

An Exploration of Undergraduate Students' Motivation and Attitudes towards English Language Acquisition

Naser Shirbagi

Faculty of Humanities, University of Kurdistan, Iran

This paper analyzed various socio-psychological orientations of the Iranian undergraduate students towards learning English. The research focused on what are considered as the two most important social psychological variables; attitude and motivation. A total of 400 students participated (48.3% female and 51.7 % males). The questionnaire consisted of two parts, questions eliciting demographic data and a set of attitudes scales. The respondents showed favorable attitude towards learning English. Regarding their receptive skills, the respondents rated their reading skill higher than their listening skill. On the other hand, concerning productive skills that are natural of course the respondents rated their writing skill higher than speaking. Students acknowledged the social dimension of English as a language that can offer the opportunity of cross-cultural exchanges. In addition, strong and positive correlations were found among integrative orientation and other psychological variables such as; instrumental orientation, motivation intensity, and desire to learn English. Hierarchical regression showed that, 38% of variance in integrative orientation is explained by only instrumental orientation variable. The results highlight that Iranian students learn a foreign language mainly for its utilitarian value rather than integrative motivation.

Keywords: Motivation, Attitudes, Orientation, English language learning