

**Motivation towards Learning  
English among Dental Freshmen of  
Delta University**

**By:**

**Dr. Abdelrahman E. AlAdl**

Lecturer of English  
Delta University for Science and Technology  
Egypt- Gamasa, International Road

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### **Introduction:**

Previous research in the field of medical science showed that English language is an important tool in the academic and professional lives of the medical students. Among different factors contributing to foreign language learning, different aspects such as attitude, motivation, and background are of great significance. Among these factors, learners' attitude towards language learning is regarded as a key role in motivating the students to learn the foreign language. Motivation plays a basic role in developing students' learning a new language.

Although the majority of medical students know the importance of English language as a medium of communication and academia, some still lack sufficient motivation for different reasons including; teaching practices, the inability to relate English to real life situations, lack of interest in English culture and values, and the negative perspective of what learning a foreign language for.

English has become the common language of international experts in a wide range of subjects, such as medicine, the natural sciences and the social sciences. Consequently, the language teaching profession has seen the emergence of language teaching for specific purposes. As technological and transportation advances have created a "global" society, that globalization has brought many professions and vocations into the international domain. The sub-field of English for Specific Purposes has emerged out of the field of English as a Second Language to meet

the specific academic and professional needs of learners. Courses in ESP focus on the specific vocabulary and the unique language skills those in a given field are likely to require.

**Statement of the problem:****- Learning English in Delta University for Science:**

In Delta University English is a compulsory subject in all colleges and all the students must pass English as foreign language before they can graduate from the university. Currently because of job scarcity, educational advancement and similar reasons more and more college students from all walks of life are also realizing the importance of learning this language and have become more interested in learning the language proficiently (Chalak and Kassaian 2010). Also, as an important part of the university entrance examinations, learning English helps the aspiring university students gain acceptance into good universities and study high valued majors. Therefore, instructors are forced to educate students in a manner which will prove most useful to them, which is based on grammar translation. Egyptian students are therefore very restricted in using the language in real life context, and study English mostly for achievements in these examinations. Basically it seems that the driving force and motivating factors behind learning English are undertaking such university exams and not integrating into the target language community. (Hashemi& Hadavi 2014)

Moreover, due to many social factors including lack of English speaking communication, lack of face to face contact with native English speakers and grammar based teachings methods at high schools, it seems that the long process of teaching English in Egypt has not shown much success in helping young people learn English proficiently. Since English language is the medium of instruction in

many medical courses, and medical students who are proficient in English have a higher and better opportunity to be admitted to an academically university for continuing specialized and professional fields of study, medical and dentistry students seem to be and are expected to be more proficient in English. This study was devised to study the motivational orientation of the students of dentistry in learning English. The question addressed through this study was: what are the motivational orientations of the dental students at Delta University?

### **Review of Literature:**

Many researchers dealing with the area of teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) have explored the role of various socio-educational factors which might affect language learning. Gardner (1985) has introduced a number of factors which are interrelated when learning a second language. This model correlates four features of second language acquisition, which include the social and cultural milieu, individual learner differences, the setting or context in which learning takes place and linguistic outcomes. Gardener's model also introduces the four individual differences which are to be the most influential in second language acquisition, which include intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. In this model motivation is a key factor which is composed of three elements of effort, desire and affect.

Motivation is divided into two basic types: integrative and instrumental (Gardner 1985). Integrative motivation is characterized by the learner's positive attitude towards the target language group and the desire to ingrate into the target language community. Gardner (1985), found that integrative and attitudes toward the learning situation have directly affected motivation. Instrumental motivation is characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or

concrete from the second language and is more utilitarian such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation (Norris-Holt 2001).

Motivation plays a major role in learning and represents one of the most appealing and complex variables used to explain individual differences in language learning (Norris-Holt, 2001). Researchers have defined motivation in different terms. It has also been identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Crooke & Schmidt, 1991). Gardner (1985) defines motivation: "...as the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language". Brown (2000) states that: "motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action". In the behaviorist school of thought motivation has been termed "the anticipation of reward" (Brown, 2000). Oxford and Shearin (1994) state that it is of utmost importance to understand students' motivation which directly affects the utilization of language learning strategies. It has also been reported that highly motivated students use more strategies in learning the second language and therefore obtain better results in the long run (Oxford, 1996).

ESP researchers believe that identifying the motivating factors of the learners is very important in how they use these language strategies (Tamada, 1997). Dornyei (2006, p. xi) believes that motivation to learn a foreign language is not just an individualistic affair but is related to various social attitudes which exist in the learner's community regarding the target language group. According to Gardner's theory of motivation (1985, 2006) there are two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to

learn a language for utilitarian purposes such as employment or travel whereas integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community.

Finegan (1999: 568) goes one step further and claims that integratively motivated students achieve: "a wide range of registers and native like pronunciation.

While both integrative and instrumental motivations are very important in the successful learning of a second language, it has been argued that it is integrative motivation which sustains long term success when learning a second language (Norris-Holt, 2005). She further stresses that integrative motivation: "is continually linked to successful second language acquisition, and the students who support an integrative approach to language study are usually more highly motivated and overall more successful in language learning."

Brown (2000) point out that both integrative and instrumental motivation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Learners rarely select one kind of motivation in preference to another, rather a combination of both orientations is usually at play. Brown (2000) for instance gives example of international students residing in the United States, who are learning English for academic purposes as well as wishing to become integrated into the people and culture of the country, at the same time.

In a study of (Al- Tamimi and Shuib; 2009), it was also found that the subjects had higher instrumentality than integrative motivations, but the Yemeni students had high levels of instrumental and integrative motivations.

Qashoa (2006) conducted a study on secondary school students in Dubai which aimed to examine the students' motivation for learning English, and identify the factors affecting learners' motivation. It was found that the

participants' instrumental motivation was higher than integrative motivation. Further, difficulties related to English vocabulary, structures and spelling were reported to be the most demotivating factors for such learners.

At last, the objectives of Al-Qahtani (2013) study, were First, to explore the learning strategies used to study English as a second language. Second, to identify students' motivations for studying English. Third, to assess students' perceptions toward their learning environment. Fourth, to investigate students' attitude towards the speakers of English. Fifth, to explore any possible relationships among English language proficiency grades of students and the following: demographic variables, grades for their general medical courses, learning strategies, motivational variables, attitudes, and environmental variables. It is also the aim of this study to explore the relationships between English language learning strategies and motivational variables. The study showed that students utilize all types of language learning strategies. However, cognitive strategies were the most frequently utilized. Students considered their learning environment as more positive than negative. Students were happy with their teacher, and with their English courses. Students held a positive attitude toward English speaking people. Achievement in English was associated positively with performance in the general medical courses, motivation, and social learning strategies.

The study of Hashemi & Hadavi (2014) was devised to determine the motivational orientations of medical and dentistry students at Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences (RUMS) in English language acquisition. In this cross- descriptive study, 200 students of the dentistry and medical schools were chosen by census sampling method in 2009. The data gathering method was the integrative and instrumental motivation scale of Gardner, which was



adapted to a 5 point likert's scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). The questions of 1-12 indicated the integrative and 13-25 indicated the instrumentality motivation. Two open ended question were included to measure language self efficacy of the students to rate their own English proficiency level and elicit qualitative information to see whether there has been any change in the level of their motivation. The data were analyzed, using SPSS14, t test and Chi square: The results indicated that the students were highly motivated to learn English and there was no statistically significant differences on instrumental versus integrative motivational orientations of these students ( $p=0.07$ ). This study indicated high motivation for learning English among the medical and dentistry students at RUMS. Considering the importance of learning English for the students, language teachers and program developers should assist the students and plan better and comprehensive programs for teaching English at the university level which would include involving the students in the actual use of the English language.

All of these studies confirm the importance of identifying learners' motivation towards learning English language. It is no doubt that motivation is an important factor in L2 achievement. Considering the issues discussed above, the present study was designed to explore the personal integrative and instrumental motivation of dental students at Delta University.

### **Objectives of the study:**

This study aims at investigating dental students' motivation towards learning the English language, moreover to determine which of the two types of motivation, instrumental and personal, could be the primary

source of students' motivation towards learning the English language.

**Methodology:**

This section presents a description of the instrument employed to elicit data as well as a description of the population and the area where the study was conducted. It also specifies the procedures which were followed to carry out this study.

This study was conducted to identify Dental students' motivation towards learning English language. To achieve this objective, two research tools were used namely, questionnaire and interview.

**The Participants:**

The population was consisted of freshmen students of Dentistry College at Delta University. The sample was made up of 100 students enrolled in the first level during the academic year 2015- 2016.

**Students' Questionnaire:**

It consisted of two sections: the first used to collect information regarding the students' background. Section B consisted of two parts which included questions to identify students' motivation to learn the English language. The researchers adapted these questions from Qashoa (2006) based on two scales of Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (the instrumental and integrative orientation scales). These reasons represented the three motivational constructs namely, instrumental motivation (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) and personal motivation (items 7, 8, 9 and 10).

On the other hand, the students were asked to answer a question on whether or not they are interested in attending more English language training courses to improve their proficiency in the English language. Answering such a question is of great importance to know about their desire

for learning the language which is considered one of the main components of language learning motivation (Gardner, 2006).

To ensure its validity, the questionnaire was piloted prior to carrying out the main study. On the basis of the outcome from the pilot study, the questionnaire was amended and the final draft was prepared for the main study.

Besides the questionnaire, interviews were used to obtain data to supplement the students' responses to the questionnaire. The students were asked questions related to their motivation towards the English language. The interviewees were asked about 1) their reasons for learning English, 2) their interest to attend more training courses in English, and 3) their attitudes towards the English language importance for their major studying

#### **Data collection:**

Prior to distributing the questionnaire and conducting the interviews, the students were informed of the objectives and significance of the research. The data collected in the present study was of two types i.e. quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data of the questionnaires were analysed in terms of means, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and percentages. For analysing the qualitative part of the data, on the other hand, a content analysis method was used. In the analysis process, the interviewees' responses for each question were firstly translated into English and then transcribed. After that, the responses were analysed in terms of item related to the study aims.

#### **Discussion of results and Recommendations:**

This section presents a discussion of the study results according to the order of the main objective. In other words,

the results with regard to dental students' motivation towards learning English.

**Results:**

To identify the students' motivation towards learning the English language, they were asked to first, rank a list of six reasons in terms of importance in enhancing their learning of the English language and second, they were requested to answer a question on whether or not they are interested in attending more English language training courses to improve their English proficiency. Table 1 shows mean values representing the subjects' responses to the former question. The means are simply arithmetic average of the responses with 1 point assigned for "not important", 2 for "of little importance", 3 for "of some importance", 4 for "important" and 5 for "very important". On the other hand, Table 2 shows percentages representing the subjects' responses to the yes, no question.

Table1: The students' results on their motivation for learning English

Motivational Constructs	Reasons for Learning English	N	Mean	SD	Overall Mean
Academic motivation	1- Because it will enable me to carry my tasks more efficiently	100	4.7037	.789	4.45
	2- Because it will enable me to get a job easily	100	4.712	.765	
	3- Because I hope to further my education	100	4.69	.839	
	4- Because it is a university requirement	100	4.284	1.043	
	5- to search for information and materials in English on the Internet	100	4.471	.812	
	6- Successful dentist should be able to speak English.	100	4.832	1.09	
personal motivation	1- To participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups	100	3.06	1.56	3.93
	2- To meet and converse with more and varied people	100	3.68	.905	
	3- To integrate the personal development	100	4.11	1.23	
	4- to know various cultures and peoples	100	3.83	.959	

The comparison of the overall mean scores between the two types of motivations Academic (4.45) and personal (3.93) indicated no significant statistical differences. Academic motivation (items 1, 2, 3, and 4) received the highest mean scores, of all the subjects' results, (overall mean=4.5000) as shown in Table 1. For example, the students highly favoured learning English for the purpose of getting a job as this reason had received the highest mean score i.e. 4.712. Learning English to enable them to carry their tasks more efficiently was followed next in order (mean=4.7037). The remaining academic motives i.e. as it is a university requirement and to further their education were also considered as important reasons to the students with mean scores 4.2840 and 4.69 respectively.

For the personal type of motivation, the results in Table 1 indicate that it had the least impact on students' English language learning. That is, the least number of the subjects (mean=2.5802) had the view that meeting and converse with more and varied people”.

Given the subjects' reasons to learn the English language, these subjects were further asked to specify their own opinions to the idea of attending more English language training courses that would help improve their proficiency. The results in Table 2 below indicate that 97.5% of them responded positively.

Table 2: Results of the students regarding language training needs

Questionnaire item	Yes		No		total	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Would like to attend more English language training courses which will help you to improve your proficiency in the language?	96	96	4	4	100	100

Consistent with the questionnaire results, the majority of the interviewees agreed that their motivation arises from "more functional or external needs, such as the need to pass examinations, or for possibly, career opportunities" (Skehan, 1989, p.50). In other words, instrumental reasons were considered the primary source of the students' motivation towards learning the English language.

### **Discussion:**

This study was conducted to investigate two types of motivation - Academic, and personal - of dental students towards learning the English language. The findings show the students' demonstrated greater emphasis on instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian (e.g. enable me to get a job easily) and academic reasons (e.g. enable me to carry my tasks more efficiently, it is a university requirement and to further my education). This apparently reinforces the idea that the students see English as playing a vital role in their lives, either currently or in the future.

This finding is consistent with Roohani (2001), Vaezi (2008), and Chalak and Kassaian (2010).

Joseba's (2005) view pertaining to the current need of medical students as far as English is concerned. Emphasising the significant role of English as a lingua franca in the scientific community, Joseba (2005) states that as English has become de facto the international language of science and technology, dental students have to face this fact since books, papers, handbooks, journals, etc. written in English are included in their reading lists. Furthermore, the English language is one of their most valuable resources in the labour market. Personal reasons (e.g. for a personal development and to enhance their status among friends) were also regarded as important motives by the students.

In addition, the results show that almost all the students were interested in attending more English language training courses to improve their proficiency in the English language. The most reasonable explanation for this might be that the students lacked the language skills that would enable them to function effectively in both their academic and professional settings. Having great desires for learning the language is considered to be one of the main components of language learning motivation (Gardner, 2006). It might be worth mentioning that the questionnaire results have been confirmed and thoroughly explained by those obtained from the students' interviews as presented in the previous section.

With reference to previous research, it is noted that the present findings were consistent with some studies. For example the results of Sarjit Kaur (1993), Al- Quayadi (2002) and Qashoa (2006).

### **Recommendations:**

The results of this study have indicated that the dental students of Delta University are highly motivated in learning the English language. The response to the items regarding academic motivation indicated that they see English as a major step for future academic aspirations.

The study findings could reflect various pedagogical Implications that should be taken into consideration by English instructors for medical English courses. The implications are as follow:

- English language courses should enable students to function effectively at both their academic and occupational settings.
- English for specific Purposes (ESP) should be implemented. This means that the current courses is seen as not appropriate to equip these students with the potential level and type of language skills.

- To match the instrumental role of the language, Dentistry students mentioned that they would like to attend training courses. However, as the time allocated for the current English language course is only one year, it might not be enough to help the students be proficient in the language. As such, the duration and number of the courses should be increased so that English is an essential courses for them.
- As an employment requirement, an understanding of the western culture has been emphasized by some of the students. As a result, a component in the students' English language course should be tailored to meet these prerequisites.



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