

Orientations and Motivation of Two Samples of Iranian Bilingual University Students' For English Language Acquisition

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This article brings some of the principal findings of a survey conducted in Tabriz and Kurdistan Universities in Iran. The main objective was to analyze and determine how various psychological and social factors in foreign language apply to Iranian Bilingual Students. The study was most part based on Gardner & Lambert's (1972) work. Motivation and attitudes are undoubtedly major factors in foreign learning success (Gardener, 1985, Oxford & Shearin, 1996) and has been extensively investigated (Dornyei & Clement, 2000; Maniruzzaman & Haque, 2000; Rahman, 2005; Nikolaou, 2005; McClelland, 1998). Ajzen (1998) defines attitude as a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event. Motivation, on the other hand refers to the combination of efforts plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the languages (Gardener, 1985). Attitudes do not influence learning directly but they are instrumental in development of motivation. Gardner & Lambert (1972) argue one should not necessarily expect a relationship between the two. They first made the famous distinction between two types of motivation, instrumental and integrative. What had been thought on in the Gardner and Lambert tradition as motivation or, reasons for undertaking the activity, has more recently been renamed orientation. The orientation is instrumental; if the learner is oriented towards instrumental goals: desire to study in country where the target language is spoken or to get a better job. On the other hand, learners who are integratively motivated want to interact with members of the other community, get to know the target language culture better and even become part of it. Gardner, 1985 proposes that second language acquisition is truly a socio-psychological phenomenon. Although socio- psychological investigation of the learner is important in both understanding the learning situation and the learners' mindset towards English, However, the applicability of the finding of the research of Gardner (1979) may be questionable in a predominantly and consistently monolingual country like Iran. The role of English in Iran is purely functional as English is used as an international link language as well as English is not used as an interpersonal and inter-institutional communication. Usually, Iranian students do not have a chance to interact in any form with the native speakers of English. The apparent idea of native speaker is gotten mainly from both electronic and print media that may not give an authentic picture of native speakers.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used

The study was lunched in 2008. Tabriz and Kurdistan universities were chosen as the sites of the survey. The two samples would be evenly distributed in the sense that very few subjects would come from very poor or very wealthy families. A total of 400 university students participated. For a clear reason university students have been chosen. The fact is that children especially in school are more ambivalent in term of job objective. Also they may not have a genuine interest in acculturation. The sample comprised 42% female and 58 % males. The mean age of the respondents was 20 years. The questionnaire given to students was developed in English than translated to Persian and consisted of the two items: questions eliciting demographic data and a set of attitudes and orientations scales.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

The findings of the study are as follows: The number of respondents reporting a middle level of proficiency was striking. The students are found to be both integratively and instrumentally oriented in English-language learning task but the appeared to more integratively than instrumentally oriented. Also, the results showed that the instrumental orientation is significant predictor for the integrative orientation of the selected sample and it explained 15% total variance of integrative orientation. Overall, the respondents showed modestly favorable attitudes toward learning English and have positive attitudes towards foreign languages learning. The students showed a moderate motivation and desire to learn English. Finally, there are positive and significant correlations between psychological and social factors and students' self-rated proficiency in English marks and orientation toward learning English.

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