

DR. SARWAT SULTAN\*  
SARAH IMTIAZ\*\*  
DR. IRSHAD HUSSAIN\*\*\*

## ATTRIBUTES OF LEARNERS AND INSTRUCTORS: EFFECTS ON LEARNERS' MOTIVATION TOWARDS FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

### *Abstract*

*This study was conducted to examine the effects of attributes of learners and instructors on motivation towards foreign language learning. The population of the study consisted on undergraduate foreign (English) language learners of which 560 learners were taken conveniently from Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The data were collected from the respondents on academic confidence, self-efficacy, English learning motivation; learners' perception about their autonomy & their support and perceived teaching competence of their instructors. The results of the study demonstrated positive relationship of learners' motivation towards learning of English language with their attributes –academic confidence and self-efficacy; and also with that of their instructors' attributes –perceived autonomy & support and perceived competence. The study concluded that attributes of learners and teachers are significant predictors of motivation among undergraduate university students towards learning of foreign (English) language.*

### **Keywords:**

*Academic Confidence, Learning Motivation, Self-efficacy, Perceived Autonomy & Support, Teaching Competence*

---

\* Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

\*\* Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

\*\*\* Department of Educational Training, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur:

## ***Introduction***

Language learning is an instinctive process which takes place informally in the environment starting from the lap of one's mother. However, acquisition of a foreign/ second language is intentional and requires motivation of learners and their commitment along with attributes of the teacher or instructor. In Pakistani context, English has become a significant foreign language to be learnt as second language. It is generally said that change is eternal and the process of instruction has been changed with changing world focusing more on learners rather their teachers' or instructors.

The 21st century is regarded as the century of innovations and inventions which seemingly have been infused in almost all fields of life. The field of education and training has openly embraced such developments to make teaching learning process more effective and more efficient. In modern world the learner has become focal point of all educational endeavors. Curricula, instructional strategies and all other related activities are focusing on learners and their competence. Keeping in view the changing scenario and requirements, O'Malley and Chamot (1995) expected teachers to be more responsible in developing confidence among their students and making them independent relying less on them (their teachers).

Similarly, Littlewood (1996) linked learners' self-direction and motivation with their perception of performance and interest; instructional strategies selected by teachers, perception of their autonomy & support extended by teachers. Littlewood further asserted that instructional strategies are associated with progress of learning a language. Therefore, a teacher of foreign language [English] wishfully be well-informed and well-equipped to make students good [English] language learners. Brewer and Burgess

(2005) regarded motivation essential for learning whereas, Ellis (1994) viewed intrinsic motivation as starting point for leaning. However, in case of learning it serves as stimulus to foreign [English] language learning. (Gardner, 1885). Ellis (1994) also acknowledged that language teachers valued motivation among learners. Similarly, Cook (2000) affirmed the improved presentation styles and enhanced performance of such learners because of motivation and interest in learning. As learners have different levels of motivation, hence, the pace of their learning is different. But some other factors also appear to affect language acquisition of which the three i.e. age, motivation, and personality are the contributories in foreign [English] language learning (Cook, 2000).

Different studies (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Clement, 2000; Dörnyei and Otto, 1998; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Tanaka, 2005) anticipated a positive role of instructors in developing motivation among learners of a foreign language. Kikuchi (2009) and Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also demonstrated a significant effect of instructors on motivation of foreign language learners. Instructors may engage learners in learning process by offering them different activities leading towards active learning in an edutainment way. It fosters and promotes motivation among learners and it was appreciated by Ramage (1990). However, learners' perception of instructional strategies & learning activities and autonomy granted by an instructor also determine their level of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). According to Dornyei (1994), attributes of instructor –their competency, instructional method(s) & strategies like scaffolding and feedback can affect learners' motivation. Likewise, learners' attributes –their perception of and interactions with instructors, self-efficacy, and academic confidence appear predictors of their motivation to foreign language (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Language instructors may use different techniques to develop and sustain motivation among learners. They may create edutainment situations by designing and offering different learner-centered activities in the classroom. S/he may also engage learners in dialogue by assigning a specific role to every learner to enliven the environment. It helps in developing motivation among learners and make them active language learners. But it all depends upon behavior and competence of instructors. A competent instructor develops motivational classroom environment (Alison & Halliwell, 2002).

Enhanced individualized interaction of instructors with their learners, being concerned with educational problems and issues of learners providing them confidence to discuss, and being supportive to them develop positive perception among learners. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) asserted that positive perception of learners towards their instructor's enthusiasm to instruction and autonomy support keeps them motivated to language acquisition.

The present study was conducted to evaluate the effect of learners' attributes (academic confidence and self-efficacy) and teacher's attributes (perceived teacher's autonomy & support and perceived teacher's competence) on motivation towards foreign [English] language learning. It was hypothesized that learners' and instructors' attributes predict motivation towards foreign language learning motivation.

## Hypothesized Model

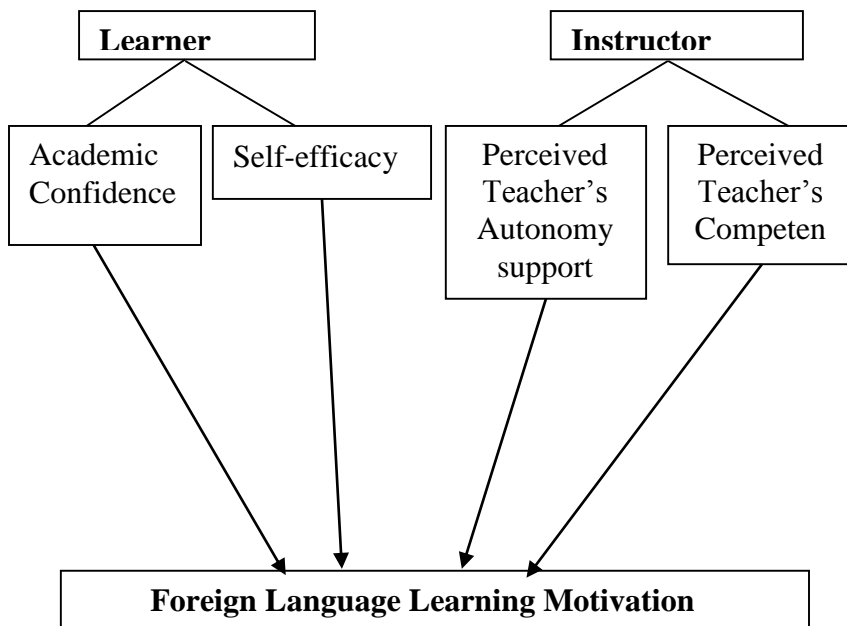


Fig 1: Hypothesized Model of Learners' and Instructors' Attributes

## Research Method

It was a descriptive study for which survey approach was adopted. Detail of research methodology is given blow;

## Participants of the Study

The sample of the study consisted on 560 undergraduate students enrolled in English course of second semester. All the participants were selected from seven departments (n=80 each) of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan through convenient sampling. Of the

sample, 300 were male and 260 were female students aged 19-22 (M=20.23, SD=2.08).

### ***Instruments of the Study***

A 24-items Academic Confidence Scale was adopted to gauge learners' academic confidence (Sander and Sanders, 2003). Responses were obtained by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all confident' (1) to 'very confident' (5). The reliability co-efficient of academic confidence scale was 0.76. Similarly, the level of self-efficacy was measured by using a 10-item Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995). A 4-point Likert scale 'not at all true' (1) to 'very true' (4) was used to elicit the responses. Total score ranged between 10 and 40. The reliability co-efficient of self-efficacy scale was 0.74. Likewise, a Perceived Autonomy Support Questionnaire (Black and Deci, 2000) was used to get perception of learners about autonomy granted by their instructors. Fifteen (15) items were presented on 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A composite score was computed after reversing item 13 in such a way that response 1 was converted as 7, and 7 was reversed in 1. The reliability co-efficient is 0.88.

The perception of learners about competence of their teachers was elicited by using Perceived Teacher's Competence Scale (Passi and Lalita, 2009) consisting of 21 items on 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The total score appeared between 21 and 147. The reliability co-efficient of perceived instructional competence scale was 0.89. English language learning Motivation Scale (Gardener, 1985) based on 5-point rating scale which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to gauge motivation among learners to learn English language. Items 1-12 of the scale measured integrity of learner towards the target language and items 13-25 measure the learner

utilitarian reason for learning the target language. The reliability co-efficient of scale was 0.88.

### *Procedure of the Study*

The data were collected from the undergraduate students enrolled in seven departments of faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan. All the participants were approached through conveniently; only those students of second semester were selected who were enrolled in English Language Course. After getting consent from the students, a booklet containing five questionnaires and a demographic information sheet was administered to the learners. They were contacted during their class times and were provided instruction on responding to the scales. They were assured about confidentiality of the information provided by them. The collected data were statistically analyzed by using SPSS-17.

### *Results of the Study*

**Table-1** *Mean, SD and Correlations among Study Variables*

		<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	Academic Confidence	87.58	9.72	1				
2	Self-efficacy	30.18	4.76	.33**	1			
3	Perceived Teacher's Autonomy Support	78.14	13.74	.46**	.36**	1		
4	Perceived Teacher's Competence	101.91	16.78	.47**	.44**	.61**	1	
5	English Learning Motivation	96.39	14.26	.38**	.20*	.49**	.38**	1

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < 0.001$

Table 1 demonstrates the correlation coefficients to indicate relationships of all study variables with each other. Findings

revealed significant relationship of learning motivation with attributes of learners and instructors. It was evident that academic confidence, self-efficacy, perceived teacher's autonomy & support, perceived teacher's competence were significantly and positively correlated with English learning motivation.

**Table-2** Regression Analysis Indicating the Effect of Academic Confidence on Foreign Language Learning Motivation

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	48.03	5.07		9.47	.000
Academic Confidence	.552	.058	.376	9.59	.000*

$R^2 = .144$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .140$ , ( $F (1.559) = 91.957$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), \* $p < 0.001$

Table 2 shows impact of academic confidence on motivation towards learning of foreign language. Findings revealed a significant effect of academic confidence on motivation among learners towards foreign language learning. It predicted association between motivation among learners towards learning of foreign language and their academic confidence.

**Table-3** Regression Analysis Indicating the Effect of Self-efficacy on Foreign Language Learning Motivation

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	p
(Constant)	78.52	3.79		20.67	.000
Self-efficacy	.593	.124	.198	4.77	.000*

$R^2 = .04$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .037$ , ( $F (1.559) = 22.726$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) \* $p < 0.001$

Table 3 indicates effect of learners' self-efficacy on their motivation to foreign language learning and data analysis significantly affirmed it. It evidently predicted link between learner's motivation and level of their self-efficacy while learning a foreign [English] language.



**Table-4** *Regression Analysis Indicating the Effect of Perceived Autonomy Support on Foreign Language Learning Motivation*

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
(Constant)	56.16	3.03		18.57	.000
Perceived Teacher's Autonomy Support	.515	.038	.496	13.51	.000*

$R^2 = .25$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .245$ , ( $F(1,559) = 182.435$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), \* $p < 0.001$

Table 4 determines the effects of learners' perceived autonomy & support by their instructors on their motivation in learning of English as foreign language and confirmed significantly. It acknowledged that perception of learners' about autonomy & support by their instructors appear as a predictor of their motivation towards foreign language learning.

**Table-5** *Regression Analysis Indicating the Effect of Perceived Teacher Competence on Foreign Language Learning Motivation*

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
(Constant)	63.79	3.44		18.53	.000
Perceived Teacher's Competence	.320	.033	.376	9.59	.000*

$R^2 = .142$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .140$ , ( $F(1,559) = 92.120$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), \* $p < 0.001$

Table 5 illustrates effect of perception of learners about competence of their instructors on their motivation to learn English as foreign language; and substantially established it by ascertaining that motivation to learn English as a second language depends upon learners' perceived competence of their instructors.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of findings it is concluded that learners' attributes (their academic confidence and self-efficacy) and instructors attributes (learners' perceived autonomy & support by their instructors and perceived instructors' competence) have significant effect on motivation among learners to learn English as second/ foreign language.

Therefore, it is recommended that competent and trained instructors may be appointed to teach English language at undergraduate level in Pakistani universities. Similarly, learners' attributes like their academic confidence and self-efficacy may be viewed as motivational stimuli and hence enhanced by the instructors.

## **References**

- Alison, J., & Halliwell, S. (2002). Challenging classes: Focus on pupil behavior. *London, UK: CILT.*
- Black, A. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The effects of instructors' autonomy support and students' autonomous motivation on learning organic chemistry: A self-determination theory perspective. *Science Education, 84*, 740-756.
- Brewer, E. W., & Burgess, D. N. (2005). "Professor's role in motivating students to attend class". *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, 42*(3), 24.
- Cook, V. (2000). Linguistics and second language acquisition. *Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and Macmillan Publishers Ltd. (2000).*
- Csizer, K., & Dornyei, Z. (2005). Language learners' motivational profiles and their motivated learning behavior. *Language Learning 55*(4), 613-659.

- Dörnyei, Z. & Clement, R. (2000). Motivational characteristics of learning different target languages: Results of a nationwide survey. *Paper presented at the AAAL convention, Vancouver, Canada. Retrieved November 7, 2012, from: <http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/uploads/2001-dornyei-clement-hi.pdf>*
- Dörnyei, Z., & Otto, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics (Thames Valley University, London), 4: 43-69.*
- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language Classroom. *Modern Language Journal, 78, 273-284.*
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Longman.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Ellis, Rod. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *The study of second language acquisition. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press by Arrangement with Oxford University Press.*
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Kikuchi, K. (2009). Listening to out learners' voices: What demotivates Japanese high school students? *Language Teaching Research, 13, 453-471.*
- Littlewood, W. (1996). Autonomy: an autonomy and a framework, in *System, 24 (4): 427-435*
- O'Malley J. M. and Chamot, A. U. (1995). *Learning strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 1 (78): 12-28.
- Passi, B. K., & Lalitha, M. S., (2009). General Teaching Competency scale, National Psychology Corporation, Agra. 4/230, Kacheri Ghat, Agra-282004 (U.P.)
- Ramage, K. (1990). Motivational factors and persistence in foreign language study. *Language Learning*, 40, 189-219.
- Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom. *System*, 37, 57-69.
- Sander, P. & Sanders, L. (2003), Measuring confidence in academic study. Available on Internet summary report. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology and Psycho pedagogy*, 1, 1.
- Tanaka, T. (2005). Teacher influence on learner motivation. Osaka Female Junior College, Retrieved in the EFL classroom. *System*, 37, 57-69. Retrieved from [http://www.wilmina.ac.jp/ojc/kiyo\\_2005/kiyo\\_35\\_PDF/2005\\_06.pdf](http://www.wilmina.ac.jp/ojc/kiyo_2005/kiyo_35_PDF/2005_06.pdf)
- Williams, M., & Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.