

A study of instrumental, integrative and personal motivation levels of Telecommunication Engineering students learning English as a Second Language

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Motivation is a crucial variable that constitutes to the development of a second language (L2). Hence, it is a prerequisite for the successful acquisition of a target language under almost all circumstances. The need to acquire an L2 in the context of an academic environment by virtue of the fact that it is the medium of instruction leaves students with no option but to develop proficiency in the target language. This study evaluated a group of telecommunication Engineering students' motivation and attitudes towards learning the English language using the three motivational constructs proposed by Gardner: instrumental, integrative and personal in order to identify which category of motivation is the most crucial one for this particular set of undergraduates. The sample population consisted of a group of seventy-five first-year undergraduates at the Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC). The primary source of data collection was done through the adaptation of Gardner's motivation questionnaire named the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and the findings revealed that the main reason why these learners wanted to acquire the English language was instrumental since they had to use the target language for academic purposes. The highest scoring was obtained for the assertion that learning the English language is a means of ensuring that they are in a position to use it to become successful in the study programme being followed. Therefore, the findings of the study stressed the importance of engaging in teaching activities that would target this particular need of the particular sample student population whose requirements for learning it are mostly for academic purposes rather than for cultural acculturation with that of the community of target language speakers. The research concludes by divulging certain pedagogical factors that could be used in similar academic environments as means of identifying, developing and sustaining high levels of motivation among adult L2 learners.

Keywords: Attitude, Instrumental motivation, Integrative motivation, Second language acquisition, Telecommunication engineering, Undergraduates