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ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

# AN EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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## ABSTRACT

Motivation has been recognized for some time as one of the fundamental elements that influence English language learning. The English language is considered a world language and has therefore become a necessity for many people, whether for education, employment, or the like. The ability to speak English fluently is now considered a necessary skill, especially for the younger generation, and therefore various studies have been conducted to investigate the nature of motivation. This study analyzed the sort and level of English language learning motivation (extrinsic or intrinsic) of 100 randomly chosen participants from 16 to 35+ years old in the Sarajevo Canton. A quantitative motivational survey of 15 questions based on Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test was adapted. The data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. The main results show that participants tend to be highly but extrinsically motivated to learn English. This indicates that extrinsic motivation is an important component in this group of English learners. Based on the current study findings, a few relevant and beneficial learning suggestions are proposed for the improvement and growth of the learners' motivation.

**Keywords:** extrinsic, intrinsic, motivation, learning, learners



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## Introduction

Nowadays, English is considered a global language and a means of communication throughout the world, and therefore the ability to speak English fluently is considered the required skill for communication and adaptation to the world. The situation is similar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where English language skills are required for some jobs and are considered an additional advantage when applying for other jobs. Since speakers' linguistic competence may be influenced by their level of motivation to learn a foreign language (Ellis, 1994; McDonough, 1983), the topic of motivation has been widely explored. It is not defined by a simple definition, but by different ones. Brown (2000, p. 133) defines it as an "expectation of reward". Parsons et al. (2001) describe motivation as an important part of the learning process. Learning and motivation have the same significance in order to achieve something. Learning enables us to acquire new knowledge and skills, and motivation spurs us to go through the learning process. Nguyen (2019, p. 10) defines it as "the communicative needs of students and their attitudes toward the second language community." Additionally, he sees motivation as "students' decisions" (Nguyen, 2019, p. 10) to approach something and make choices.

Harmer (1991) clarifies the significance of motivation as the "interior drive" that pushes someone to accomplish something (p. 3). Gardener (1982) sees motivation in three elements, and those are: effort (time that learner spends learning the language), desire (the need to learn the language) and affect (learner's response to learning). Assuming we feel that our goal is worth doing and that it appeals to us, we try to achieve that goal. Motivated students tend to learn and acquire a language faster than less motivated students (Spolsky, 1990). In addition, motivation is considered a necessary element for students' engagement. Various factors can affect motivation, starting from the place where students learn the language, followed by the methodology, i.e., the methods students use to acquire the language, then the teachers, and finally the success in language learning (Nguyen, 2019).

Accordingly, since learners' motivation to learn English may affect their learning outcomes, it is worthwhile to explore how learners become successful or discouraged in English learning, as this may affect their motivation and familiarity with the language. Dornyei (2002) expressed that the learn-

er's enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and diligence are the determining factors for either success or disappointment. As stated by Hayikaleng et al. (2016), since motivation is a key factor in learners' success in learning English, learners who feel positive and have a good attitude towards English tend to continue learning even when the process becomes difficult. Learners can be motivated differently, so in the following part more about them is provided.

When talking about types of motivation, one refers to reasons why someone learns a language. When it comes to learning a language, learners may be motivated for different reasons, such as to further their education, find a job, communicate with people from other countries, travel, or to gain more knowledge. According to Harmer (1991, p. 25), motivation is either a "short-term goal" (to get a good grade) or a "long-term goal" (to have a better job in the future). In general, motivation can be divided into two basic groups: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation.

According to Hayikaleng et al. (2016) extrinsic motivation alludes to an exhibition in which individuals act to receive awards such as good grades or to increase pay, or to stay away from discipline. Extrinsic motivation is instrumental, due to the fact that it is related to some results. An example for this might be a teenager who does some housework to get pocket money (Legault, 2016). In this case, learners are driven in learning English by their extrinsic excitement, such as finding a task, performing an assessment, etc. This type of motivation is usually associated with more negative results and lower achievement, as learners continue to learn the language as long as they can benefit from it, but once the rewards are gone, so is their desire to learn.

On the other hand, Hayikaleng et al. (2016) express that intrinsic motivation in language learning alludes to the motivation to participate in a movement because the action is enjoyable and intriguing. Individuals may be stimulated by the enjoyment of the learning activity or want to help themselves to have a better perspective. Here learners are attracted by their intrinsic motivation, they focus on English due to their intrinsic encouragement. Learners are not motivated by reward or punishment, but by the degree to which they enjoy learning. Intrinsic motivation is usually the one associated with better learning outcomes and more

success because students continue to learn even when there is no reward. An example for this might be a child who plays with toys, or runs, or jumps, and his/her motivation for doing so is no other than innate satisfaction. This also means that intrinsic motivation is non-instrumental, due to the fact that the actions are not dependent on result other than behavior itself (Legault, 2016).

Therefore, motivation is the mix of endeavor and want which gives the purposes behind individuals' activities, wants, and needs to get the goal of learning towards a target. As per Lai (2011), motivation alludes to reasons that underlie conduct that is described by readiness and volition. This study was conducted with the Bosnian sample selected randomly to explore the dominant motivation in their English language learning. The data for this study are obtained through a questionnaire administered to a total number of 100 participants. Identifying whether they are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated, the researcher may be able to formulate measures for the improvement of their learning motivation in the English language. This is for the aim of their better language learning achievement. The students' type of motivation will be recognized, and we believe that this will present the first point to help students through their successful path of learning English.

### Literature review

The most of the studies done on this topic are in agreement with Gardner and Lambert's statement (1972) that students are either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Hedge (2000) researched the motivation of 20 Japanese learners who were learning English. The findings demonstrated that the most widely recognized explanations behind concentrating on English as a subsequent language were correspondence with individuals abroad, observing work in a high-profile location, handling worldwide data and understanding different societies.

Such results were aligned with those presented by Gardner and Lambert (1972) who claimed that an individual starts learning a subsequent language either to associate with the learning language local area (i.e., intrinsic motivation) or to acquire information from that learning language (i.e., extrinsic motivation). Wechsumangkalo and Praserttananadecho (2004) made a study that showed plainly that students who are proficient in English

are more intrinsically motivated than those whose proficiency in English is low. Nonetheless, there was no significant contrast in the degree of extrinsic motivation between these two groups of students. Also, the enquiry showed that students with high level of proficiency in English are more motivated than students with low level of proficiency in English and with low English accomplishment.

Rahayu and Yugafiati (2019) studied the motivation of eighth graders to learn English at MTs Mathla'ul Anwar Sukaguna and found that students are highly motivated and also have an interest in learning English. They concluded that students' motivation depends on the teacher's creativity and ability to use technology to make learning more interesting (Rahayu & Yugafiati, 2019).

Hussain et al. (2020) did a study with adults in Saudi Arabia (English as a Foreign Language - EFL) and Pakistan (English as a Second Language - ESL) and found out that both groups were intrinsically motivated to learn English. The reason why the participants in Saudi Arabia were not extrinsically motivated was that learning English is not welcomed in the society, and there is a lack of places to learn the English language. This was confirmed by Ahmad (2015) when he realized through his research in Saudi Arabia that the level of English proficiency in the country is low because Arabic is considered the most important language, and all other languages, including English, are left aside. In Pakistan, the reasons for students' lack of extrinsic motivation were the absence of financial rewards, well-trained teachers, and classrooms that are not equipped and suitable for language learning.

Radfar and Lengkanawati (2019) researched first-year students in the Department of English in Indonesia to determine their type of motivation. They revealed that students' motivation was high, with differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Namely, the students were more extrinsically motivated, and the reason for their lack of intrinsic motivation could be due to the teachers' lack of information about the target language, including the culture, lifestyle, and geography of the target language.

On the other hand, Ajmal et al. concluded in their study on undergraduate students that two types of motivation co-exist, and both are crucial for language learning. Ulfa and Bania (2019) conducted a study with high school students in Langsa

and concluded that the reason for students' extrinsic motivation is their teacher, while the reason for intrinsic motivation is a student's goal. Wijaya (2017) also conducted a study with students in Kediri and found that students were more intrinsically motivated, which could be because they were studying the English language at the Department of English.

English in Bosnia and Herzegovina holds the status of the most prominent foreign language (Brdarević-Čeljo & Dubravac, 2022; Dedović-Atila & Dubravac, 2022; Dubravac, Brdarević-Čeljo & Bećirović, 2018; Dubravac, 2016; ribo & Dubravac, 2021), and as such is important within the institutions of formal education but also outside of them (Brdarević-Čeljo, Bećirović & Dubravac, 2021; Dubravac & Milak, 2016; Dubravac & Latić, 2019; Dubravac, 2022). Thus, motivation for its learning is the topic that needs to be explored. Previous studies conducted in this context showed that students are highly motivated to learn English (Ahmetović & Dubravac, 2021; Bećirović, Dubravac, & Brdarević-Čeljo, 2022; Latić & Dubravac, 2019). However, while both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation seems to be high, extrinsic dominates in this learning setting, as illustrated by Ahmetović, Bećirović and Dubravac (2020). They also showed a significant relationship between amotivation and speaking anxiety, which confirms positive effects of motivation on students' performance in the classroom.

This study will be carried out to determine the motivational level of the randomly selected learners from Sarajevo Canton and to determine if they are more extrinsically or intrinsically motivated for English language learning.

The research study was conducted to survey the randomly selected learners in the Sarajevo Canton. The aim was to answer the questions:

1. Are the English language learners from the Sarajevo Canton motivated intrinsically?
2. Are the English language learners from the Sarajevo Canton motivated extrinsically?

## Hypotheses

1. The English language learners from Sarajevo Canton are motivated intrinsically.
2. The English language learners from Sarajevo Canton are motivated extrinsically.

## Research Methodology

### Participants

The participants of the study were 100 randomly selected participants from the Sarajevo Canton who were studying the English language. Some of them were language learners at the Cultural Center King Fahd, students at International Burch University, as well as students from other universities and language centers in the Canton Sarajevo.

Table 1 shows that more than a half of the respondents were female (56 %) while the number of male respondents was 44 (44 %).

**Table 1.** Gender of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	44	44
Female	56	56
Total	100	100

Table 2 shows the age of the respondents. It varied from 16 to 36+ years old. The majority of respondents were between 21 and 30 years old.

**Table 2.** Age of participants

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
16 – 20	15	15
21 – 25	34	34
26 – 30	27	27
31 – 35	7	7
36 +	17	17
Total	100	100

## Research instrument

The instrument used in this study was a 5-point Likert Scale which was adapted from the original 7-point Likert Scale format of Gardner's Attitude / Motivation Test, ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' (Gardner, 1960). Some of the questions used in the questionnaire were adopted from Prapphal's Attitudes Testing (Prapphal, 1981) to collect data on the participants' motivation. There were 15 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The questionnaire format included the following parts.

Part 1: General demographic information of students: age and gender.

Part 2: Students' motivation related to English language learning.

## Data collection and analysis

The questionnaires were distributed online through google forms to the 100 students. The data were then collected.

The collected data were analyzed in the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program, version 23. The data on the participants' general background are presented in percentages. A 5-point Likert Scale was applied to determine the level and type of learners' learning motivation. This scale was applied in the questionnaire to identify the level of agreement and disagreement based on scale presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Scale for assessing the level of motivation

Mean Range	Interpretation
3.68–5.00	High degree of Motivation
2.34–3.67	Moderate degree of Motivation
1.00–2.33	Low degree of Motivation

## Results

### Motivation

The following tables display overall details of the study's results. They include information related to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The data were dissected by the number arithmetic Mean and the Standard Deviation.

The highest score was recorded for 'I really like learning English' with ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ). It was followed by 'Studying English is substantial to me so that I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV, or radio' with ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) and 'Studying English is significant to me because I would like to learn as many foreign languages as possible' with ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) which are considered as high levels of motivation. On the other hand, 'Studying English is necessary to me because it will enable me to know new people from different parts of the world' ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), and 'Studying English is important to me so that I can read English book, newspapers or magazines' ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) were considered as moderate levels

of motivation. Table 4 reveals that the respondents possess a high level of intrinsic motivation. This is supported by the average mean score of ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) in the table.

**Table 4.** Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic Motivation	Mean	SD	Rating of Motivational Level
I really like learning English	4.40	0.68	High
Studying English is necessary to me because it will enable me to know new people from different parts of the world	3.40	0.70	Moderate
Studying English is significant to me because I would like to learn as many foreign languages as Possible	3.70	0.80	High
Studying English is substantial to me so that I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV, or radio	4.20	0.75	High
Studying English is important to me so that I can read English book, newspapers or Magazines	3.47	0.80	Moderate
Total	3.83	0.78	High

When it comes to the extrinsic motivation of the participants, Table 4 shows the overall high degree of extrinsic motivation of the respondents with a high average mean score of ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). The statement 'Being proficient in English can lead to more success and achievements in life' had the highest score ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), when compared to the other statements.



**Table 5.** Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic Motivation	Mean	SD	Rating of Motivational Level
Studying English is notable to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English	4.35	0.50	High
Studying English is important to me so that I can be a more knowledgeable person	4.23	0.76	High
Studying English is obligatory to me because I may need it later (for job, studies)	4.20	0.48	High
Studying English enables me to discuss interesting topics in English with the people from other national Backgrounds	4.35	0.58	High
Being proficient in English can lead to more success and achievements in life.	4.60	0.49	High
Total	4.34	0.56	High

Tables reveal that the mean score of extrinsic motivation ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) is higher than the mean score of intrinsic motivation ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). However, the overall mean score of both types of motivation ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) is considered to reveal a high degree of motivation.

## Discussion and Recommendation

The general results show that learners are profoundly motivated to learn English. These observations answer our research questions. The study focused exclusively on the investigation of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In light of the correlation and evaluation, it is found that the learners are slightly more extrinsically motivated to learn English, which is in line with previous studies investigating this specific learning context (Ahmetović

& Dubravac, 2021; Bećirović, Dubravac, & Brdarević-Čeljo, 2022). The reason could be the fact that English is a world language, and the ability to communicate it properly is considered a required skill in this country (Brdarević-Čeljo & Dubravac, 2022; Devdović-Atilla & Dubravac, 2022). Therefore, to get a good job, learning the language is inevitable. This is confirmed by the high rating of the statement that 'good English skills can lead to more success and achievements in life.' This also corresponds with Hedge's (2000) research with Japanese students who viewed English as an opportunity to work in good job positions. Likewise, the findings are similar to Radfar and Lengkanawati (2019), where participants were more extrinsically motivated, due to the lack of representation of the culture and lifestyle of people of the target language.

In addition, a high level of intrinsic motivation might be due to the fact that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially Sarajevo, daily encounter tourists from different parts of the world, and therefore knowing the English language will enable them to communicate with foreigners. Also, English is present in social media, and the participants showed the desire to read newspapers and magazines in English, as well as to watch videos and films. Previous studies emphasized the same as well (Ahmetović & Dubravac, 2021; Dubravac & Skopljak, 2020; Laličić, ubravac & Bećirović, 2020). This is also similar to Wijaya (2017) where students were more intrinsically motivated, as well as Wechsumangkalo and Prasertrattanadecho (2004) where students who used the English language daily and had high proficiency in it, were more intrinsically motivated than those who did not use it daily and had lower proficiency in it.

Therefore, the research hypotheses 1 stating that the English language learners from the Sarajevo Canton are motivated intrinsically and 2 claiming that They are motivated extrinsically, are confirmed, due to the fact that the participants showed both types of motivation. Even if there was a slight predominance of extrinsic motivation, both types can be classified as high.

Such findings have important implications and accordingly, should lead to suggestions for additional preparation or studies. Future examination ought to likewise incorporate more and various foundations. The exploration collected information from 100 learners within a narrow time frame. It is suggested that a larger number of examples

with a longer time frame be used to increase the speculative level of the investigation and make the data more substantial and reliable. It is suggested that a larger sample of respondents should be considered. As English learning motivation is one of the main learning factors, it is beneficial to find out learners' real belief circumstances. This will help in the appropriateness and ability to learn the language.

## Conclusion

All in all, this study was directed to give a few experiences into the level and sort of motivation of the students in the Sarajevo Canton. However, the research provides helpful information and data for a larger learning context. Although the source of information of the investigation does not address all remaining groups of learners, the results will provide a comprehensive picture and will be of extraordinary value for the concerned professionals and researchers. Learner motivation in English language learning can be an incredible source of information and understanding for the implementation of relevant projects. Learners with sufficient motivation might become proficient language learners with extreme language abilities.

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