integrative/instrumental and general instrumental ones, there is a direct relationship between the mean and the degree of motivation (Table 4). The lowest means ($X_1=63.65$; $X_2=71.43$) are related to low motivation, and the highest means ($X_1=80.86$; $X_2=82.68$) are related to high motivation in participants with anti-integrative/instrumental orientation and general instrumental orientation respectively.

Table 3. An ANOVA of Subjects' Kinds of Orientation Among Four Groups of Motivation

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Financial	Between Groups	1267.073	3	422.358	2.024	.110
	Within Groups	74096.158	355	208.722		
	Total	75363.231	358			
General instrumental	Between Groups	4003.020	3	1334.340	14.280	.000
	Within Groups	30554.222	327	93.438		
	Total	34557.242	330			
Anti-integrative/instrumental	Between Groups	10754.200	3	3584.733	16.599	.000
	Within Groups	75152.943	348	215.957		
	Total	85907.143	351			
Anti-integrative	Between Groups	2001.586	3	667.195	1.946	.122
	Within Groups	118274.489	345	342.825		
	Total	120276.074	348			
Integrative	Between Groups	455.865	3	151.955	.610	.609
	Within Groups	83988.893	337	249.225		
	Total	84444.758	340			

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Kinds of Orientation and Four Groups of Motivation

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
General instrumental	Low motivation	46	71.4322	11.6350	1.7155	20.00	94.12
	Low intermediate motivation	92	74.9233	9.0710	.9457	43.53	95.29
	High intermediate motivation	151	79.4390	9.6479	.7851	52.94	98.82
	High motivation	42	82.6891	8.5719	1.3227	62.35	98.82
	Total	331	77.4836	10.2332	.5625	20.00	98.82
Anti-integrative/instrumental	Low motivation	50	63.6571	16.0075	2.2638	20.00	97.14
	Low Intermediate motivation	95	69.8045	16.5692	1.7000	20.00	100.00
	High intermediate motivation	164	77.2474	13.6892	1.0689	40.00	100.00
	High motivation	43	80.8638	12.1943	1.8596	42.86	100.00
	Total	352	73.7500	15.6445	.8339	20.00	100.00
	High motivation	41	51.2805	16.1741	2.5260	22.50	80.00
Total	341	48.7903	15.7597	.8534	20.00	100.00	

To find out which of the five orientations is more related to motivation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results indicate that anti-integrative/instrumental orientation is more related to motivation than the other kinds.

To answer the last question, i.e., to find the more related variable to the English language proficiency between motivation and kinds of orientation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results indicate that motivation is more related to the English language proficiency than kinds of orientation

Results and Discussions

As mentioned above, many researchers believe that social context is a determining factor in the orientations of the learners. Based on the present study, five kinds of orientations are recognized in the IUEM students, in an FL context. Among these orientations, anti-integrative and anti-integrative/instrumental orientation do not differ significantly which indicates that they act like each other. In other words, one might claim that anti-integrative, like integrative, has an instrumental nature.

On the other hand, considering the existence of general instrumental and anti-integrative/instrumental orientations as the first two ones in the rank of orientations, and the existence of integrative orientation, though the last one in the rank among the IUEM students, one might conclude that first of all Dornyie's (1990) statement that "a common feature of such situations is that learners often do not have sufficient experience of the target language community to have attitude for or against it" (p. 9), is true to some extent. This may be due to the assumption that the highest orientation in the IUEM student is instrumental. But it is not completely true because, they have integrative and anti-integrative orientations, too. Therefore learners might have integrative or anti-integrative orientation, though far from the L2 community.

Secondly, the existence of a new orientation, i.e., anti-integrative or anti-integrative/instrumental orientation, in an FL context, is recognized. The researches done in FL contexts so far have either

proved the existence of integrative/instrumental orientations, or other kinds of orientation but not an anti-integrative one.

So, it seems more logical to substitute the general term of "orientation" for "integrative orientation" as one of the subcomponents of "integrativeness" in Gardner's (1983, 1985) model.

Moreover, as Clément and Kruidenier (1983) mention there is ambiguity in the meaning of instrumental orientation. For example, sometimes "getting more money" is considered as an instrumental orientation and "getting familiar with L2 culture" is considered as an integrative orientation, while this may not be the case in all types of context. Sometimes an individual wants to get familiar with the L2 culture because he is just interested in learning more, i.e., general instrumental orientation, or sometimes he wants to get familiar with the L2 culture to be able to recognize the weak points of the L2 culture, i.e., anti-integrative/instrumental orientation. So, in fact, the kind of orientation implied in this sentence can be revealed in relation to other sentences or in relation to the learners' attitude.

In general, based on the results of this study, one may consider a continuum of instrumentality, having different degrees of instrumental orientation on it. This continuum includes two extremes, i.e., integrative orientation and anti-integrative orientation, which does not differ significantly from anti-integrative/instrumental orientation, and a middle part related to instrumental orientation in general, as demonstrated in the chart below.

Integrative orientation

instrumental orientation

anti-integrative orientation

As the chart indicates, since an individual may have different kinds of orientation at different periods of time, he may move along the continuum with different instrumental orientations at different phases of time or some instrumental ones at the same time, or getting closer to either extremes with the changes in attitude.

Finally, summarizing the relationship among the three variables in this study, i.e., motivation, kinds of orientation, and the English language proficiency, one may consider that motivation is related to the English language proficiency on the one hand, and to the kinds of orientation on the other hand. So, one may assume that there is a direct relationship between motivation and the English language proficiency while an indirect one between kinds of orientation and the English language proficiency.

Conclusion

The theoretical implications of this study were clarified. The findings of this study can be beneficial for teachers as well.

As mentioned above, the English language proficiency has the greatest relationship with motivation. So, if the students' degree of motivation is increased, their English language proficiency level will be increased, too.

On the other hand, motivation is related to the learners' orientation with instrumental function. In this study, the participants wanted to learn the English language firstly, for reasons such as newspaper reading, using computer, getting familiar with other people, etc.; and secondly, for developing their country in different aspects and

preserving and developing their own culture through translation, traveling, etc.

So, if learners' objectives are recognized precisely through "needs analysis", it can help increase their motivation and consequently their English language proficiency, by organizing their lessons based on those objectives.

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