

**DIFFERENCE IN L2 MOTIVATIONAL CHANGE AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF SINDH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IR) AND PHYSICS DEPARTMENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research is based at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, at the departments of International Relations and Physics. It aimed at finding motivational change in learning English as a second language at the two departments. The data is collected from the students of Part-I and II during their undergraduate degrees in their respective departments. The research could not provide any obvious answer on motivational change of the learners of different majors, as the findings in most of the cases remained similar when seen from the perspective of the different departments. However, when the students were divided on the basis of their batches, it is found that mostly motivation changes during the two years of study of the language at the university, and the change is positive in most of the cases as well. Intensity and desire as well as attitude of the Part-II students towards learning English was found to be greater than that of Part-I students. It is, therefore, concluded that motivation increases with the passage of time and with the active influence of academic factors.*

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**Keywords:** Motivational Change, Intensity, Desire

**INTRODUCTION**

At the University of Sindh, motivation towards learning English language seems to vary during the two years of under graduation when English is a compulsory subject for all the students, regardless of their proficiency level. The response of the students to the studies, the desire to learn, attitude towards the language in general, along with other factors involved seem to change with time. The change seems to be different among the learners of different faculties at the university.

This research paper is one of the series of papers (Shahriar, 2014; Shahriar, Mari & Umrani, 2015) produced after conducting a research focusing the reasons behind learner motivation and the effect of temporal element of motivation on it. The project also found noticeable changes in motivation of the language learners from the faculties of Natural Science and Social Science during the two years of their study and the factors behind them.

The study explored issues related to learner motivation towards learning English language. It helped find out the learner attitude and desire for learning. Learner's intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivations were focused. Besides, it also laid attention to the domestic, academic and socio-cultural element and its effects on language learning. The main focus of this thesis will be on finding the change in motivation among language learners from Social Science and Natural Science faculties during the two years of their undergraduate study, when English language is a compulsory subject for them.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Dörnyei (2001:183) believes a scientific research to be a 'disciplined enquiry' of 'finding systematic answers to questions'. This research is also conducted to find answers to the following questions:

- a) How is the change different in students studying different subjects?
- b) How is their desire to learn the language different?
- c) How is their attitude to learn the language different?
- d) What is the ratio of willingness to unwillingness to learn English of students of different major subjects?

#### **LEARNER MOTIVATION**

Motivation is a practical issue (Ushioda, 1996). Differences in learner motivation towards learning in general, and second language learning in particular, result in achievement differences. Motivation, besides aptitude, determines the success and failure of a learner in any sort of learning, notes Dörnyei (2000, 2001), because it affects the degree of attention and effort invested by an individual on an act of learning. Elsewhere, the author (Dörnyei, 2005) mentions that motivation prevails over aptitude, and he supports his argument through quoting the research findings from Sternberg (2002) and mentions that a similar argument is put forward by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Dörnyei (2001) also quotes from his experience that 99% of motivated foreign language learners learn a foreign language to a reasonable degree, regardless of their aptitude. He also notes the opposite, i.e. learners with aptitude fail due to lack of motivation. The reason that Dörnyei presents for this observation, is the lack of continuous effort on the part of those learners who lack motivation. He calls language learning a long and tedious process which requires enthusiasm, commitment and persistence on the part of the learner which is not possible without being highly motivated for the accomplishment of the goal. He also notes that motivation provides the initial reason to move towards a goal and continues to drive towards its achievement during the process of language learning.

**MOTIVATIONAL CHANGE**

Motivation is not stable; it is an ever-changing phenomenon. Motivation research shows that learner motivation keeps vacillating throughout the process of learning. Ushioda (1996), notices that in academic settings it is usually noticed to be inconstant rather than constant. She observes that Gardner & MacIntyre (1993:4) point out that ‘motivation is subject to change through reinforcement associated with the act of learning’. Ushioda (1996) also finds, in her own study, that motivation does not completely increase or decrease with the passage of time; rather there are different effects of academic and personal influences and circumstances on different aspects of motivation. Therefore motivational change is not a linear process. Various aspects of motivation move in different directions with the passage of time.

Motivation, during prolonged activities, is characterised by internal and external influences and appraisals; that is why it changes. Dörnyei (2001, 2003, 2005) remarks, that learner motivation undergoes continuous changes during the long process of second/foreign language learning. He (2005) cites Garcia (1999) as bringing up the ‘ebb and flow’ as the remarkable (prime) characteristic of motivation. Dörnyei (2005, also in 2003), then, remarks that the state of motivation, even during a single second/foreign language class, varies; hence in case of an extended process of learning, like L2 learning, it is surely expected to change. Earlier elsewhere (Dörnyei, 2000), he quotes Schumann (1998) as mentioning that maintaining motivation becomes an issue during a prolonged activity. Dörnyei (2003, 2005) refers to the neglect of significance of time element in motivation research as the cause of variance and disagreements among motivation scholars. Dörnyei (2001) also observes that the exerted learning effort oscillates in the motivational field, due to the regular fluctuation in learner motivation. Through various experiences during the process of second/foreign language, learning the rate of enthusiasm, commitment and determination keeps varying. He believes that numerous internal and external influences, the learner is exposed to exert force on his motivation.

According to Dörnyei (2000), the issue of the temporal element in motivation is among the four challenges faced by the scholars during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that traditionally, motivation is considered as stable mental state, as it has been measured through questionnaires or interviews from individuals at certain point in time. Yet, he accepts, there are incidents in literature, since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when motivation is mentioned as dynamic and is treated as a process in research. He quotes Pintrich & Schunk (1996) as referring to motivation as a *mental process* which starts and continues to vary throughout the performance of the activity. Later on in Dörnyei (2005) as well, he presents the incidents of the

empirical research on motivational evolution; some of his citation are, Koizumi and Matsuo (1993); Tachibana, Matsukawa & Zhong (1996); Chambers (1999); Inbar *et.al.* (2001); Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002); Gardner *et.al.* (2004); he mentions Ushioda (2001) and Shoaib & Dörnyei (2005) among the most systematic studies along the research in motivational change, till then.

To his call for the need of a motivation theory that could measure the temporal dimension of the dynamic phenomenon of motivation, Dörnyei, himself, in collaboration with Otto (1998) develops the Process Model of L2 Motivation. They mention that motivation evolves gradually after passing through a set of phases, *pre-actional phase*, *actional phase* and *post-actional phase*; also explained in Williams and Burden's (1997) three stages of motivation during a process "Reasons for doing something → Deciding to do something → Sustaining the effort or persistence" (the first two are preactional and the last is actional; in the stages by Williams and Burden, there is no mention of post-actional stage of Dörnyei and Otto). The complex process-oriented construct of second/foreign language learning motivation by Dörnyei and Otto organises various motivational influences along the action sequence.

Dörnyei & Otto (1998) noted that none of the existing theories of motivation (under their consideration) were sufficient to explain the actual classroom interventions. They mention the following theories on motivation in their paper:

- **Expectancy value theories** assume that motivation to perform various tasks is the result of learner's/performer's *expectancy* of success and the *value* or importance he gives to that success;
- **Attribution theory** marks the dependence of motivation on past success or failure.
- **Self-efficacy theory** refers to the individual's personal judgement of his capabilities;
- **Self-worth theory**, similarly, lays emphasis on the individual's positive attitude and self-acceptance;
- **Goal theories** claim that motivation is possible if *goals* are set and pursued;
- **Self-determination theory**, proposes the importance of internal willingness to initiate and achieve;
- In **social psychology**, finally, *attitudes* towards the target influence and direct an individual's motivation.

In addition to these theories, the two researchers note that there were others in the past also. They quote Weiner's (1994:18; cited in Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) conclusion to explain their stance, "any theory based on a single concept, whether that concept is reinforcement, self-worth, optimal

motivation, or something else, will be insufficient to deal with the complexity of classroom activities”.

Dörnyei & Otto (1998) refer to the *Action Control Theory* of German psychologists Heinz Heckhausen and Julius Kuhl (Heckhausen, 1991; Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985; Kuhl, 1987, 1992, 1994) as introducing the element of change in the motivation of a learner through a period of time. Heckhausen (1991; also cited in Dörnyei, 2000& 2001) mentions that the term ‘motivation’ is associated with variety of very different phenomena like wishes, decision-making and acting. In fact, it starts when the wishes arouse in an individual to do something and continues when the goal is set, decisions are taken and are acted upon; during the action and after it finishes, motivation never remains constant; it is unstable and keeps fluctuating from its highest point to its lowest depending on various cognitive, affective and situational factors. Therefore, he suggests separating the various phases during the phenomena of motivation. Heckhausen divides motivational research into two main camps; the one researching on the pre-decisional phase of motivation and the other on motivation during the performance of an action. Although the two scholars, Heckhausen in collaboration with Kuhl, have not given any process-oriented model of motivation, yet their work introduces the various phases of motivational change, that is, before the action starts, during the action, and after the action finishes. Their work introduces *pre-decisional* and *post-decisional phases* during the process of motivation. From their Action Control Theory, Dörnyei and Otto developed the Process Model of L2 Motivation.

Dörnyei & Otto (1998) maintain the view that most learners experience motivational change on a regular, even day-to-day basis, during the same course. According to the two authors, enthusiasm and commitment fluctuates regularly in common situations. Motivation, for Dörnyei and Otto, is associated with dynamic mental processes of ‘decision-making, action-implementation and action-controlling as well as with the accompanying energy sources fuelling the action’. They mention that due to the inadequate models of L2 motivation, they developed the Process Model, which presents the dynamics of motivational change along with a fine blend of all the motivational models to provide a design for practical classroom situations. Their model contains two dimensions: Action Sequence and Motivational Influences. The first dimension represents the behavioural process during which initial wishes, hopes, and desires are first transformed into goals, then into intentions, leading to action and, finally, to the accomplishment, after which the process follows final evaluation. The second dimension of the model, Motivational Influences, includes all the energy sources and motivational forces (discussed in motivation literature till-date including cognitive, affective, and situational factors or conditions) that underlie and

fuel the behavioural process and actional sequence in the model (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998).

Following the Action Control theory and Dörnyei & Otto's Process Model of L2 Motivation, Shoaib & Dörnyei (2005) identify and document through a qualitative research, involving 25 interviews, the role of motivational influences and various temporal patterns in the participants' language learning development over a period of about two decades. The study examines the macro-processes engaged in the evolution of motivation over a longer period of time. From the findings, the two researchers have devised a model on main motives that influence the learner's behaviour/thinking during the three motivational phases. The findings support the literature that motivation is an unstable, dynamic state affected by a variety of factors putting a negative or a positive impact on the motivation of the participants. The research shows the promising future direction of the motivation research based on Process Model, contributing towards the environmental and the temporal context, and biographical/autobiographical research.

## METHODOLOGY

Having reviewed the existing literature related to the field, this section discusses the research methodology adopted for our research. The present study is a small scale research using the case study approach as it is intended to help researchers to understand such similar situations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The study is set in the present day educational environment at the undergraduate level, Part I and II of Physics and International Relations departments, in a public-sector university, the University of Sindh, of a non-English speaking country, Pakistan, with English as its official language.

The 'Mixed-Method' approach is used for this study, with 200 questionnaires (with 24 closed questions) and 20 interviews (with 5 open questions); this was the total data collected for the entire project, not just for this paper. These two major research approaches, quantitative and qualitative, are more than just being numerical and non-numerical (Davies, 1995; cited in Dörnyei, 2001). Dörnyei (2001) considers them, and I agree, to be varying philosophical approaches to the construction of meaning and the exploration of the world. According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), the difference is that of focus, scale and purpose yet, for them, the two paradigms are 'complementary rather than competing'. Quantitative paradigm is usually, chosen for in order to keep *Psychic Distance* (Chomsky, 1972) i.e. separating oneself from what one is studying to achieve an objective point. Here too, to preserve objectivity and reliability, and to bring about comparison and generalization, this paradigm seems effective (Cohen

*et.al.*, 2007). Yet, Dörnyei (2001) notes that, since the researcher averages out the results in a quantitative method, therefore the data loses any individual aspects and thus even brings forward similar results of dynamic sample. Qualitative approach on the other hand, apart from being too subjective, is giving sense to the situation with particular reference to the participants; it contributes with those aspects of the study which quantitative approach cannot bring in. The qualitative research focuses on 'the participants' rather than the researcher's interpretations and priorities' (Dörnyei, 2001). Researchers (Dörnyei, 2001; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Ramage, 1990; Ushioda, 1994, 2001) support the combination of the two approaches to solve the major theoretical issues in SLA.

Appropriate methodology, instrumentation and sampling decide the quality of the any research (Morrison, 1993; cited in Cohen *et.al.*, 2007). Therefore, suitable sample was an important issue for this research. From the entire population i.e. Part I and II undergraduate students (because English language is taught during these two years of under graduation at the university) of the University of Sindh, I took the students of the departments of Physics and International Relations through *Purposive Sampling* for collecting quantitative data through questionnaires. The reasons behind choosing these departments include the average class size, the average proficiency level of the students besides easy access to these two departments. Some of the departments in the university have extremely large classes with up to 200 students per class while others even have 10 students only. Data collection in both the mentioned cases would become difficult. Physics and International Relations have medium sized classes. High scores in entry tests and good earlier results are mandatory in some of the departments, while in others there are no specific admission criteria, due to this the level of proficiency of the students in these departments varies. Access to these departments was easier due to the cooperation of the heads and the language teachers of these departments. Therefore, the sample taken is representative of the population and it was practicable also.

At a later stage during the research, *Stratified Sample* was taken from the larger purposive sample for a narrower study through Internet-based interviews.. The sample was chosen from the list of students who filled the questionnaires, and offered their consent for further contact by providing their e-mail addresses.

Following principles, related to research ethics, were taken care of during the process of research:

### **Informed Consent**

The participants were informed about the aims of the research in the beginning before distributing the questionnaires and they were allowed to fill



in or not. Likewise, before the interviews were conducted a consent form, including the necessary information on the research, was sent to the participants to provide written consent. They were given the right to withdraw at any stage.

**Confidentiality**

During the collection of data, questionnaire and interview, the confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability was guaranteed. For the purpose of confidentiality, the teachers who distributed and collected the questionnaires were given guideline on not looking into the questionnaires while the students are writing and not even after that. They were informed regarding the sensitivity of the data. The participants were also assured of non-traceability at a later stage after the research ends.

**Privacy**

The participants were allowed the right to hold any information with them if they did not wish to disclose it. They were even allowed to skip the questions they do not want to answer, in both the questionnaires and interviews. In the questionnaires, the students were allowed to fill the personal details on their own convenience. Anonymous respondents give comparatively less self-protective and more accurate' answers (Dörnyei, 2003); therefore the respondents to the questionnaires were allowed to keep themselves anonymous. Besides the names of those who provided them in the questionnaires and those who gave e-mail interviews are kept confidential and especial care is taken that no names are mentioned anywhere in the dissertation.

**Due Importance**

Due importance was given to each individual questionnaire and even in case of interviews, all the interviewees were asked same questions, except a few probes in most of the cases, and they were allotted nearly equal time duration except in case when some interviewees wanted to explain and express themselves.

**Equality**

Regardless of their gender, age or departments, the data from each participant was treated on equal terms. Without giving importance to individuals on the basis of their L1, or proficiency over English language, they were all treated objectively.



**Humaneness**

Special care was taken about understanding and consideration of the feelings and emotions of the participants. No hurting remarks, comments or questions were used. Non stressing, non-threatening manner of the interviews was ensured.

**Verification**

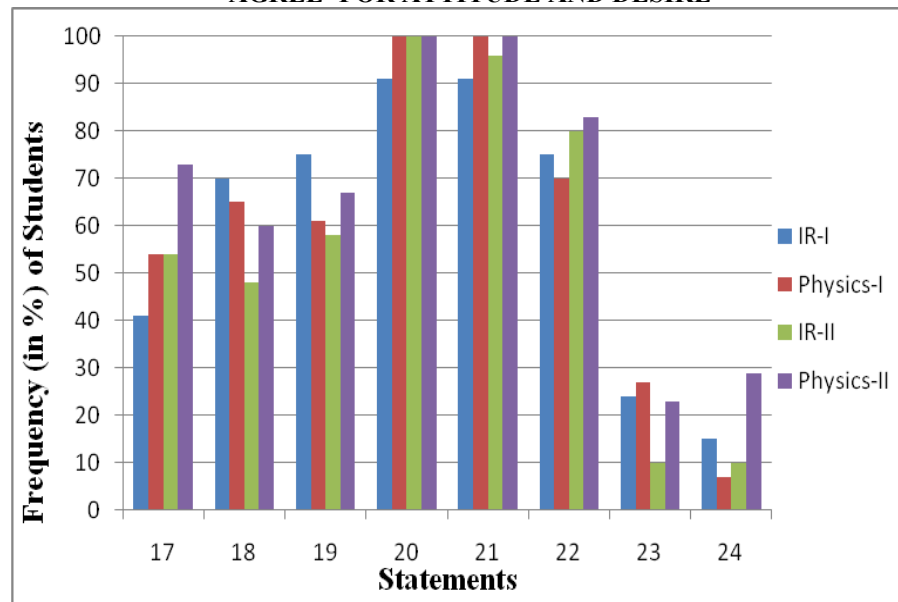
Transcriptions of the interviews were verified from the participants.

**DIFFERENCE IN THE MOTIVATIONAL CHANGE OF STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT MAJORS**

In order to measure the motivational change of students studying different majors, I added 8 questions, related to the desire to learn and attitude towards English language learning, to the questionnaire. Besides, one question was asked in each interview. The mean of the findings from these statements are shown in table 1 and 2. The comparison between the students of different majors is presented in the following paragraphs along with charts.

The efforts taken by the learner to improve their English are noteworthy in all three classes in case of all three statements. The minimum range in percentage is that of IR-I, that is 41, for all the three statements on desire, and the maximum range in percents is 75 for statement 19 by IR-I also. The interviewees also accepted the importance of desire and effort taken due to that in English language learning as in seeking anything else. An interviewee even accepted that he gets fewer marks because he gives less time to studies. The views about watching English movies and reading English novels are already presented in context of statement-3.

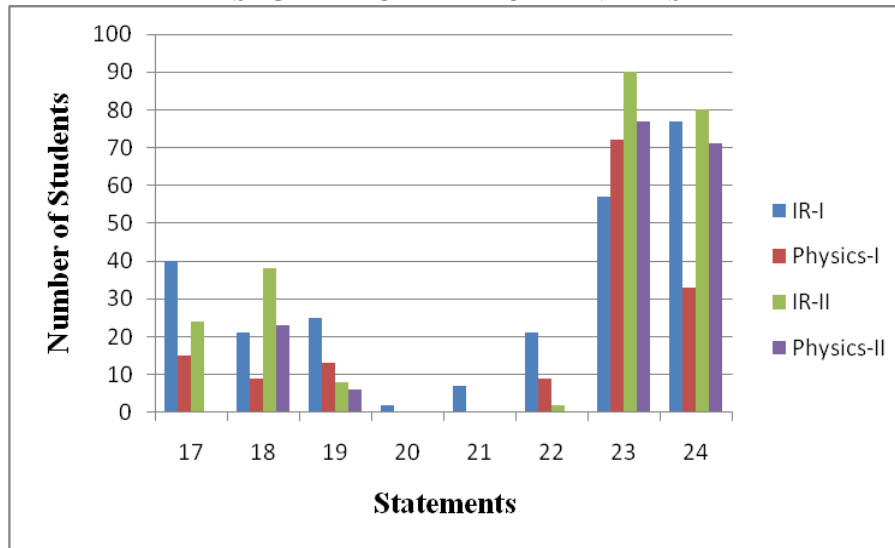
**TABLE-1**  
**FREQUENCY (IN %) OF 'STRONGLY AGREE' AND**  
**'AGREE' FOR ATTITUDE AND DESIRE**



Statement 20 (Learning English is useful and important) and statement 21 (I want to learn/improve my English) are most frequently agreed upon by the students of all four classes from all the attitude and desire statements. For these two statements, the minimum range is that of IR-I, that is 91% for each of the two statements.

Although the bars in the following graph are high yet the students do not completely disagree with statements 23 (I do not think English is a useful subject at university level) and 24 (Learning English is useless; I would prefer to spend time on other subjects).

**TABLE-2**  
**FREQUENCY (IN %) OF 'STRONGLY DISAGREE' AND**  
**'DISAGREE' FOR ATTITUDE AND DESIRE**



The interview data brought similar results to the questionnaire data on the attitude and desire to English language learning. An interviewee remarked that she does not like English but she has to study because it has become important. Many respondents to the interviews accepted the significance of English yet they insisted on the significance of Sindhi, their mother tongue. One respondent remarks that statement 24 is useless because nobody can agree with it, yet the questionnaire data is against his/her judgement.

#### COMPARISON BETWEEN THE STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT MAJORS

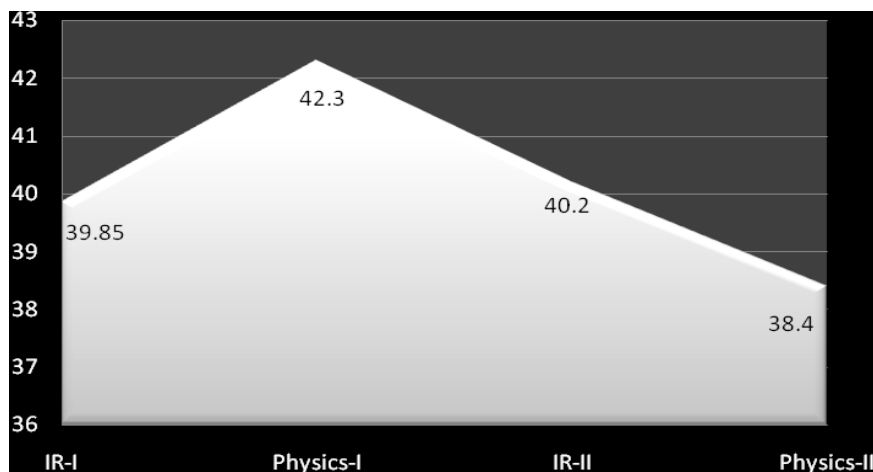
In order to get general strength of each of the class on attitude and desire, I used the following scale for calculations.

➤ Used 5-point rating scale as follows:

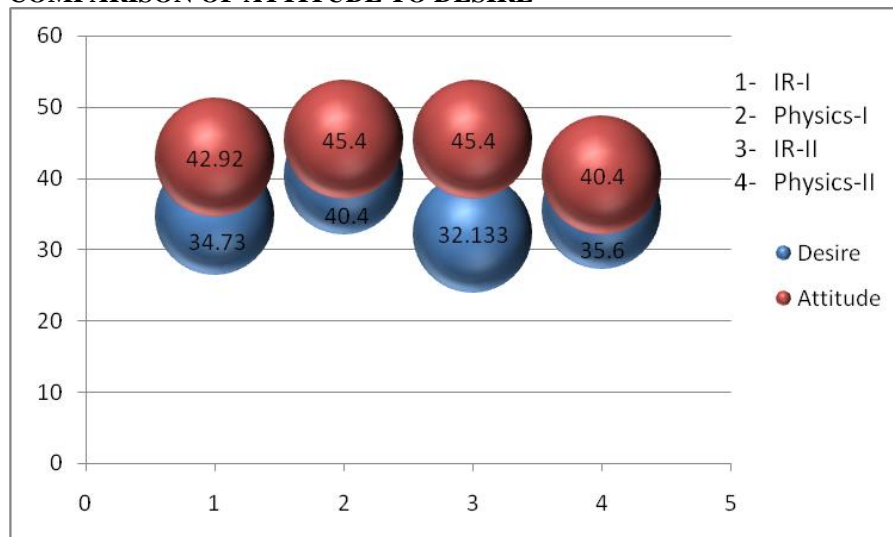
Statements 17-22: Strongly Agree	= 5
Agree	= 4
Neutral	= 3
Disagree	= 2
Strongly Disagree	= 1
Statements 23-24: Strongly Agree	= 1
Agree	= 2
Neutral	= 3
Disagree	= 4
Strongly Disagree	= 5

- Multiplied the frequency on each of the variables with the mentioned number on the rating scale; for example:
  - ❖ Physics P-II: Statement 20: 34 students Strongly Agree =  $34 \times 5 = 170$
  - ❖ Physics P-II: Statement 20: 14 students Agree =  $14 \times 4 = 56$
  - ❖ Physics P-II: Statement 20: 0 students Neutral =  $0 \times 3 = 00$
- Taking the mean of the calculations by
  - Added the calculation resulting from each class as a result of second step, separately; resulting in,
    - ❖ International Relations Part-I = 1594
    - ❖ Physics Part-I = 1691
    - ❖ International Relations Part-II = 1608
    - ❖ Physics Part-II = 1535
  - Dividing the sum by 40, as,
    - ❖ International Relations Part-I =  $1594/40 = 39.85$
    - ❖ Physics Part-I =  $1691/40 = 42.3$
    - ❖ International Relations Part-II =  $1608/40 = 40.2$
    - ❖ Physics Part-II =  $1535/40 = 38.4$
- Preparing the graph of the means to show the comparison between attitude and desire of each of the class,

#### MEAN OF STRENGTH OF ATTITUDE + DESIRE



The above area graph shows that Physics-I has the highest combination of desire and attitude towards learning English language. Below is the bubble chart showing the mean attitude and desire of each of the classes separately.

**COMPARISON OF ATTITUDE TO DESIRE**

The bubble chart shows the equally better attitude of Physics-I and IR-II and the best desire of Physics-II. The overall figures for desire are lower than attitude in all four cases, as the chart shows.

**DISCUSSION**

Before comparing the attitude and desire of the students of Physics and International Relations (IR), we would like to present the comparison on the earlier discussed issues in this chapter.

On comparison between the students of the two departments, the mean on the intrinsic integrative and instrumental motivation of Physics is greater than that of IR. Although the difference is minute in case of instrumental motivation yet it is there, but we would not like to consider this as a proof to generalise a claim that Natural Sciences students are more intrinsically motivated than that of Social Sciences. Because it can be an idiosyncratic property of these particular batches of students or it may even be possible that the other students in the same batch could have brought a difference to the result. Therefore, this result is not all conclusive.

On the comparison of extrinsic motivation of the students of the two departments, the peculiar responses to statements 9 and 10 by IR-II have spoilt the formation of any regular patterns in the data. The department of Physics has an even pattern of equal means for both integrative and instrumental extrinsic motivation. The mean for the integrative extrinsic motivation for IR is also in the same range as Physics but that of instrumental extrinsic motivation is quite low which disturbs the pattern.

The difference between the departments is not noteworthy in case of factors which makes the issues concerned (discussed in the previous section) uniformly accepted.

When considering desire for learning, the frequencies are generally low as compared to attitude in case of both the departments. Attitude towards learning English touches the peaks of the graph and the obvious reason is the modern day use of the language.

None of the four classes completely disagreed to statements 23 and 24, which is strange. It can be assumed that some of the learners find English as a useless subject in university due to their good proficiency level. Yet it is unclear why some of the students agreed to statement 24. The reason, in both cases or at least for statement 24, can be students' misunderstanding while comprehending because the rest of the research negates this finding.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is a comparative study of motivation for learning of English among students of Natural Science and Social Science faculty at undergraduate level.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through Multi-stage sampling for the purpose of the study. Purposive sample for questionnaires was taken from the departments of Physics and International Relations. And Stratified sample was taken for the Internet-based interviews at the next stage.

The third section discusses the motivational change. Dörnyei (2000) propagates the dynamic nature of motivation and mentions that it takes time in generating through complex mental processes. His Process Model of L2 Motivation (1998), worked out in cooperation with Otto, presents different motivational phases through the process of learning, from initial planning, goal setting, intention making, to decision taking and acting, the model even mentions the post-actional phases of motivation. Dörnyei (2000) mentions that the utility of the process model in viewing the actual shaping of the process from the choice to the after-effects.

The involvement of the element of time in the generating and expanding of learner motivation has become an issue of concern in research during the present century. Presently it is undeniably accepted by a majority of researchers in the field that motivation is a dynamic process and it is in perpetual fluctuation. Motivational change is accepted to be neither linear nor unidirectional. The need of further research in the field is desired and suggested by most of the well-known researchers in the field.

The presence of various domestic, academic and social factors in the regulation of the learner motivation is widely discussed in the research till

date. These factors have the tendency to positively or negatively affect motivation.

Although, the results are encouraging and provide initial information on English language learners' motivation over a period of time yet I would also like to recommend that more research in the field of the temporal aspect of motivation can provide better understanding and practical implications. This study adds to the existing body of research on motivation in Pakistani context (Mari, Pathan & Shahriar, 2011; Pathan, Shahriar & Mari, 2010; Shahriar, 2011; Shahriar, Pathan, Mari & Umrani, 2011). Consequently, it calls for future research on a number of issues, as it opens the flood gates for the future research in the field of motivation and motivational change in Pakistan by identifying the typical sequential patterns and developmental aspects in this research.

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