

Motivational Orientations for Learning English: The Case of Turkish University Students

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Abstract

In this article, the motivation and orientations of first year university students towards learning English in a globalizing world are studied. Background information comprises studies describing the driving forces such as instrumental and integrative orientations and their components. The diversity of the results obtained in various investigations is discussed and the methodology followed is disclosed. The article utilizes a survey consisting of a questionnaire and open ended questions together with subsequent focus group interviews. Subsequent factor analysis revealed three independent orientations categorized as instrumental, integrative and educational, all clearly delineated and not blended. It is ascertained that students' main orientations for learning English are to find a well-paying job, and to stay connected to the rest of the world through media and foreign friends. The study highlights the findings of similar surveys covering most of the university students in this globalizing world, and claims that Turkish university students want to learn English in order to master a skill which has become a requirement for participating and surviving in the international labor markets – a perspective that may provide a more realistic insight about the English Language Teaching in the country.

Keywords: motivation, orientation, language learning, integrative, instrumental

INTRODUCTION

Why do people feel the need to learn a second language, what motivates them? For a few countries where a number of languages are spoken, the answer seems to be obvious. But for the rest of the world, the demand for learning a foreign language, especially English, seems to be growing at an exponential rate (Crystal, 2003). So, how could such a motivation be explained ?

“As a concept, motivation is a bit of a beast. A powerfully influential and wide-ranging area of study in psychology, motivation at its core deals with why people behave as they do. But, in terms of mutual understanding and tightly controlled boundaries of application, motivation roams the field of psychology with almost reckless abandon. There are over twenty internationally recognized theories of motivation with many opposing points of view, differing experimental approaches, and continuing disagreement over proper terminology and problems of definition. In fields of instruction and learning, this has led to some difficult problems- whom to believe, which theories to apply and how to make sense out of this wealth of confusing possibilities. In general instructors and trainers can find very few guidelines that suggest how to cohesively and consistently apply the most useful and practical elements from this extensive array of motivational information.” (Wlodkowski, 1986, pg. 44-45)

Among the “over twenty internationally recognized theories of motivation” are Expectancy-Value theory, Achievement Motivation Theory, Self-

Efficacy theory, Attribution Theory, Self-Worth Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, Goal Orientation Theory, Self Determination Theory, Social Motivation Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior. Individually or collectively, they all may shed light on two basic questions – why do people want to learn a foreign language? And also, what does it entail?

“Learning a foreign language always entails learning a second culture to some degree, even if you never actually set foot in the foreign county where the language is spoken. Language and culture are bound up with each other and interrelated. People do not exist in a vacuum any more than club members exist without a club. They are a part of some framework: a family, a community, a country, a set of traditions, a storehouse of knowledge, or a way of looking at the universe. In short every person is a part of a culture. And everyone uses a language to express that culture, to operate within that tradition and to categorize the universe. So, if you are planning to carry on some sort of communication with people who speak or write a given language, you need to understand the culture out of which the language emerges.” (Brown, 1989, p. 65)

It is no accident that L2 motivation research was initiated in Canada. The country is one of the rare bilingual locations in the world where the population is “officially” divided into speakers of two powerful world languages – English and French. Therefore, the competition between the two official Canadian languages has been particularly fierce. Robert Gardner and his colleagues have proposed that the

knowledge of the other community's language might serve as a mediating factor and developed the socio-educational model for that reason.

Gardner's (1985) socio-educational approach, which attempts to identify the issues that stimulate the individuals into learning a second language, has been one of the most influential of the models that deal with language learning. In that study, he (1985, p.10) defined 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." Gardner's socio-educational model is based on two orientations and three components. The orientations are called instrumental and integrative and the components motivational intensity or the effort, desire to learn the language or the want and attitudes towards learning the language. The orientations are precursors of the components and their role is to create motivation. The integrative orientation involves language learners' attitude toward the community of the target language, their desire to interrelate with the members of this community and their desire to become members of this community. This characteristic was amended later as "individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). The second orientation Gardner (1985) identified was the instrumental orientation which encompassed practical reasons for learning a foreign language such as job prospects or credits for a course.

Analogies may be drawn between some motivational theories and Gardner's model. The instrumental orientation of Gardner and the external regulation orientation of the Self-Determination Theory seem to be strongly correlated. and so does integrative orientation and the intrinsic motivation of the self-determination theory (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000). Similarly, of the four orientations of Clement and Kruidenier (1983), travel, friendship and knowledge appears to be associated with integrative orientation of Gardner and the instrumental orientations of both constructs seems to define same types of behavior (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000). The mastery goals and performance goals of Goal Orientation Theory (Ames, 1992) resemble Gardner's approach in some respects (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010).

According to the socio-educational model, people learned a foreign language because they wanted to communicate with other communities whose culture they were interested in or to whom they wanted to relate (see, e.g. Gardner, 1985; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Schuman, 1986) or because of a practical aspiration such as a promotion or even a better grade or job (Gardner, 1985). This may be true for a handful of countries but for the rest of the world,

English has become practically a global language and in more than 100 countries, learning a foreign language has become almost synonymous with learning English (Crystal, 2003) with research on second language acquisition trying to resolve what motivates people to learn a foreign language (see, e.g. Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008; Bradford, 2007; Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 1990; Dörnyei, 2001; Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994).

Another perspective came from Norton who introduced motivation as an investment and explained such an investment in terms of cultural capital. Basing her argument on the data she collected in Canada, Norton (1995) claimed that language learners invest in language learning to gain resources which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital by integrating the language learner and the learning context. Gardner, Masgoret and Tremblay called this factor sociocultural milieu and defined it to be as broad as the community in which people lived or as narrow as the experiences of the individuals at home (1999). They claimed that sociocultural milieu guided the attitudes, motivation and anxieties of the language learners. The experiences attained in the social environment determine the motivation to learn a language and the attitude toward language learning. The concept of sociocultural milieu also found its place in Norton (1995) who emphasized the significance of the social world in language learning, which she conceptualized as "investment" in her study with immigrant women which illustrated the interdependence of the environment and the individual in the process of second language acquisition.

Research into language learners' orientations and motivation yielded diverse results. For example, in Hungarian context, Dörnyei's (1990) early research showed that instrumental orientations significantly contribute to motivation. Although Dörnyei could not identify a clear integrative orientation in this study, a later study with similar participants revealed better defined integrative motives that resembled the results obtained in North American studies (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994). However, in a more recent study, Dörnyei & Kormos (2000) found that the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations was quite distorted. Similar to this finding, in a study in Indonesia, Lamb (2004) arrived at the conclusion that the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations were almost indistinguishable. Contrary to these results, Csizer and Dörnyei (2005) not only found distinct instrumental and integrative orientations but also that instrumental orientation was the antecedent of integrative orientation. Different orientations related to foreign language learning such as life/career aspects, xenophilic, instrumental, media, knowledge, identification, employment social advancement have

been established by different researchers (Bradford, 2007; Cid, Granena, & Tragant, 2009; Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008)

In order to ascertain the motivational orientations of 168 university students toward learning English, Bradford (2007) carried out a research in Indonesia using a questionnaire and identified 11 factors which she called employment, societal advancement, success, education, sociocultural, friendship-travel, further and international study, media, prestige, English as a lingua franca, and identification. The factor with the highest mean score was employment, which unveiled the language learners' desire to land a job with good prospects. Societal advancement and success followed suit.

In order to determine the motivational orientations of 610 high school students toward learning English, Kyriacou and Zhu (2008) carried out a research in Shanghai utilizing a questionnaire and 64 interviews and identified 3 factors they termed life/career aspects, integrative orientation and external pressure. The factor with the highest variance (24.5 %) was life/career aspects including comments such as "it will help me in my future career development" and "knowledge of two languages will make me a more cultivated person". Statements such as "I have the desire to communicate with foreigners and make foreign friends" and "I like English songs, movies, magazines, novels, etc." designated the integrative orientation and accounted for 18.1 % of the total variance.

In order to determine the motivational orientations of 301 high school students toward learning English, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) conducted a study in Hungary employing a questionnaire and spotted 5 factors, namely xenophilic, identification, sociocultural, instrumental-knowledge and English media. The xenophilic orientation comprised items such as "make friends with foreigners" and "would like to travel" and had the highest mean score (4.22/6) followed by English media (3.79) and sociocultural orientation (3.96) which involved language learners' fascination in "cultural aspects of the world".

Cid, Granena and Tragant (2009) carried out a survey to identify the attitudes and goals of 77 secondary school students. The questionnaire they used yielded 3 orientations which they labeled instrumental/professional-academic, popular culture/functional use, interpersonal communication/xenophilic. 22.5 % of the variance was explained by the instrumental/professional-academic orientation followed by 19.5% of the popular culture/functional use.

What has been considered as the context of the native speakers has been rapidly changing due to globalization and the emerging status of English as an international language. An example of such a change was given by Yashima (2002) who identified the concept of "international posture" which embodied Japanese students' attitudes towards the international community. Another example came from Lamb (2004) who revealed language learners' desire for "bicultural" identity in Indonesia. However, the number of studies to elucidate such a change seems to be insufficient. There is a need for further research to understand what motivates people in different parts of the world to learn English.

Gender differences have been reported on motivational orientation. In some of these reports, tendency towards integrative and instrumental orientations varied in both directions while in others, no differences were observed (Lin, Warschauer, 2011).

In Turkey, the number of published studies on the motivation of individuals to learn English is limited. Kızıltepe (2000) investigated the instrumental and integrative orientations of high school students. She found that the high school students were highly motivated to learn English and that instrumental orientation was more pronounced than integrative. In a more recent study on Turkish university students' willingness to learn English, Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2009) reported that students were moderately motivated to learn English and their motivation was mainly instrumental. Karahan (2007) investigated a situation in southern parts of Turkey and reported that what impels the students into learning English was the prospect of finding better a job. The purpose of this study is to reveal the language learning orientations of the university students in Turkey and thereby help to fill the existing gap.

METHOD

The methodology followed in gathering data is explained below.

Participants

A questionnaire was administered in the spring term of 2012 to first year undergraduate students of a non-profit, English-medium university in Istanbul, Turkey, seeking to identify their motivational orientations.

As the language of instruction is English, the scale used was in English as well. The total number of valid questionnaires were 523, with 251 (48 %) from female students and 272 (52 %) from male. The ages of the students ranged from 18 to 21. The native language of the students were Turkish and English was their second language with levels ranging from intermediate to advanced.

The breakdown of the students according to their departments and gender are given in table 1 below with table 2 showing the educational level of the parents.

Table 1 – demographics – breakdown according to the departments and gender

year		Departments												total
		Arts & Sciences		Bus. Admin.		Communic.		Engineer.		Architec.& design		law		
2012	Gender	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	
	number	43	41	36	42	40	33	56	67	42	35	55	33	
	sum	84		78		73		123		77		88		523
	%	16		15		14		23		15		17		100

Table 2 – demographics – educational level of the parents

Year	Less than high school	High school graduate	Some university	Univer. graduate , post graduate	Do not know
2012 (n=523)	34	52	124	295	18

Table 3 – demographics – number of students who spent time in English speaking countries

year		Departments												overall
		Arts & Sciences		Bus. Admin.		Communic.		Engineer.		Architec.& design		law		
2012	Gender	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	male	fem	
	number	14	12	10	12	6	18	12	17	11	15	3	3	
	sum	26		22		24		29		26		6		107
	%	31		28		32		23		34		7		20

The Instrument – Questionnaire and Interviews

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. Quantitative data were collected by means of a questionnaire that also contained some open-ended questions. The questionnaire was based on scales in use in EFL context (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010) and was designed in two parts. The first part dealt with demographics which required students to answer questions such as gender , scholarships , faculties, etc. and are summarized in tables 1and 2 . The second part entailed items with a seven point Likert scale and open-ended questions investigating the students’ perspectives about learning English. Some samples of the items are, “I want to learn English to get a more prestigious job” and “ I want to learn English because I like to travel .”

The figures for reliability obtained after a factor analysis for this study are given below:

Table 4: Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficients

Subscale	Alpha (n=523)
Factor 1 - instrumental	0,81
Factor 2 - integrative	0,84
Factor 3 – educational	0,76

The Procedure

The survey was administered during regular class times at the end of the spring term of 2012. The students were informed that their participation was voluntary and their responses to the questionnaires would remain confidential. No time limit was imposed.

In addition, a number of students were recruited to participate in individual interviews for obtaining more detailed responses across a range of questions

posed in the survey. A total of 30 students participated in the interviews and focus group sessions.

SPSS version 18 was used for analyzing data, factor analysis and other relevant mathematical procedures. Frequency analysis was conducted for the open-ended questions. 5 students from each department were chosen for group interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding and in order to interpret data better.

RESULTS

The factor analysis yielded three principle components with Eigenvalues 4.32, 3.54, and 2,21 which accounted for 64 % of the variance. Items whose measures of sampling adequacy were less than 0.5 in the anti-image correlation matrix or cross-loaded on others were eliminated.

As can be seen in Table 5, eight items comprise Factor 1. All the items are associated with instrumental orientation such as the need of English for a better career or promotion or for graduation. The subsequent interviews consolidated the view that students preferred an English-medium university in order to get ahead in life. This first factor may be labeled “instrumental” .

As the second factor encompasses items from the integrative orientation of Gardner such as being like an American or British, it may be labeled “integrative” .Subsequent interviews revealed the fact that students enjoy travelling and the fact that the daily life in the U.S.A. or the U.K. seems to intrigue them.

Items such as being able to read technical publications or holding discussions about the subject matter in English with instructors or colleagues are loaded onto to factor 3 which may be labeled as “educational”.

Table 5: Principle Factors

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
I will get a better /prestigious job	0.49		
I may be able to work globally	0.71		
I may have foreign friends	0.88		
it may facilitate promotion	0.84		
without English, I cannot graduate	0.76		
I need it for postgraduate studies	0.81		
I would be able to connect to the rest of the world	0.90		
it is good for my personal development	0.59		
to learn more about the culture and art of English		0.66	
to interact more easily with speakers of English		0.72	
to enjoy travelling		0.69	
to better understand and appreciate the English way of life		0.82	
to be like an American or British		0.69	
to watch movies in English		0.71	
to learn how other communities live			0.62
to understand what instructors are saying in English easily			0.82
to follow technical publications in English			0.86
to discuss topics of study with instructors and colleagues			0.60
Eigenvalue	4.32	3.54	2.21
Percentage of variance explained	27.6	21.3	15.1

As a part of the descriptive statistics, mean value of each subscale is calculated. The mean value of the instrumental was the highest with $m= 5.32$ and the integration was the lowest with $m=3.85$ with educational in the middle ($m= 4.26$).

These findings were confirmed by the open-ended item analysis and interview results which disclosed that the main concerns of the students for learning English revolve around finding a desirable career (86 %) and staying connected to the world through media and contacts (54 %). A desirable career implied finding a prestigious and well-paying job, preferably abroad. Within Turkey, international companies were favored. The second basic reason for learning English was that English was regarded as an international language and upon attaining sufficient aptitude, the students could stay connected with the rest of the world to follow developments. It became clear during the analysis of the open-ended questions and the

focus-group interviews that the higher the education level of the parents, the more the parents insisted on the importance of English (table 2) . Students who traveled abroad declared that they were more at ease in communicating in English and better able to attribute meanings to many of the intricacies of the language that they were unable to fathom before (table 3) .

All the students seemed to agree in the interviews that proficiency in English was the first requirement to find a job and start a career, Some examples are , ”Being proficient in English is a must to find a job. If you have graduated from an English-medium university, you would be preferred.”; “In employment, one deals with Turks as well as foreigners. With English, I will be ahead of others. ”; “ If you buy something, the instructions come mostly in English, rarely in Turkish. English is needed for survival.”

As far as the gender difference is concerned, females seem to be more inclined towards integrative orientation and males instrumental, similar to some of the reported by Lin and Warschauer (2011).

It appears that students are motivated by globalization and the requirements of a global workforce for which English needs to be cultivated and improved.

DISCUSSION

The current study established three orientations that motivated Turkish university students to learn English. These are the students’ desire to succeed in life using English as a stepping-stone, need to integrate into international community and aspiration for educational achievements. Utilization of media in English, establishment and maintenance of contacts with foreigners, finding a job in Turkey or preferably abroad seem to be the driving forces of integration into international community.

The reason behind the desire of the university students to be proficient in English seems to be improving career prospects. The perceptions of the students are well-founded considering the fact that a substantial portion of the lucrative positions are advertised in English and other European languages. This finding differs from an earlier study (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2009) conducted in Turkey in which students attending preparatory classes of a university participated and in which instrumental and integrative orientations blended. However, The results of the current study do agree with those from another study (Kızıltepe, 2000) which clearly identified participants having both orientations.

The analysis of the open-ended questions and the interviews undoubtedly indicated that the participants covet integration into an international community by

working in an international company, working abroad, having foreign contacts, following media in English, etc.. In the Turkish context, it appears that pragmatic reasons for learning English surpass those of integration into a target community. Along the same lines, in the Japanese context, Yashima (2000) found that students associate English with international community rather than a target language community and that their main contention was fitting in. These can be interpreted as an outcome of globalization and the emerging status of English as an international language around the world. They also show that English is no longer seen as a property of the native speakers but rather as an international medium that all communities benefit. In this EFL context, it may be inferred that Gardner's notion of integrative orientation towards a single community has been modified to an orientation towards an international community.

Furthermore, the current study seems to strengthen Gardner's notion of instrumental orientation. In this study, the instrumental and integrative orientations are clearly designated, with students showing a propensity for the instrumental. On the other hand, in a number of studies (see for example, Bradford, 2007; Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2012; Cid, Granena and Tragant, 2009; Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000) the distinction between instrumental and integrative orientation seems to be blurred. This may be a result of wishing for a single language that may be used all around the world, offering a means of communication for all purposes and for all individuals, similar to the concept of money. According to the participants of this study, however, the demarcation between integrative and instrumental orientations are clearly drawn, with instrumental having the upper hand. The outcome points out that educational and integrative orientations are not rejected but the preference seems to lie with the pragmatic approach, the instrumental orientation.

Landing a lucrative position in a reputable firm seems to play a significant role in being motivated to learn English. This result is consistent with other studies conducted in various EFL contexts. Although a variety of orientations have been unearthed, students' yearning to find a well-paying and prominent job seems to dominate all others (see, for example, Bradford, 2007; Karahan, 2007; Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008). Bradford (2007) reported that for Indonesian university students the primary concern for learning English was to find an alluring and well-paying job, followed by a desire to get ahead and to be successful. Kyriacou & Zhu (2008) witnessed the same outlook in Shanghai where senior high school students wanted to learn English for future career development. Both Lamb (2004) and Karahan (2007) stated that high school students believed that English could help their career prospects. Ping (2009)

illustrated that language learners' perception of social needs impact their effort directly and that Chinese university students made efforts to learn English since they perceive it as a social need.

A number of limiting factors may be taken into consideration for this study. The first limitation is the fact that the study is conducted in a single institution, a matter that hinders generalization. The second constraint is the lack of earlier research which might have been used for comparison among universities in this country. The medium of instruction is another drawback. As the medium of instruction is English, results obtained can only be used to infer about universities that provide education in English. And the final limiting factor is the fact that all the respondents are of the first year – inclusion of upper classes may make a difference.

In conclusion, it appears that in various EFL contexts, language learners want to learn English in order to find a job with a good salary and prospects, which may suggest that language learners regard English as a short-cut to success. In today's social milieu, Norton's (1995) notion of "investment" seems to delineate the complex nature of the relationship between language learners and the target language better than "motivation". According to Norton (1995), "if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return on that investment – a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources" (p17). Although Norton developed her theory to explain the motivation of immigrants to learn English in the Canadian ESL context, her concept of investment may be put to use for elucidating EFL students' desire to learn English. These learners seem to invest their time and intellectual effort to learn English with the expectation of a lucrative position, a prominent social status and being connected to the global community. In short, the English language learners' motivation in EFL context can not be understood without taking globalization into consideration. In this rapidly globalizing world, language learners seem to perceive English as a required skill to find a job in a growing international job market.

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