

## Motivations towards learning English: A study of Thai Freshmen undergraduate students, Rajamangala University of Technology

Received: September 30, 2019

Revised: November 5, 2019

Accepted: December 4, 2019

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแรงจูงใจที่มีต่อการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาปีหนึ่งในระดับปริญญาตรี มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคล การวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์มุ่งเน้นถึงการศึกษาหาระดับของแรงจูงใจภายใน และภายนอกในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ โดยมีการเก็บข้อมูลจากนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี 62 คน โดยใช้วิธีสุ่มตัวอย่าง แบบเจาะจงและนำข้อมูลมาวิเคราะห์โดยการวิเคราะห์ ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ผลการวิจัย พบว่า นักศึกษาระดับของแรงจูงใจภายใน และภายนอกในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาปีหนึ่งในระดับปริญญาตรีมีค่าในระดับสูง ทั้งแรงจูงใจภายในและภายนอก

**คำสำคัญ:** แรงจูงใจ, การเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ, นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีปีหนึ่ง

### Abstract

This study investigates the motivations towards learning English of Thai Freshmen undergraduate students, Rajamangala University of Technology. It aims to determine the level of motivations and explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation regarding Thai Freshmen undergraduate students towards learning English. The samples are 62 Thai undergraduate students which are gathered by purposive sampling. The statistics used for analyzing the data are percentage, mean and standard deviation. The result indicates that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are in a high level of motivation.

**Keywords:** Motivations, Learning English, Freshman Undergraduate students.

### Introduction

English is the international language. It is the mother tongue of the people of England, America, Australia and some other countries. Approximately, there are 300 million people who are not English origin use it as a second language. However, English is the official or semi-official language in more

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than 60 countries and of many international organizations. In consequences, English has become an international language. People around the world are perpetually involved in English. Smith (2015) states clearly that at present witnessing a rapid increase in the use of English as a language of wider communication. It is the language of air-traffic controllers at international airports all over the world. It is the language used most frequently for international mail and at international conferences. It is the principal language of international commerce and international aid. Then, learning English is vital for developing life of many people. People could not show the talent, performance, and efficiency in international firms without English. Most of documents in this world are written in English. Presently, more than 80% of all information in the world's computers and internet is presented in English. English enables us to get good professional career and high salaries. Currently, firms need employees who can speak, read and write in English. English is also important for trade, commerce and industrial development of a country. Thus, learning English is an open door to study in to achieve degree in university.

In Thailand, the national and official language used in Thailand is Thai and there are several regional dialects. The official working language is English. English is also the medium of instruction in many schools, colleges and universities. The role of English in Thailand is quite important as it is in many other developing countries. New technology and the adoption of the internet have resulted in a major transition in terms of business, education, science, and technological progress, all of which demand high proficiency in English (Wiriyachitra, 2002). However, the high-school student who has been learning English for approximately 12 years or more cannot answer the simple question like "How have you been?" Also, students can remember what the word "wear" means but could not use or implement it when speaking or writing in sentence. To illustrate, by considering the amount of time Thai students have spent studying English, a high level of English proficiency should be expected of them. Unfortunately, in actual situation, Thai students' English proficiency was below average as shown in the English scores on the 2012 Thailand's Ordinary National Education Tests (O-NET) of primary, lower, and higher secondary students which were 38.4 percent, 30.5 percent, and 21.8 percent respectively. (Sermsongswad & Tantipongsanuruk, 2013). Therefore, English language learning in Thai schools will never success, as long as they could not 'communicate' well in English. That is an unachievable goal through learning English language in the classroom.

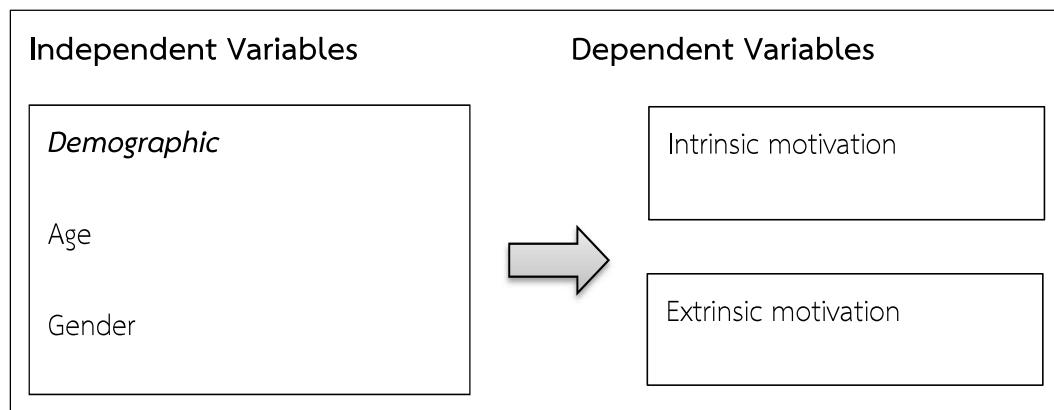
When learning English in class, the students need motivations to learn. Motivation is a widely used variable in many educational and other studies. Motivation plays a significant role in the process of learning language. For instances, Gardner (1985) points out that motivation is "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity. Next, motivation is a key factor in order to accomplish a particular activity

and it is difficult to imagine anyone learning a language without some degree of motivation (Hall, 2011). Also, students always learn when they need to learn, but sometimes the students confront the tough time to learn some courses which they are unmotivated for. With or without motivation, motivation still plays a vital role in the success or failure of the acquisition of second language. Success with English language learning might result from an actual and solid motivation to learn English. Consequently, learners' motivation is a key factor for students in class to pay attention to study language. However, learners' motivation might vary according to individual. This study will determine the level of motivations and explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation regarding Thai Freshmen undergraduate students of Rajamangala University of Technology towards learning English.

### Objectives

1. To determine the level of motivations regarding Thai Freshmen undergraduate students towards learning English of Rajamangala University of Technology.
2. To explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Thai Freshmen undergraduate students towards learning English of Rajamangala University of Technology.

### Scope and Conceptual framework



Adapted from (Mun, 2011)

### Research Methodology

- 1) **Content:** Collect the level of motivations (the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) regarding Thai Freshmen undergraduate students towards learning English from faculty of business administration, Rajamangala University of Technology.
- 2) **Samples:** this study attempts to seek 62 first year undergraduate students from faculty of business administration, of Thai Freshmen undergraduate students, Rajamangala University of Technology. The samples of this study are selected from the purposive sampling. Also, purposive

sampling enables the researcher to ‘handpick the cases to be included in the sample based on their judgment of their typically or possession of the characteristics being sought’ (Cohen, 2004).

3) **Research area:** Faculty of business administration, of Thai Freshmen undergraduate students, Rajamangala University of Technology.

4) **Period to collect data:** one semester (three and a half month).

#### Research instrument

The instrument used in this study is a close-ended questionnaire with 5 point of scale and ranged from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Strongly Disagree’. There are 10 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two main parts

Part 1: General demographic information of students: age and gender

Part 2: Students’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which are related to various variables of English language learning.

#### Data collection

The questionnaires are distributed to the 62 students during regular class, which the lecturer has assigned clear instructions and explanations to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaire is collected after done.

#### Data analysis

The data collected in this study is quantitative. The quantitative data of the questionnaires is analyzed in terms of means and S.D., using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and percentages. The data in part 1 and part 2 in relation to the subjects’ general background is calculated and shown in percentage. A five-point Likert scale is used to measure the level and type of subjects’ learning motivation. The scale which is used for interpretation the questionnaire to point out the level of the agreement or disagreement will depend on the following criteria:

Mean Range	Interpretation of findings
3.68 – 5.00	High degree of Motivation
2.34 – 3.67	Moderate degree of Motivation
1.00 – 2.33	Low degree of Motivation

#### Limitations of study

A total number of 62 freshmen undergraduates from Rajamangala University of Technology are selected purposively as the sample of this study regarding the issue of motivations. This sample size

is only a small fraction of the entire population. It is not enough to be taken as completely accurate or representative of the entire population.

### Definition of terms

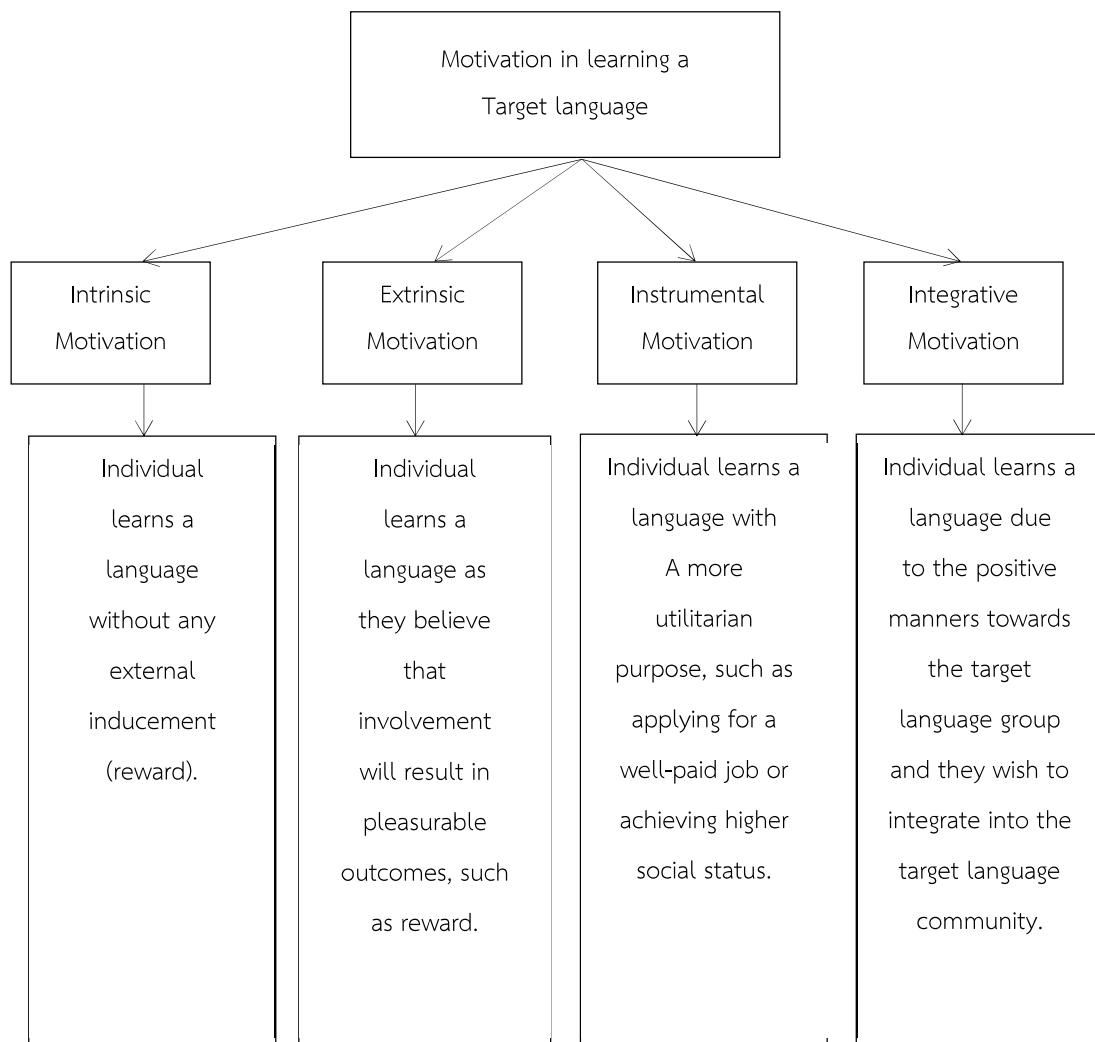
*Intrinsic motivation*: refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is naturally satisfying to you.

*Extrinsic motivation*: refers to behavior that is driven by external rewards such as money, fame, grades, and praise.

### Literature Reviews

#### 1. The concept of motivation

Motivation is an internal feeling which brings individual to complete an action. Without motivation, there is no action. Motivation is important because it is what causes us to actively look for resources to guarantee our success. Motivation is considered as an integral part in the achievement of any goal. It is an important factor that has a positive influence in any educational learning process especially in learning second language (Rehman, Bilal, Sheikh, Bibi, & Nawaz, 2014). By illustrating more clearly, this chart generally reveals motivation in learning a Target language (MUN, 2011).



(MUN, 2011)

### 1.1 Types of Motivation

#### 1.1.1) Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation (IM) refers to engagement in behavior that is inherently satisfying or enjoyable. IM is non-instrumental in nature, that is, intrinsically motivated action is not contingent upon any outcome separable from the behavior itself. Rather, the means and end are one and the same (Legault, 2016).

Conversely, extrinsic motivation (EM) refers to performance of behavior that is fundamentally contingent upon the attainment of an outcome that is separable from the action itself. In other words, EM is instrumental in nature. It is performed in order to attain some other outcome (ibid, 2016).

### 1.1.2) Instrumental and Integrative Motivation

The idea of instrumental/integrative motivation is also like that of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. If a student wants to learn second language just to pass the exam, to get job and to use it in holidays in a country is instrumental motivation while a student takes interest in knowing more about second language culture and values is integrative motivation. A student may motivate to learn second language just to pass the exam but on the other hand he/she may get interested in culture of language too (Noreen and Esmail, 2015).

Researchers are of the view that motivation is a driving force behind any actions and is responsible for determining human behavior by energizing it and giving its direction. We cannot connect motivation with our inner natural forces such as instinct, violation, will, physical strength and not as reinforcement and stimuli (Noreen and Esmail, 2015). Furthermore, individual who struggles through the Sciences, Chemistry, Mathematics, or English class realizes that not everyone would be motivated to learn the same courses. Someone might think that learning English class is very fun and easy, but someone is struggled by learning English. These kinds of actions reveal the motivation to learn and can shed the light on an important part of the learning process towards learning English language.

## 2. *Related Studies*

In the first place, motivational studies have shown that Malaysian students realize the importance of English for their future development and that students are extrinsically motivated by factors such as the desire to get good grades, opportunities to further their studies and career advancement to improve their English. However, in these cases extrinsic motivation does not necessarily translate to better performance in English. Most of these studies were undertaken in tertiary settings. Thus, there is a possibility that secondary school students may not be aware of the importance of English for their future. Conversely, it is also probable that these problems stem from a lack of motivation and poor attitude beginning from secondary school. This paper discusses the findings of a study undertaken to investigate these issues further by carrying out a questionnaire survey on attitudes and motivation of a group of secondary school students in East Malaysia towards learning English as a second language. The study reveals an overall positive attitude towards learning English by art and science students. Further Science students and higher proficiency students show more interest in improving their English. In addition, the findings reveal a positive relationship between higher proficiency level and positive attitudes and motivation to learn English (Ming, Ling, & Jaaf, 2011).

On the other hand, Shakfa and Kabilan (2017) investigate the role of motivation in enhancing students' English language learning at the UCAS (University College of Applied Sciences) in Palestine. The mixed method research design is employed for this study. Two instruments are utilized to collect the required data: a 5-level Likert scale questionnaire for quantitative data with 60 students and interviews with 10 students as sources for qualitative data. Findings showed that students' integrative motivation is slightly higher than instrumental motivation in learning English. This reveals that integrative motivation is a significant factor among UCAS students in learning English. In addition, results indicated that over 70% of students have got low motivation towards learning English and they have lost hope in learning English for political, religious, or business purposes. Moreover, 15% of UCAS students only enjoy learning English language. Therefore, it recommends that the management of UCAS should undertake several steps to enhance students' motivation towards learning English by integrating new alternative methods in learning English language.

Next, it is the study was entitled as "Comparison of public and private Urdu EFL learners' attitude and styles towards English learning at secondary level". The major objectives of the study were to explore Urdu EFL learners' attitude and learning styles towards learning English in Public and Private Schools and to make a comparison between Urdu EFL public and private secondary school learners' attitude towards learning English. The study was descriptive in nature. The population of the study comprised all the public and private secondary school students. Standardized questionnaire was used in the study. The above-mentioned questionnaire was highly reliable and frequently used in studies. Questionnaire was administered to the sample. The collected data was analyzed through most frequently used statistical techniques of mean score, standard deviation and t-test. The finding of study revealed that public secondary school students feel more hesitation to speak English frequently as compared to private secondary school students and it is also found that private secondary school students are like more to learn English as compared to public secondary school students. (Kamal & Ali, 2017).

According to the literature reviews, they show the significances of the way towards motivations and attitudes towards learning English which are related to what are the students' motivation and attitude In terms of this particular study, this research will investigate the differences from those literature reviews by focusing on the study of motivations towards learning English of Thai undergraduate students, Rajamangala University of Technology.

## Results

The results are divided into two parts:

- (1) general information of the samples (2) students' motivation

This part illustrates the general demographic data of the samples. The results are revealed based on the questionnaires as follows:

*Table 1: Gender finding*

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	50	80.65
Male	12	19.35
Total	62	100

Table 1: reveals that there are 62 practical samples. The majority of sample is female (80.65 %) and the minority of the sample is male (19.35 %).

*Table 2: Age Finding*

Age of students (years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
17	1	1.6
18	56	90.3
19	3	4.9
20	2	3.2
Total	62	100

Table 2: shows the frequency of age which the results indicate that the most frequency of age is 18 years (90.3%). However, this is the standard age range of the freshmen undergraduate students in Thailand.

*Table 3: Motivation results*

Intrinsic Motivations	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation of findings
1. I want to get a good grade in English	4.709	0.453	High
2. I want to use English language to pursue my higher degree	4.612	0.577	High
3. It enables me to be educated person	4.580	0.685	High
4. I want to enjoy English movie, music by learning English	4.612	0.656	High
5. English is important for personal development	4.903	0.295	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.683</b>	<b>0.533</b>	<b>High</b>

Extrinsic Motivations	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation of findings
6. English is important for my future career	5	0	High
7. It enables me to get job easily	4.677	0.467	High
8. It is the university requirement	4.645	0.478	High
9. English leads me more success and achievements in life	4.048	1.452	High
10. English is beneficial when traveling abroad	4.887	0.316	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.651</b>	<b>0.678</b>	<b>High</b>

In order to find the answers which are set in the objective no.1 and 2. Firstly, table 3 presents overall findings of the study. By using descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation (S.D.), table 3 also includes 10 intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in relation to the student's motivation towards learning English.

Secondly, according to the interpretation of findings, table 3 reveals that the both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are in a high degree level of motivation.

Thirdly, for intrinsic motivation, item 5 (English is important for personal development) is in a highest degree level of motivation. On the contrary, item 3 (It enables me to be educated person) is in a lowest degree level of motivation.

Next, for extrinsic motivation, item 6 (English is important for my future career) is in a highest degree level of motivation. On the contrary, item 9 (English leads me more success and achievements in life) is in a lowest degree level of motivation. Interestingly, a high standard deviation of item 9 shows that the data is widely spread (less reliable) while item 10 (English is beneficial when traveling abroad) shows a low standard deviation which implies that the data are clustered closely around the mean (more reliable).

Lastly, the finding reveals that Item 6 (English is important for my future career) which is the extrinsic motivation is the most motivated for Thai Freshmen undergraduate students towards learning English. It shows that all of students are aware of the importance of English language in relation to their future career.

### Discussions and conclusions

Apparently, the result indicates that Thai Freshmen undergraduate students have got high motivation towards learning English. The students realize the importance of English in the university because it is important for their future career. I claim that it is so, according to, English is nowadays the main

language for business at a global level. Although, they feel that learning English is tough and stressful, the students do not think it is a waste of time, and item 2 (I want to use English language to pursue my higher degree) also demonstrates that they want to use English language to pursue their higher degree.

The results further demonstrate that overall means are almost equal in both intrinsically (4.683) and extrinsically (4.651) regarding motivation to learn English language. Then, both motivations are required to motive the students to learn English language.

Accordingly, when the student is intrinsically motivated, the behavior is motivated by internal desire to do something for its own sake. For example, the student wants to get a good grade in English and enjoy English movie, music by learning English. Besides, when the student is extrinsically motivated, the behavior is motivated by an external factor pushing you to do something in hopes of earning a reward or avoiding a less than positive outcome. For instances, English is important for my future career and leads me more success and achievements in life. Thus, the students need both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English. Maintaining motivation in English language learning is absolutely a key. English language lecturer needs the tools to effectively enhance a student's motivation. As the lecturers, of course, they can motivate the students. As a learner, the issue is the same, the students expect the lecturer to teach and motivate them. The lecturer might support them by responding them positive feedback or rewarding like praise or awards in class which can also motivate students to learn English more and more.

The results in table 3 generally supports other results. To clarify, in other Thai contexts by focusing on first year undergraduate students at Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT), Thammasat University, Wimonmas (2013) points out that instrumental motivation is a significant factor among this group of students learning English. Based on this study's findings some relevant and useful motivational learning implications are recommended for enhancement and improvement of the students' motivation.

### Suggestions

From the results, motivation plays a vital role language learning process. The lecturers should realize that they could not teach English language effectively if they cannot get through the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Motivation is a kind of passion for the process of learning language. The lecturers should help the students to connect to their passions with the English course. Also, the motivation is the catalyst which could enhance the students to perform certain types of activities for a certain period. High-level of motivation is the key to success towards learning English. When there is no motivation, the students either get no results, or only acceptable ones, whereas, when there is motivation, the students reach greater and better results and achievements.

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