

The Effect Of Pupils' Motivation And Attitudes on EFL Learning in Adrar Middle Schools

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Received:07/06/2022 Accepted:05/04/2023 Published: 07/06/2023

Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effect of middle school learners' attitudes and motivation on learning English as a foreign language in Adrar, Algeria. It seeks to understand the role of these two psychological factors in the success of the English learning process in Algerian middle schools. To achieve this, data were collected through a questionnaire that was distributed to a randomly selected sample of 242 middle school pupils at different levels. The questionnaire was based on the Attitude/Motivation Battery which is constructed by Gardner (1985). Data analysis was descriptive. The results revealed that the pupils had positive cognitive, emotional and behavioral attitudes toward learning English, and thus they have higher motivation. Furthermore, the results showed that females are more motivated than male learners. Based on this, teachers are recommended to incorporate more convenient methods and strategies that increase the learners' motivation and help them develop positive attitudes toward EFL learning.

Keywords: learning, English, foreign language, attitude, motivation, middle school

ملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الى التعرف على مدى تأثير المواقف و الدافعية لدى المتعلمين في الطور المتوسط على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في منطقة ادرار بالجزائر. كما تهدف الى ابراز أهمية الجانب النفسي في إنجاح تعلم اللغة. وقد جمعت البيانات من خلال استبيان أجاب عليه 242 تلميذا في مختلف المستويات. و قد استوحى الباحث بعض الأسئلة من مقياس Attitude/MotivationTest Battery الذي صممه قارندر سنة 1985. وقد استخدم مقياس ليكارت الخماسي لمعرفة شدة مواقف التلاميذ (مواقف بشدة, موافق, حيادي, غير موافق, وغير موافق بشدة), وقد أظهر تحليل النتائج ان التلاميذ لديهم مواقف فكرية, مشاعرية, سلوكية إيجابية تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية وان لديهم دافعية عالية ومتنوعة أيضا. وأشارت النتائج الى ان الاناث هم الأكثر دافعية للتعلم. وتوصي الدراسة الى تعزيز هذه الدافعية من طرف الأساتذة باستخدام وسائل وطرق ترغب التلاميذ أكثر وتراعي ميولهم من اجل رفع التحصيل العام في اللغة.

كلمات دالة : التعلم ، اللغة الإنجليزية، لغة اجنبية ، المواقف ، الدافعية ، التعليم المتوسط

1. Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is a challenging task for middle school pupils as they are beginners. Many language researchers believe that success in learning a foreign language is based on the teacher's knowledge and competence rather than on the learners' achievements. Although the teacher invests all knowledge content in a target language, the learners might fail in learning a FL because they lack the motives to learn. Learners must develop a sense of confidence to learn better (Hawk et al., 2000). Noticeably, learning a foreign language depends on the student's readiness, their attitudes and beliefs toward the target language.

In this study, the focus is both on the motivation and attitudes toward English as a foreign language (EFL). In the process of learning, the learners develop some orientations which shows their liking or disliking for English learning. In the meantime, motivation and attitudes toward English are also influenced by other factors. Early in the first stages of their studying for English, learners encounter various obstacles that may hinder their motivation. Unlike Arabic, the mother tongue, English has a distinct syntax, vocabulary and grammar. The difficulty may result in some negative attitudes for some learners, which would influence their motivation in EFL learning. Furthermore, the drives to learn are varied from one learner to another. While some find the pleasure in language itself, others find the pleasure in the benefits and goals for studying it. In an attempt to understand the effect of both factors, the current study aims to investigate the following questions:

- 1) Does attitude affect EFL learning?
- 2) Does motivation affect EFL learning?
- 3) Do middle school learners have positive attitudes toward learning English?
- 4) Is there any difference between male and female learners in terms of their attitude and motivation toward EFL learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitudes

People shape certain orientations toward objects as a form of attitude. Thurstone (1931) defines attitude as the feeling toward or against a psychological object (i.e, positive or negative). Furthermore,

Gardner (1985) defines attitude as an evaluation that an individual shows regarding the object on the basis of his/her beliefs system. Attitude has three aspects: the first is the object of attitude which can be a human, an institution or an abstract concept such as religion or education. The second aspect is human perception of the object which can be positive or negative. The third aspect is the reaction or behavior that individual demonstrates in accordance with the prevailing belief.

Language attitude is a significant factor in its learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) ensure the important role of attitude that exerts great impact on learners' abilities to learn a foreign language. In contrast to the students with negative attitudes, those who hold positive attitudes have great willing to invest time and efforts, and to improve their skills inside and even outside classroom. The concept of attitude toward language reflects expressions such as ease, difficulty, degree of importance, elegance of language and even social status (Richard and Smith, 2002). These elements can lead learners to change their attitude.

There are three components for attitude: first, the cognitive component which refers to the beliefs and perceptions about language. Second, the affective component which implies the degree of liking or disliking, associated with a teacher and language class (Gan, 2004). The third component is the behavioral attitude which refers to the consistent action or behavioral intention toward the object (Wenden, 1991)

Additionally, personality and social factors affect language attitude. According to Getie (2020), the social factors as English speakers, peer groups, learners' parents influence positively the attitude of language learners, taking into account that individuals' beliefs in their society. In addition to the educational elements such as language teachers, school learning environment and textbook. Understandably, attitude is related to the extent that learners are motivated to and to the way that determines their intention to learn the language or not.

22.. Motivation

The concept of Motivation has been widely tackled in the field of human psychology. It refers to the meaning “to be moved to do something” (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Many other researchers have examined motivation from different perspectives. For instance, Boussard and Garrison (2004, p.106) defines it as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something. Brown (1987, p 114) defines motivation as “an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action.” These actions serve certain goals. As Bhatia (2004) puts it, motivation is stimulation or action toward a particular goal where there is little attraction to the action.

2.2.1. Types of Motivation

2.2.1.1. Integrative Motivation

Learners have different reasons to learn a foreign language. This determines the way they are driven to learn a language. Some learn a language for the purpose to be integrated into L2 society; this type is called integrative motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) define integrative motivation as the desire to associate with speakers of the target language out of interest in their language or culture. Later, Gardner (1985) assures that some learners are interactively motivated to learn a second language because they have a positive feeling toward the community that speaks the target language. As a result, these learners display a great desire to successfully integrate into that community (Gilakjani et al., 2012) for personal growth or cultural enrichment. Ellis (1994) guarantees that integrative motivation is the best type for FL learning. Nevertheless, such a view might fit some learners but not all of them, particularly middle school learners who are too young to think of emigration.

2.2.1.2 Instrumental Motivation

Unlike integrative motivation, instrumental motivation refers to the factors that drive learners to achieve practical benefits (Zhang et al., 2020). In the case of foreign language, Lambert and Gardner (1972) note that instrumental motivation means accomplishing the practical value and advantages of learning a new language. This usually connects to pragmatic gain because, here, learning a language has a

specific purpose such as getting a job, passing an exam, and meeting an educational requirement (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). This type helps more learners who lack enjoyment in learning for its sake.

2.2.1.3. Intrinsic Motivation

Deci and Ryan are the pioneers of Self-Determination Theory in which they divide motivation into two forms: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation implies the activities done for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself whereas extrinsic motivation refers to actions carried out to achieve certain instrumental ends as earning rewards or to avoid punishment (Pulido et al., 2010). Noel (2001) correlates intrinsic motivation to integrative motivation, but they are not totally identical. Deci and Ryan (1985) define intrinsic motivation as a desire to perform actions simply for the pleasure which accompanies the action. These feelings of pleasure come from innate needs for competence and self-determination (cited in Noel et al., 1999). People who have intrinsic motivation feel that they do tasks voluntarily. These tasks represent a challenge to their existing competencies and require the use of creative capabilities. In an L2 learning context, Feng and Poh Kiat Ng (2015) think that learners are assumed to be intrinsically motivated when they learn the target language for its sake. Intrinsic motivation is defined as the extent to which the individuals strive to learn a language for the sake of satisfaction inherent in this activity. The reward for that is inherent in the enjoyment of the activity itself or the feeling of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

2.2.1.4. Extrinsic Motivation

Unlike intrinsically motivated learners, some can be motivated because they will achieve some external goals. They are called extrinsic motivated learners. Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity for attaining some separable outcomes (Dennis et al., 2010). It is mainly the action done to achieve other instrumental ends such as avoiding punishment or earning rewards. Therefore, extrinsically motivated people enjoy taking part in activities due to the reasons which are not related to these activities (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). This means that enjoyment in extrinsic motivation is met in the task's environment rather than in the task itself.

For language learning, Brown (as cited in Alizadeh, 2016) determines the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Then he argues that extrinsic motivation may well turn out as integrative form if L2 learner wishes to integrate into L2 culture.

Extrinsic motivation is internalized through different levels to make someone more motivated. Noel et al. (2001) divide extrinsic motivation into 3 subtypes. They are external regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation. These types are proved when one is being more internalized into self-concept than the other. External regulation is a situation when L2 students learn a language for certain pressure or reward that is inherent in the social environment. Ryan and Deci (2000) affirm that such behaviours of external regulation are performed to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency. Therefore, external regulated L2 learner do their best to learn language mainly for the purpose of gaining rewards or acquiring a course credit. The second form is the introjected regulation in which a learner internalizes some reasons as pressure to motivate himself/ herself to learn L2 as doing assignments to impress others by his/her proficiency or to feel guilty if he or she does not do the homework. The form of introjection is *ego involvement* (Nicholls, 1984; Ryan, 1982). People do actions to enhance or maintain self-esteem and the feeling of worth. The final form is the identified regulation, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. An individual feels that the language activity is personally worthwhile.

2.3. Motivation and Attitudes to Learn English as a Foreign Language

Attitude and motivation receives a wide range of importance in learning English as a foreign language. Lambert (1963) advocates a discipline in which a person can learn a foreign language based on the level of motivation and attitude toward it and the ethnocentric predisposition. This psychological modal underlines the cognitive aspect as intelligent language abilities and then affective variables such as motivation and attitude (Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013).

In Chalack and Kassaian's (2010) study, an investigation for the various psychological orientations of Iranian undergraduates toward learning English, they focus on the motivation of learners and their attitudes toward target language and the community it belongs to. On eight domains, the study limits the purposes: interest in English, parental encouragement, motivational intensity, attitudes toward learning English, attitudes toward speaking people, integrative orientation, desire to learn English and instrumental orientation. Gardner (1985) includes all these elements to construct the AMTB (Attitude Motivation Test Battery). A study revealed that Iranian students are motivated for learning English for both integrative and instrumental reasons. Moreover, their attitudes toward target language community is highly positive.

Other studies were conducted in Arab contexts to investigate EFL learner's motivation and attitudes. In Yemen, Al-Quyadi (2002) found that Yemeni learners had similarly a high level of both instrumental and integrative motivation, and they had positive attitudes towards the English language. Additionally, Qashoa (2006) devoted a research on secondary school students in Dubai to examine the priority of integrative or instrumental motivation in English learning, then to recognize the factors that affect their motivation. The finding reveals that students have higher degree of instrumental motivation rather than integrative. In Algeria, Mellit and Idri (2019) conducted a study that probed into attitudes the second year EFL learners held toward reading English literary texts at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Setif. Findings demonstrated that the students had a very low reading motivation due to their negative attitudes towards reading English literary texts.

EFL learning is determined also by personality and gender features. Aldersari (2014) posits that females are the best in learning English as they are more motivated than males. Females maintain the best positive attitudes.

EFL learning in some cases is a compulsory task. It is a subject that must be taken as a course. Then learners do not have the choice to quit

or refuse studying it. So, they learn it only to pass exam or to get a future job.

Understandably, attitude and motivation are interrelated in EFL learning. Students who hold a positive attitude toward English learning, have also a higher level of motivation, whereas those with negative attitudes and beliefs are unlikely to be motivated to learn it.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The population chosen for this study was middle school learners from different levels(first, second, third and fourth-year levels), gathered from different school around the city of Adrar. More than 250 had received the questionnaire but only 242 responded. There were 149 female pupils and 93 male ones. The study groups first and second levels together, then groups the third and fourth levels. The first category (first and second levels) consists of 113 participants representing 46.7% of the total number, and the second category comprises 129 participants, representing 53.3%.

3.2. Materials and instruments

As the study purpose to explore the importance of students' attitude and motivation in learning English, the method used is the five Likert scale questionnaire. Some questions in this questionnaire are borrowed from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Battery Test (1985). It is also divided into two main sections, the first section includes three sub-sections (behavioral, cognitive and emotional attitudes), and the second is devoted to motivation. Questions cover each type of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental and integrative). The questionnaire consists of 27 questions. The respondents were asked to tick (✓) under the most convenient option.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested through a Cronbach's Alpha test, with 31 students. Four items were deleted after this exploratory study:1) "learning English is very difficult"; 2) "I cannot apply knowledge that I learned in real life"; 3) "I do not get anxious to answer any question in English class"; 4) "I feel bored in

English class.” As all students shared the same answer. The reliability score is 0.649

3.4. Data Analysis and Techniques

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v. 26). Frequencies, the mean and standard deviation were computed to ascertain the types and frequencies of the students' attitudes and motivation toward EFL learning. The study uses t-test and ANOVA test.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The study selected randomly three middle schools to conduct the study. Middle school learners are still beginners for EFL learning, and they may face difficulties to answer a foreign language questionnaire, that is why the researcher translated it into their mother tongue (Arabic). After taking the permission form teachers of English to take parts their sessions' time to explain the questionnaire carefully. Pupils were given enough time to think and were even allowed to take the questionnaire home and submit it the following day.

3.6. Results

Beginning with the first section, it is devoted to the general information about the learner's background in learning English. The participants are requested to tick their geographical area. (52.9 %) are from the city center of Adrar and (47.1%) are from rural areas. Gender information revealed that 61.6 % are female and 38.4 % are males. Age group is divided into three groups: 57.0 % between age (11and 13), 34.7 % are placed between (14 and15) years old) and finally, 08.3 % are found between (16 and 17). Students also have to tick their educational level to examine if motivation and attitude are affected by the learner's level. Frequency results shows that 46.7 % are between first and second year. Finally, 53.3 % learn between the third and the fourth level.

3.6.1. Learners' Attitudes toward EFL Learning

The first section of the questionnaire is devoted to the three types of attitudes. It aims to investigate how learners believe, feel, and behave toward learning English as a foreign language. In the first

sub-section of behavioral attitude, the high scores reported by students show that they have a positive attitude, for instance, 42% of respondents strongly agree that they like to be able to achieve native-like English practicing level English. Furthermore, 42.6 % agree that they enjoy speaking English with fluent speakers of English. On the contrary, negative statement receives low scores. 43% strongly disagree that they are not interested in doing homework of English lessons. So, behavioral attitude toward EFL learning score (mean = 3.10 and SD=0.61) has medium level of agreement.

The second subsection reveals the findings of cognitive attitude. 30% of learners agree that success in learning English enables them to succeed in other subjects. Then, 33% agree, and 43% strongly agree with the idea that learning English makes them more knowledgeable, and that the content of the English course covers different fields' knowledge.

For the third part which is concerned with emotional attitudes part, the results demonstrate that most students have positive attitudes about learning English as shown in statements as: "learning English is enjoyable," 35 % agree and 40% strongly agree. for the statement "I feel proud and confident when I get a good grade in English exams," 68% respond with strongly disagree, and only 2% disagree on "I feel proud and more self-confident when I learn English. The majority of respondents representing (31.8%) disagree that they have little interest in English. Emotional attitude is a high degree of agreement with mean value 3.46 and standard deviation (SD) = 0.54. These results indicate that learners have a noticeable positive emotional attitude toward EFL learning.

3.6.2. Learners' Level of Motivation toward EFL Learning

In the motivation section, majority of the respondents' answers show that they are highly motivated to learn English. For the statement "learning English helps me for my future career," the majority with 45% strongly agree whereas the least percentage with 6.6% strongly disagree. Similarly, in "I learn English because it provides me with several future opportunities," the 42% as a majority

strongly agree, 32 % agree and 5.8% strongly disagree. This indicates that students can be instrumentally motivated and they have their reasons to learn English. This does not mean an exclusion of other types of motivation. The learners show an integrative motivation as well. A majority of 50% strongly agree that English helps them integrate with native speakers, but only 3.3% disagree. In response to the statement “English helps me to learn about others' cultures, values and thoughts,” only 7.0% strongly disagree. A percentage of 56.2% agree that learning English allows them to travel abroad. A majority of respondents strongly (109 in total, representing 45%) agree with the statement "I learn English because I like it," and 6.2% have strong disagreement as the lowest percentage. In another statement, 40.1% strongly agree that they are autonomous learners of English because they are intrinsically motivated.

The results show that the respondents have an even a high level of agreement in extrinsic motivation. 60% of them agree that they are more motivated to learn English if the teachers have encouraging personality and use effective strategies in EFL teaching, while a few disagree with 1.2%. Moreover, they are motivated by their families 32.2% agree and 31.4 % strongly agree that they are motivated thanks to their parents' encouragement.

3.6.3. The Influence of Attitudes and Motivation on EFL Learning

Table N°1:Result of T-statistical test of the effect of behavioral attitude

Behavioral Attitude	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	calculated T-statistic	Signification
	,103	,610	241	,4892	,014*0

in EFL learning

This table shows that the signification is (0,014) there is a significant difference between the mean 3,10 of the behavioural attitude and the hypothetical mean of the study tool (3) with a risk error (0,05) or 5%. So we conclude that behavioural attitude has a

significant and positive effect on learning English as a foreign language

Table N° 2: Result of T-statistical test of the effect of cognitive attitudes

Cognitive Attitudes	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	calculated T-statistic	Signification
	,223	,670	241	,2055	$\leq 0,001^{***}$

on EFL learning

This table illustrates that there is a very high significant difference between the mean of the cognitive attitude (3,22) and the hypothetical mean of the study tool (3) with a risk error of (0,05) or 5%, therefore, the cognitive attitude has a very high significant and positive effect on EFL learning.

Table N° 3: Result of T-statistical test of the effect of emotional attitude

Emotional Attitude	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	calculated T-statistics	Signification
	,463	,540	241	,30313	$\leq 0,001^{***}$

EFL learning

The result shown in the table demonstrates that it is a high significant difference between the mean of emotional attitude (3,46) and the mean of the study tool (3) with a risk error equivalent to 0,05 or 5% which means that emotional attitude of the learner has a high positive and significant effect on EFL learning.

Table N° 4: Result of T-statistical test of the effect of Motivation on

Motivation	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	calculated T-statistics	Signification
	,923	,720	241	,7219	≤0,001***

EFL learning

The table reveals that result indicates the high significant difference between the mean of motivation (3,92) and the hypothetical mean of the study tool (3) with a risk error equivalent to 0,05 or 5%. This brings into the conclusion that motivation has a very high positive and significant

Table N° 5: Result of ANOVA statistical test of the effect of gender in attitude and motivation on EFL learning

Axes	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF		calculated F-statistics	Signification
				1	2		
Behavioral Attitude	female	,153	,570	1	240	,9552	,087 NS0
	Male	,013	,650				
Cognitive Attitudes	female	,293	,630	1	240	,3293	,069 NS0
	Male	,133	,730				
Emotional Attitude	female	,483	,500	1	240	,4280	,514 NS0
	Male	,433	,600				
Motivation	female	,094	,620	1	240	,21523	≤0,001** *

In this table, findings reveal that there is no significant relationship between gender and behavioral, cognitive, or emotional attitudes to learn English. Male and female learners share the same

attitudes toward English. However, there is a highly significant relationship between gender and motivation. Females (4.09) are highly motivated than male students (3.43). The value ≤ 0.001 reveals that there is a highly significant effect with risk error equal to 0,05.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

As shown in the findings that most EFL learners have highly positive attitudes toward English (in terms of their beliefs, behaviors and emotions). Although, they are highly motivated, students have different underlying motives. While some find pleasure in learning English for its sake, others have reasons to travel abroad to be integrated into the native English speaking communities, and the last group aims just to get good grades and to avoid failure or even to get a future job.

The conclusion is that the learners' level of motivation, which is a result of their attitude and beliefs, determines their success in EFL subject. It is necessary for learners to put this motivation into practice and do their best in learning English. However, despite the fact that EFL learners have a positive attitude, they may have a poor performance in English. Therefore, the task lies primarily on the teachers who should play a vital role in increasing learners' motivation and attitude to enhance English learning. Many strategies and styles can be used for the curriculum goals and meanwhile fulfill the learners' needs. The following recommendations illustrate how the teacher can help the learners to perform better in EFL learning by:

- ✓ Creating a friendly classroom climate where learners feel valued. This safe and comfortable environment will encourage learners to take part in class activities.
- ✓ Personalizing EFL classroom environment: a learner- centeredness has a great influence on language acquisition and personalizing class environment display a high level of motivating learners to do their tasks without fear of being criticized.
- ✓ Creating class situations in which students feel a sense of accomplishment. There, EFL teacher must give positive feedback on learners' mistakes.

Therefore, these learners feel more self-confident to get better achievement

- ✓ Connecting language learning to learners' interest and their life experience. In today digital world, it seems a necessary need for learners to be taught using ICT tools.
- ✓ Providing pair and group work tasks to develop learners' confidence and sense of collaboration. Learners may learn better through sharing, doing and acting.
- ✓ Creating a colorful classroom setting by sticking some English cards, or pictures related to the current sequence. Middle school learners will appreciate learning English in such motivational environment.

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