

A study of Motivation and Attitude in the Learners of English as Second Language

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to examine the role of motivation and attitude in learning English as a second language. These factors of individual differences in learning a second language is an area of which there are many controversies and differences in points of views emerging by the experts from around the world. Therefore, learning second language is strongly associated with motivation and attitude and is directly connected with the behavior of individuals participating in the process. This paper investigates how the teachers' knowledge of the learners' motivation and attitude enriches second language teaching and finds out that this is an assistive tool in inspiring second language teaching and learning both.

Key words: Motivation and attitude, individual differences, Second Language Learning.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Learning and teaching a second language can be affected by the attitudes and expectations that people bring to the learning situations which are influenced by the factors within the situation. Motivation is a major factor in the successful process of language acquisition. It is considered as the main goal directed and defined as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (Gardner, 1985). Motivation is also an important contributor to language achievement in terms of linguistic outcomes, which traditionally embrace knowledge structure of the language (Melendy, 2008). Dörnyei (2001) also explains why an individual ultimately chooses to undertake a certain action, the amount of effort they exert towards it and also how determined they are for the completion. This motivation has to be there especially among the foreign language learning. It is the main factor that is necessary in influencing second language learning. Studies say that motivation and language learning help learners and teachers both. Gardner (2010) views motivation as an abstract and complex concept that is used to describe human behavior. With a plethora of definitions, this continues to highlight the complexity of motivation, more so as a variable factor for L2 learners due to the dependency on different situations and conditions. Language learning motivation research has a long history in the field of second language acquisition, starting with Gardner and Lambert's (1959) pioneering work in the bilingual context of Canada. There is also a long-standing tradition of motivation research in educational psychology that is particularly relevant for the study of motivation. Motivation explains why people select a particular activity, how long they are willing to persist at it, and what effort they invest in it (Dörnyei, 2001). Attitude is determined by the individual's beliefs about outcomes or attributes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs), weighted by evaluations of those outcomes or attributes.

Learners' motivation in L2 is affected by individual attitudes and readiness to engage in the language learning process, which means motivation, is strongly associated with attitude. A number of views occur from the above definition particularly the need for teachers to effectively connect and uphold the learners' interest, and be dedicated for their labors until their goals are achieved. It is important to note, that the achieved goal can vary; whether it is conducting various types of activities in a classroom or learning a language for a long period of time (Hall, 2011). The individual differences among these students is in relation to their different psychological, physiological, mental and other characteristics, and to take these differences into account when teaching them. The class must be divided into similar learners' groups, and each group should be educated in a way that is equal with its abilities. The teacher must be trained by effective requirement programs to master the individual differences between his students boundary, as well as in effective methods of teaching a second language. These factors can affect not only the way people teach and learn the language but also the content of materials.

This study was determined between motivation and attitude in the learning of English as second language from the selected foreign students of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences Allahabad in India. It was based on the following investigation:

1. What is the students' level of attitude in learning English as second language?
2. What is the level of motivation in learning English as second language?

II. METHODOLOGY

Fifty (50) students, learning English as second language, were selected randomly for the study. These students have taken admission in SHUATS and completed/studied at least two semesters. The data was collected from the respondents through a questionnaire especially prepared for them. Statistical treatment of the data was made to get a fine analysis keeping in mind the study questions already mentioned earlier.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a descriptive research focusing motivation and attitude levels of the students towards learning and teaching English.

IV. INSTRUMENTS

The attitude and motivation are often treated together —given that attitudes have motivational properties and motivation has attitudinal implications. Gardner (2008) always upheld that the learners' attitude towards the target culture will have an impact on the level of success when learning a second language.

V. RESULTS

Table No. 1: Sex wise distribution of the respondents

The below table shows that the majority of respondents (76%) were males and (24 %) respondents were female. Therefore, we may conclude that most of the students were male.

SL.No	Sex	Frequency	Percentage % N = 50
1	Male	38	76%
2	Female	12	24%
	Total	50	100%

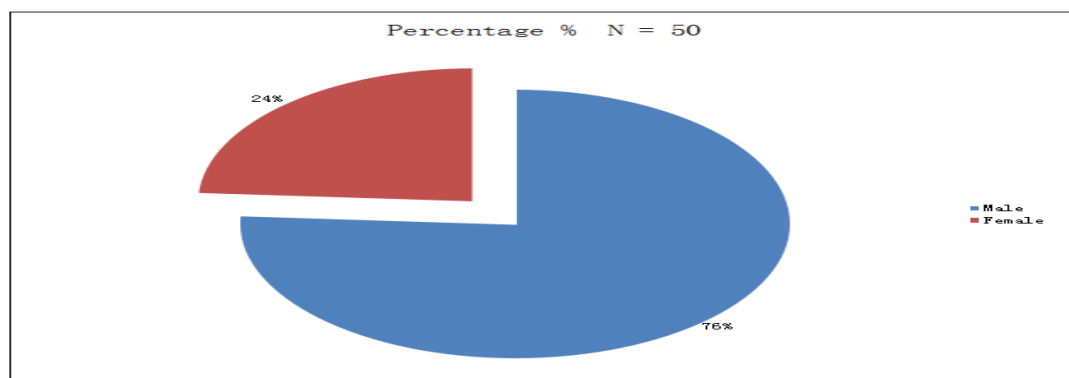


Table No. 2: Age wise distribution of the respondents

The below table shows that the majority of respondents (50%) were between the age of 20-30 and (24 %).

SL.No	Age(in year)	Frequency	Percentage % N = 50
1	20-30	25	50
2	31-40	12	24
3	41-50	7	14
4	Above 50	1	2
	Total	50	100

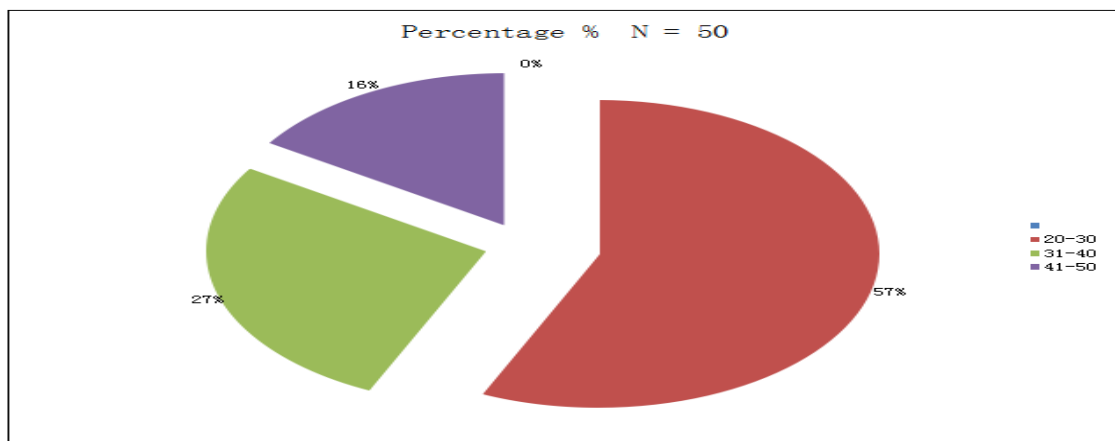


Table No. 3: Country wise distribution of the respondents

The below table shows that the majority of the respondents (44 %) were from Libya followed by Afghanistan (24 %), Nepal (18), Nigeria (10 %) and Ghana (4 %). Thus we conclude that that most of the respondent were Libyans. This data suggests that the Libyans are more focused than the rest of the students coming from outside for learning English which has a definite reason discussed in the analysis.

S.No	Country	Frequency	Percentage % N = 50
1	Libya	22	44
3	Afghanistan	12	24
2	Nepal	9	18
4	Nigeria	5	10
5	Ghana	2	4

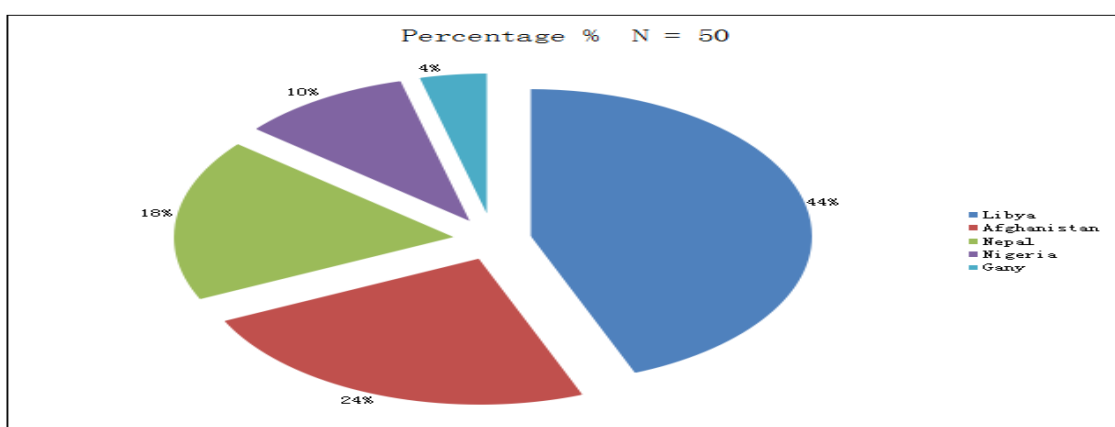
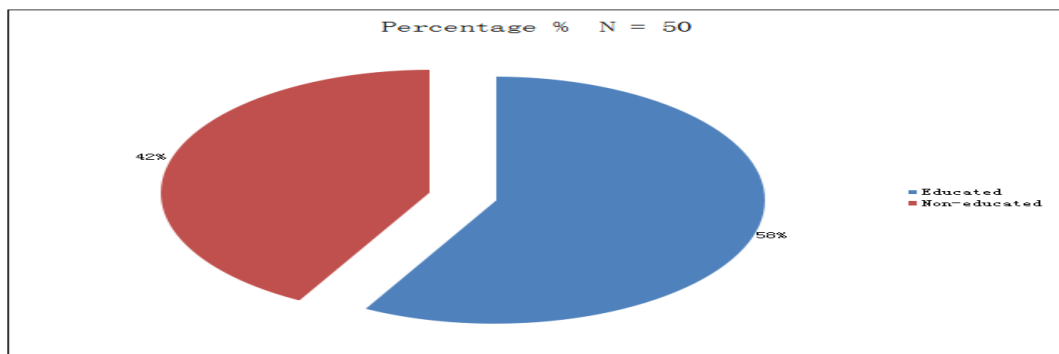


Table No. 4: Parent's education level

The respondents were asked about their parent's education level. The data collected for this question is tabulated below. The majority of the respondents, parents were (58 %) educated and non Educated Parents were only (42%) percent, therefore; we may conclude that majority of the respondents Parent's are educated.

S.N.	Education level	Frequency	Percentage % N = 50
1	Educated	29	58%
2	Non-educated	21	42%
3	Total	50	100%

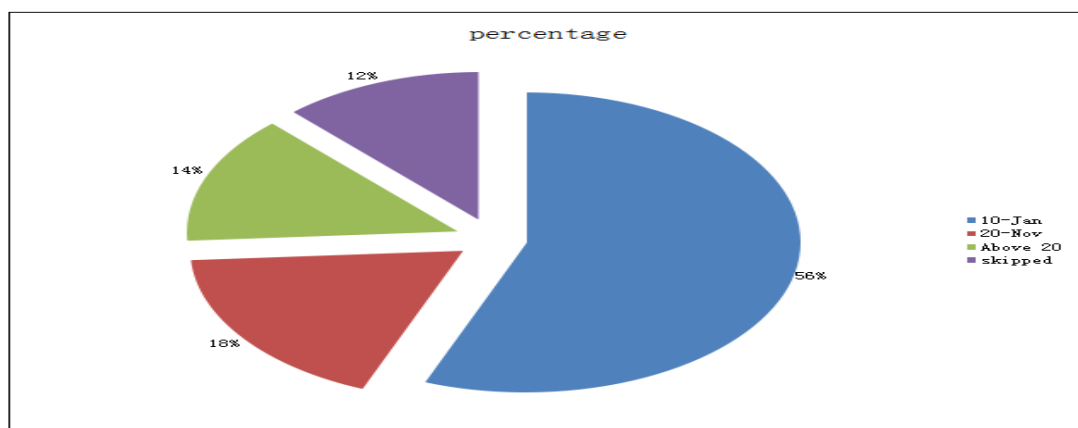


The above figure shows that the majority (58%) of the respondent's parents' were educated whereas the others (42 %) were non-educated.

Table No. 5: Length wise of exposure to English

The respondents were asked about their Length of exposure to English. The data collected for this question is tabulated below. The majority of the respondents, (56%) exposure was between (1-10) years. And very less students, length of exposure to English was above 20 years, i.e (14%). Therefore, it is concluded that majority of the respondents have good length of exposure to English. All the students have exposure to English but with difference.

S.N.	Length of exposure to English	frequency	percentage
1	1-10	28	56%
2	11-20	9	18%
3	Above 20	7	14%
4	skipped	6	12%
Total		50	100%

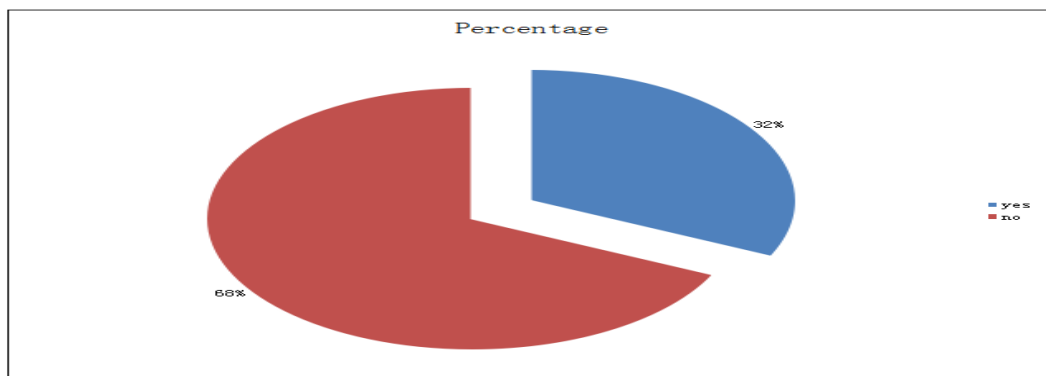


All the students have exposure to English but with some differences, the majority (56%) of them have at least 10 years of English exposure. This means the majority needed enough time to get a hold of the English language.

Table No. 6: Those who have taken TOFEL/ILETS

The respondents were asked about their TOEFL/IELTS. The data collected for this question is tabulated below. The majority of the respondents, (68%) was studying English but did not take TOEFL or IELTS. Others were only (32%) percent, therefore; we may conclude that majority (68 %) the students have taken neither TOEFL nor IELTS. (SHUATS doesn't require these examinations for admission).

N.S	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
1	yes	16	32%
2	no	34	68%
	Total	50	100%

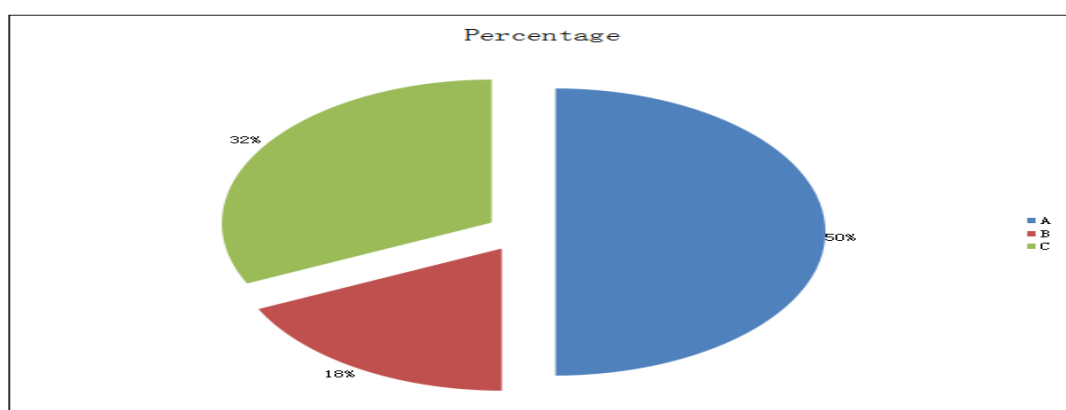


The majority of (68%) of the students has taken neither TOFEL nor ILETS. This means the majority speaks and writes English after they have learnt this language and improves it without having taken these kinds of English courses may be because most of them learn this language to fulfill their need or the universities where they are studying did not ask about the ILETS exams.

Table No. 7: Reason for improving English

The majority (50%) of the students is improving English because of the social purposes to get their works done or for carrying their daily affairs in a foreign country.

N.S	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1	A	25	50
2	B	9	18
3	C	16	32
	Total	50	100%



A-Communication (e.g. conversation, speaking, listening)

B-Academic purpose (studying, teaching, reading, writing)

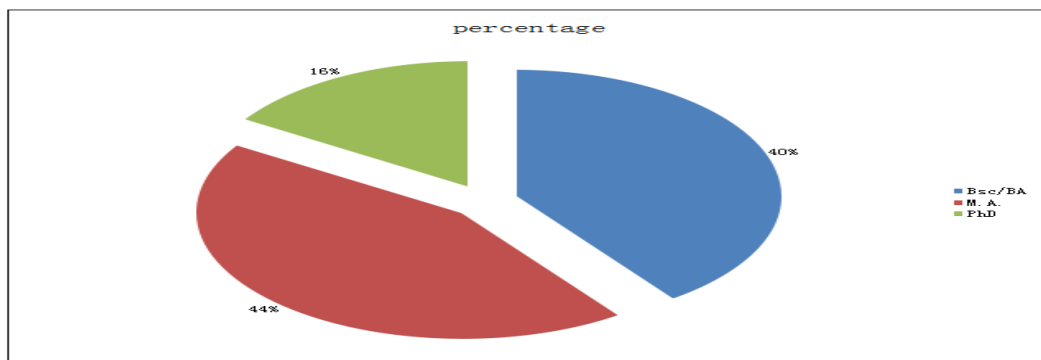
C-International language

The majority (50%) of the students is improving English because of their communicative to get their works done or for carrying their daily affairs in a foreign country.

Table No. 8: Field of work or programmed pursuing

The majority (44%) of the respondents was post graduate, 40% were graduate and only 16 % of the total respondents were PhD students.

S.N.	The field of work	frequency	percentage
1	Bsc/BA	20	40
2	M.A.	22	44
3	PhD	8	16
Total		50	100%

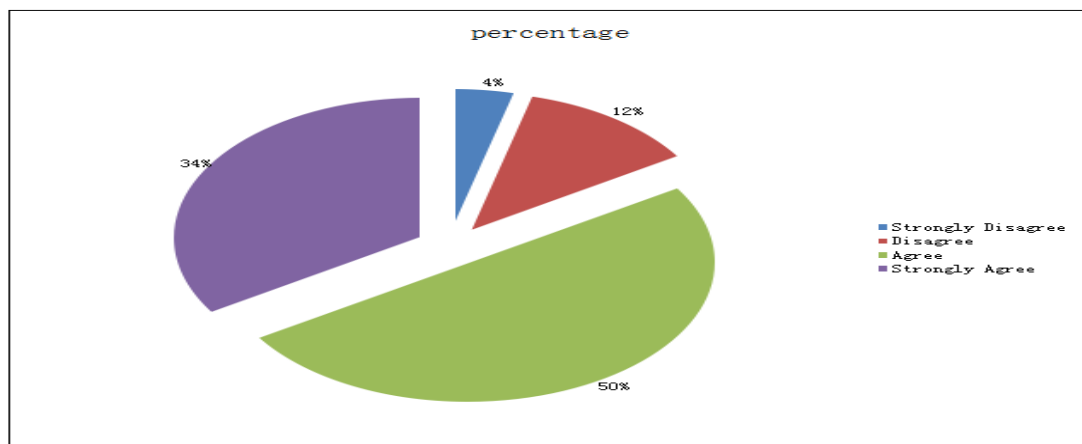


The above table shows that the majority (44%) of the respondents was M.A, 40% were B.Sc/BA and only 16 % of the total respondents were Ph.D students.

Table No. 9: It is well-known, that the social variables to enhance language learning are parent’s motivations, social motivations, and culture motivation:

The above table shows that the majority (50%) of the respondents agree of the social motivation for the learning process, a study tailored to their social motivations and strategies.

S.N.	Response / Variety	frequency	percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	2	4
2	Disagree	6	12
3	Agree	25	50
4	Strongly Agree	17	34
Total		50	100%

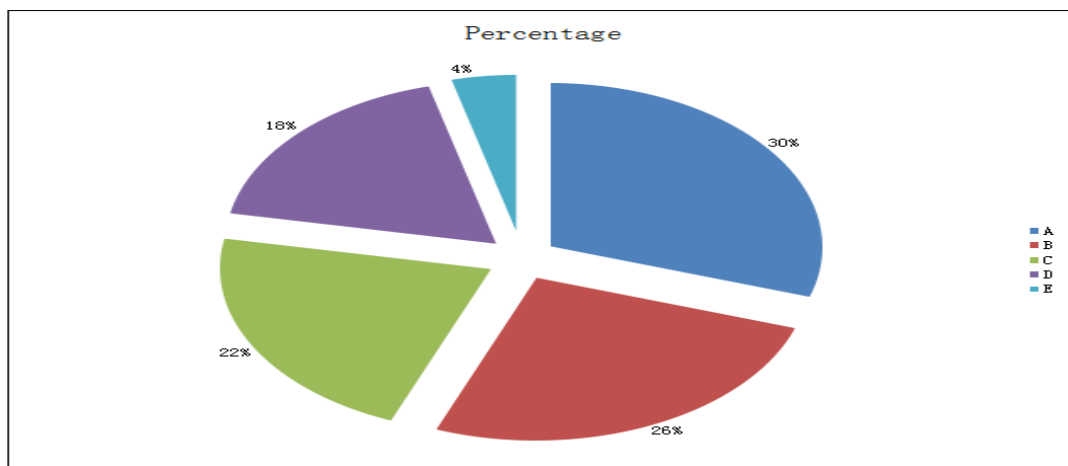


The above table shows that the majority agrees (25%) to the above question and of the respondents and students strongly agree’ were (17%) whereas the others Disagree (6%) and strongly Disagree were (2%).

Table No. 10: One of reason, of low motivation is the majority of the student do not see value in putting effort on learning English, and thus lose their interests and motivation

The above table shows that the majority of students interested only in are inter Speaking (30%) Reading (26%) Listening (22%) Practicing (18%) and Skipped (4%). The reason, of low motivation is students with a broad range of skills, abilities and experiences.

N.S	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1	A	15	30
2	B	13	26
3	C	11	22
4	D	9	18
5	E	2	4
	Total	50	100%



A-Speaking (30%) B- Reading (26%) C- Listening (22%) D- Practicing (18%) E-Skipped (4%). The above table shows that the majority of students interested only in Speaking (30%) Reading (26%) Listening (22%) Practicing (18%) and (4%)Skipped. The reason, of low motivation is students with a broad range of skills, abilities and experiences.

VI. Findings

The findings of this study, after an appropriate investigation through the information collected from the questionnaires, suggested that relationships between motivation and attitude preferences for instructional activities which can be many, in addition to this the study also finds that students who study language only at university conditions do not value language learning in and of it. Strong relationships were apparent between the same learners and the challenging activities. The study finds co-operative learning; challenging approaches, traditional approach and innovative approaches are the major factors in the relationship between motivation and attitudes. Motivation and attitude have been widely viewed by researchers as key factors that influence in the success of learning English language.

As this study aimed to resolve the level of motivation and attitude in learning English language, this also required to decide the relationship between respondents' personalities and their level of motivation and attitude. Following are the findings of this study:

1. The results revealed that sex, age, parents' educational background and language/dialect used at home of the respondents have a significant relationship to their level of motivation and attitude towards learning English. Meanwhile, for the secondary school graduated from of the respondents disclosed that there was a significant relationship towards attitude and motivation. On the contrary, graduated respondents revealed not to have a significant relationship on the attitude towards English language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) although language aptitude accounts for a considerable proportion of individual variability in language learning achievement, motivational factors can override the aptitude effect. Karahan (2007) avers that "positive attitudes let the learner have positive orientation towards learning English language". Researchers, teachers and learners agree that a high motivation and a positive attitude towards second language and its community help second language learners to acquire the language effectively (2005). Week, (2014) result revealed from a study that Arabic and English are used side by side in different domains. It also indicates that English symbolizes their Canadian identity and is considered a good instrument for achieving their educational and financial aspirations.
2. Respondents' level of motivation towards learning English as reflected in table 6, almost all the student – respondents answered 'Agree' with a grand mean of 50% on the statements given below and this meant that the students tend to have a moderately high motivation towards learning English. According to Brown (2000) it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation. As added to the statement of Tahaineh (2013), Oller (1979, p.138)"Attitudes are merely one of types of factors that give rise to motivation which eventually results in attainment of proficiency in a second language". Attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they would appear to influence students' success or failure in their learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) in Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning postulate the theory in brief: This theory, maintains that the successful learner of a second language must be psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behavior which characterize members of another linguistic-cultural group

VII. CONCLUSIONS

1. The level of attitude of the student towards learning English found out to be high. The English teaching does not take into thought the needs of students who do not possess knowledge of English or the needs of the students who possess higher levels of English knowledge.
2. Motivation is the most used concept for explaining the failure or success of a learner such inner source, desire, emotion, reason, need, impulse or purpose that moves a person to a particular action. The English teaching program possesses neither a post exam nor a system to place students according to their level of English capability and presentation.
3. The courses are designed as if groups were all the same in the level of English.
4. The English teaching program does not possess platforms to help students practice their English skills outside the classroom. Gardner and Lambert (1972) emphasized that, although language aptitude accounts for a considerable proportion of individual variability in language learning achievement, motivational factors can override the aptitude effect.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the study.

1. A learner's motivations and positive attitude towards learning English are the leading predictors of their success in learning the language.
2. A classroom environment encourages the learners to be relaxed, motivated and self-confident in acquiring the English language successfully.
3. Positive attitude toward learning English should be developed through designing English language activities that would lead the learners to participate and develop their skills.

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Biography

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agricultural Technology & Sciences, Allahabad, since July 2006.· Successfully worked as Acting Head in the Department of English & Foreign Languages at Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agricultural Technology & Sciences, Allahabad, from June 2008 to March 2010.· Appointed as Head-in-charge in the Department of English & Foreign Languages at Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agricultural Technology & Sciences, Allahabad, from October 2014 to May 2015· Supervised 5 PhD researches and currently supervising 4 PhD researches· Supervised three M. Phil thesis· Supervised 21 M.A. dissertations out of them 15 researches were conducted by foreign students· Conducted specially arranged short term Spoken English classes for Language Deficient students (including foreign students) in Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agricultural Technology & Sciences.· Edited Research journals and publications at SHIATS, Allahabad
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