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Role of L2 Motivation and the Performance of Intermediate Students in The English (L2) Exams in Pakistan

Tahir Ghafoor Malik, M.S., Ph.D. Candidate

Abstract

This paper investigates the role of motivation in the performance of Intermediate students in the English (L2) Exams. Motivation has been regarded as one of the most important factors in the process of second language learning. A class of Intermediate (F.A./F.Sc.) students is studied. Students' motivation is investigated according to Gardner's views on motivation as he described them in his socio-educational model (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

A result of final English (L2) Exam is collected in order to see whether or not there is a difference between the performance of F.A. (Arts and Humanities) and F.Sc. (Pre-Engineering/Pre-Medical) students in the English exams.

To check the role of motivation in the students' performance, two likert scale questionnaires are developed consisting of 15 items each; one questionnaire for the students and the other for the concerned teacher. The opinion of the concerned teacher is also obtained on a blank piece of paper.

The study shows that there is a big difference between the performance of F.A. and F.Sc. students in the English exams, whereas there is no significant difference between the motivation level of F.A. and F.Sc. students for learning English as L2. So, the paper suggests

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that the L2 motivation does not play a significant role in the better performance of intermediate F.Sc. students in the English exams.

1. Introduction

With particular reference to L2 learning, Gardner states that motivation is “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language” (Gardner 1994). Thus according to Gardner (1994), a motivated individual shows “favorable attitudes toward learning the language”. Oxford summarizes Gardner’s definition of motivation as: “a goal, a desire to attain the goal, positive attitudes toward learning the language, and effortful behavior to that effect.”

Many variables have been proposed and discussed that influence second language learning. Motivation is considered to be one of the most important variables that affect the level of achievement in a second language (L2). In this study, Gardner and MacIntyre’s (1993) socio-educational model of second language acquisition is used to compare the F.A. and F.Sc. students’ motivation and its impact on their scores in the English (L2) exams.

2. Objectives

This paper aims to:

- Measure and compare the levels of motivation of F.A. and F.Sc. students for learning the English (L2) language;
- Investigate the impact of motivation on the better performance of the F.Sc. students than that of the F.A. students; and
- Discuss some of the other related factors which might contribute to the better performance of the F.Sc. students.

3. Literature Review

Gardner and Lambert first made the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation that has led the research in the field of motivation for second language acquisition. Gardner and Lambert (1959) conducted a research and found that an individual’s orientation to learning French as a L2 was related to his or her motivation to learn French, attitudes toward French Canadians, and proficiency in French. According to Gardner (1997), motivation refers to the individual’s attitudes, desires, and effort to learn the L2.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) used the term integrative motivation to refer to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment that is all about the learner’s desires to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community; whereas instrumental motivation is the learner’s motivation required to learn the L2 for functional or external reasons. These include the achievement of goals, practical purposes for learning such as passing exams, promoting a career or gaining promotion. The basic principle of Gardner’s (1985) view of motivation and second language acquisition is that attitude and motivation affect second language acquisition.

Stephen D Krashen (2002) states in his book *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* that the following factors “will attempt to relate posited predictors of second language proficiency to these two functions”:

- Integrative motivation, and
- Instrumental motivation.

Integrative motivation is defined as “the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language, is predicted to relate to proficiency in terms of the two functions.” According to Krashen (2002), the presence of integrative motivation should encourage the acquirer to interact with speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. A low filter for integratively motivated acquirers is also predicted for similar reasons.

Instrumental motivation is defined as “the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian, or practical reasons, may also relate to proficiency”. According to Krashen (2002), its presence will encourage performers to interact with L2 speakers in order to achieve certain ends. So, to an integratively motivated performer, interaction for its own sake will be valued, whereas, to the instrumentally motivated performer, interaction always has some practical purpose.

Krashen (2002) further states that while the presence of integrative motivation predicts a low affective filter, the presence of instrumental motivation predicts a stronger one. With instrumental motivation, language acquisition may cease as soon as enough is acquired to get the job done. Also, instrumentally motivated performers may acquire just those aspects of the target language that are necessary; at an elementary level, this may be simple routines and patterns, and at a more advanced level this predicts the non-acquisition of elements that are communicatively less important but that are socially important, such as aspects of morphology and accent.

Brown (1994) makes the point that both integrative and instrumental motivations are mutually inclusive. Most situations in learning language involve a mixture of each type of motivation. In fact, it is difficult to attribute learning language success to certain integrative or instrumental causes.

3.1 Gardner’s Socio-educational Model

In his socio-educational model, Gardner (1982) identified a number of factors which are interrelated in the process of learning a second language. Unlike other research carried out in the area, Gardner's model looks specifically at second language acquisition in a structured classroom setting rather than a natural environment. His work focuses on the foreign language classroom. The model presents four features of second language acquisition. These include the social and cultural milieu, individual learner differences, the setting or context in which learning takes place and linguistic outcomes (Gardner 1982).

Within the model, motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements. These include effort, desire and affect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language, and affect illustrates the learner's emotional reactions with regard to language study (Gardner 1982). Later, Gardner (1995) modified the last component and suggests that motivation includes three components:

- (a) effort expended to achieve a goal,
- (b) a desire to learn the language, and
- (c) satisfaction with the task of learning the language.

He argues that effort by itself is not a complete description of motivation because individuals might expend considerable effort to please a teacher or a parent without any real motivation to learn the L2. Similarly, desire to learn the language or satisfaction with learning the language does not in themselves reflect true motivation. They must coexist with effort.

Gardner (as cited by Noels et al., 2001) maintains that motivation is basically the extent of the effort an individual is willing to exert to achieve the goal of learning a language because of a desire to do so and of favorable attitudes toward such language. In line with Krashen, Noels et al. (2001) also states that several goals, or orientations, have been proposed, but two have received the most empirical attention.

The first is *instrumental* orientation, which tackles reasons for language learning that emphasize the pragmatic consequences of L2 learning, such as job-hunting or improving one's education. The second is *integrative* orientation, which refers to reasons relating to interaction and communication with members of the L2 community for social-emotional purposes.

Gardner et al. (2002) further state that an "integrative" component consistently emerges in empirical studies, even in the most diverse contexts. It reflects a considerable portion of the variance in language learners' motivational disposition and motivated learning behavior. An example is the research carried out by Noels et al. (2001) in which the researchers consider the relations between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the integrative orientation. It investigated 59 French Canadian students studying English in a summer immersion course. The participants were required to complete a questionnaire dealing with their reasons for L2 learning. The researchers state that their subjects showed a high level of motivation. Two main reasons were given; one, the students' interest in getting to know the English culture better and second, to achieve valued personal goals or tangible rewards, such as jobs or course credits.

4. Methodology

4.1 Subjects

The study was conducted on an Intermediate English class consisting of 47 students. Twenty five of them were doing F.A. (Group A in the study) and twenty two were doing F.Sc. (Group

B in the study). Although their other subjects were different, they were studying English in the same class by the same teacher.

4.2 Procedure

First, the result of the final English exam of the Intermediate English class was collected. Second, the teacher's general remarks (**Annexure-I**) were obtained on a blank piece of paper so as to get the teacher's views on the performance of the F.A./F.Sc. students. Third, a questionnaire (**Annexure-II**) was made; containing 15 items related to motivation and it was answered by the students. The items of the questionnaire were presented in a random order. Finally, the teacher's views were also obtained in a controlled way through a questionnaire (**Annexure-III**) that contained 15 items related to the factors that might influence the performance of F.A./ F.Sc. students.

5. Analyses of the Data and Results

5.1 F.A./F.Sc.. English Result

The result of the final English exam was collected of total 100 marks. The result clearly show that F.Sc. students have outperformed F.A. students as mentioned below:

Table 1: The Final English Result

Division of the marks obtained into 10s	No. of F.A. students	No. of F.Sc. students
21-30	4	0
31-40	11	1
41-50	7	2
51-60	2	8
61-70	0	8
71-80	0	3

Table 2: The Final English Result

	Minimum marks obtained	Maximum marks obtained
F.A.	23	56
F.Sc.	36	78

The above tables of the final English exam show that the F.Sc. students have scored far better than the F.A. students. No F.Sc. student is placed below 30 marks, and no F.A. student could reach beyond 60 marks. The maximum score by an F.Sc. student is 78, whereas by an F.A. student it is 56. Similarly, minimum marks by an F.A. student are 23, and 36 by an F.Sc. student. Remarkably, 16 out of 22 F.Sc. students are found between 51 to 70 marks; whereas only two F.A. students could reach at this level.

5.2 Analysis of the Questionnaire through SPSS

The students' motivation was measured using a questionnaire and the data were put into SPSS for further analysis. A total of 41 students out of 47 answered the questionnaire. One-way ANOVA test was used for data analysis, and the results were as under:

Table 3 & 4: ANOVA

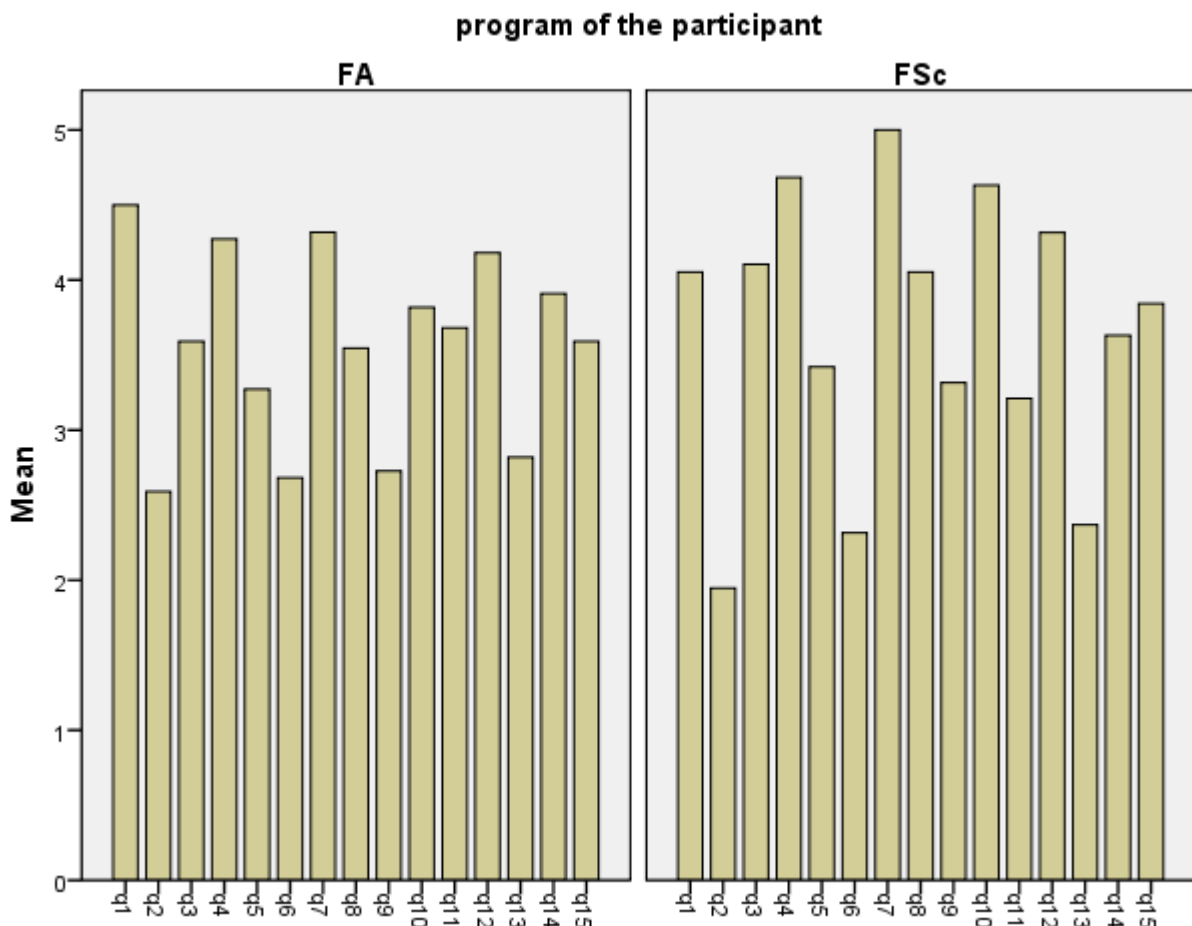
mean value of the respondents

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
F.A.	22	3.5667	.46542
F.Sc.	19	3.6596	.38675
Total	41	3.6098	.42806

mean value of the respondents

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.088	1	.088	.475	.495
Within Groups	7.241	39	.186		
Total	7.329	40			

The above results show that there is no significant difference between the levels of motivation of F.A. and F.Sc. students. The mean score of F.A. students on the motivation scale is 3.57 and the mean score of F.Sc. students is 3.67. Furthermore, the significance value of 0.495 shows that there is no significant difference between the performance of both the groups on the motivation scale. Both the groups under study display similar performance on the motivation scale as shown by the graph below:



5.3 Teacher's remarks

The concerned teacher in the study has been teaching to the Intermediate classes for more than twelve years. According to him, F.Sc. students always perform better in English exams due to the factors mentioned below:

- The F.Sc. students are not more intelligent, neither their confidence contributes to their better performance, but they are more serious in their studies.
- The F.Sc. students enjoy more prestige in society.
- The F.Sc. students are imbued with the impression that F.Sc. will bring them more prestige in society in future.
- The F.Sc. students are more hard working.

As far the teacher's responses on the questionnaire are concerned, he agrees with the statements mentioned below:

- F.Sc. students get better marks because most of their other subjects are also in English.

- F.Sc. students get better marks because their goal is specific in the form of getting admission to any professional institute.
- F.Sc. students are more socially admired.
- F.Sc. students are more analytical.
- F.Sc. students are more hardworking.
- F.Sc. students are more desirous of getting better marks in every subject including English.

6. Discussion

The study shows that the F.Sc. students (Group B) get better marks in the English exams, but it does not necessarily mean that their motivation to learn English (L2) language is higher than that of F.A. students (Group A); because both the groups display almost same levels of motivation in the study. If we discuss the finding in the light of Gardner's model, we see that Gardner and Lambert (1972) used the term integrative motivation to refer to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment that shows the learner's desires to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. Both the groups do not show this motivation as most of them do not agree that they are interested in the English culture. Instrumental motivation is the learner's motivation required to learn the L2 for functional or external reasons. These include the achievement of goals, practical purposes for learning such as passing exams, promoting a career or gaining promotion. The students of both the groups do show good level of instrumental motivation as many of them agree on the following questionnaire items:

- Learning English is important to me because it will enable me to be successful in future.
- Learning English would help me get better job.
- I study English which I feel is relevant to my future needs.
- The only reason I study English is because I have to get good marks.

Now discussing the better performance of F.Sc. students, we may say that the contributing factor might be the better exposure of F.Sc. students to English language. Most of the courses of F.Sc. students are in English language, so they are more exposed to the structure of English language. Societal role may also be important as it is true that the F.Sc. students enjoy more prestige in Pakistani society. F.Sc. students are frequently told that this is the most important time in their lives and that they can change their lives by getting admission to any professional institute. So they become more ambitious and put more effort so as to get better marks in all the courses including English. Although the main focus of the F.Sc. students remain science subjects, they put more attention to their English subject also than their F.A. counterparts; because the F.A. students are not that much ambitious and so they do not put much effort for better marks.

7. Conclusion

The study shows that there is no significant impact of L2 motivation on the better performance of the F.Sc. students in the English exams. The motivation levels of both the

groups in the study are almost same. Nonetheless, as one group (F.Sc. students) scored far better than the other group (F.A. students) in the English (L2) exam, so the role of some other factors including exposure to L2, goal specificity, self-confidence, hard work, attention, seriousness, and social admiration, as reported by the concerned teacher and discussed above, may contribute to the F.Sc. students' better performance. The F.Sc. students may not be concerned with the English language itself; rather they just want to get admission to a professional institute and in their effort to attain their goal, they score better in all the courses and even in the English exams.

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Confidence

F-sc students perform better because they are made serious in their studies - Confidence is not the issue in achieving success -

~~are~~
The F.A students are not socially admired. They don't feel their F.A programme will bring them high prestige in society. Those students join F.A classes who ~~think~~ score less in their matriculation -

Some of the F.A students are shining because of their proper and systematic schooling in the past.

The F-sc students are imbued with the impression ~~that~~ ~~either~~ that F-sc will bring them fruits and prestige in the society. There is the more positive propaganda in the society about F-sc programme - so students are more serious and more inclined to join this programme.

The Teacher's Comments

Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a research. Your few minutes to fill this questionnaire will go a long way in understanding some very important aspects of language learning.

I am doing F.A. F.Sc.. (tick the relevant box)

Scale

5=Strongly agree

4=Agree

3=Indecisive

2=Disagree

1=Strongly disagree

No.	Statements	Tick the relevant box				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	I really take pleasure in learning English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I am interested in English culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I think teachers should conduct the lecture as much as possible in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I like my English teacher because his English is good.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I find conversation with people from English speaking countries pleasant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The only reason I study English is because I have to get good marks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Learning English is important to me because it will enable me to be successful in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I would like to travel to countries such as the USA, Australia, and England in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I like my English teacher to use a lot of Urdu in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Learning English would help me get better job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	I intend to continue studying English in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I like to memorize English words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I like my teacher to speak only English in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I study English which I feel is relevant to my future needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	I do not like it when an English class is too difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thanks for your participation

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Questionnaire

Dear Sir,

I am conducting a research. Your few minutes to fill this questionnaire will go a long way in understanding some very important aspects of language learning.

Scale

5=Strongly agree

4=Agree

3=Indecisive

2=Disagree

1=Strongly disagree

No.	Statements	Tick the relevant box				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	F.Sc. students are more intelligent that is why they perform better than F.A. students in English exams.					
2	F.A. students study English as a major subject.					
3	F.Sc. students get better marks because most of their other subjects are also in English.					
4	F.Sc. students get better marks because their goal is specific in the form of getting admission to any professional institute.					
5	F.Sc. students score better because they are more confident.					
6	F.A. students do not get good marks because they do not have an immediate goal in front of them right after doing F.A..					
7	F.Sc. students perform better because they believe they can score better.					
8	F.A. students are more hard working.					
9	Teachers give more attention to F.Sc. students.					
10	F.Sc. students are more socially admired.					
11	F.Sc. students are more analytical.					
12	F.Sc. students are more hardworking.					
13	F.A. students give more attention to English.					
14	F.Sc. students are more desirous of getting better marks in every subject including English.					
15	I prefer to teach to F.Sc. students.					

Thanks for your participation

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