Business English Learners' Motivation

Nina KISIN*

Keywords: *motivation, Business English, learning foreign languages*

1. Introduction

This paper deals with motivation as a significant factor in foreign language learning, more precisely, learning Business English. Motivation is the driving force that is calling for action, an important psychological factor that leads to success. However, in everyday life, motivation is understood as either a

> fairly static mental or emotional state (e.g. His motivation was so strong that nothing could stop it), or as a target (e.g. My main motivation to become a doctor is a possibility to help others) but not as a process (Dörnyei 1998: 118).

By using a questionnaire on motivation (Salimi 2000: 74–77), the results of the research will relate to the level of motivation of the second year students who are learning Business English at the intermediate level (N = 50). We use quantitative and qualitative methods of processing the data obtained from the results of the questionnaire on motivation. All the statements in the questionnaire are translated from English to Serbian.

2. The definition and types of motivation

Motivation is derived from the Latin word (lat. *movere* = to move) and is defined as "a condition in which we are driven by certain needs, impulses, desires or motives towards a certain conduct", which is "directed towards achieving an aim" (Petz 1992 in Vizek Vidovic et alii 2003 as cited in Karlak 2014: 19). Motivation in correlation with integrativity in learning and attitudes to learning situations is an important factor in learning a foreign language. It is believed that motivation has a direct impact on the achievement in learning a second language (Gardner & Smythe 1981 as cited in Lin-Fang 2013: 203). Motivation is seen as a prerequisite for all other factors of learning a foreign language (Dörnyei 1998, 2001, 2005 as cited in Karlak 2014: 21). Gardner points out that the attitude and motivation are important factors because they affect the extent to which individuals will be interested in learning a language (Gardner 1985: 56 as cited in Taguchi 2002: 29). Furthermore, Gardner gave the definition of motivation which includes three components: *effort*,

* The University of Novi Sad, Serbia.

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

desire, and *positive attitudes towards learning* (Gardner 1985 as cited in Balenović 2011: 190–191).

There are two types of motivation stemming from the research conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1972): instrumental and integrative motivation (Gardner and Lambert 1972 as cited in Balenović 2011: 191). Instrumental motivation is learning a second language for pragmatic reasons. Miškulin-Čubrić (2002) conducted the research on instrumental motivation on a sample of 173 regular (full-time) second-year students at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija (Croatia), divided into four groups according to the languages taught: English, German, Italian and French (Miškulin-Čubrić 2002 as cited in Balenović 2011: 194). For the majority of students (63.58%) the reason for learning a foreign language is the ability to use it for future occupation, i.e. instrumental orientation is most pronounced (Ibid.). Integrative motivation is aimed at learning a foreign language to integrate into the social environment (Ibid.). Both types of motivation, instrumental and integrative, are considered to be a significant variable affecting the level of motivation for learning foreign languages (Dörnyei 2001 as cited in Lin-Fang 2013: 203).

Integrative motivation involves three concepts and their relation to learning a foreign language: *Possible self*, *Ideal self* and *Ought self*. The *Possible self* represents "individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" thus creating a link between cognition and motivation (Markus and Nurius 1986; Dörnyei and Csizer 2005 as cited in Balenović 2011: 191–192). The *Ideal self* refers to "the representation of the attributes that one would ideally like to possess: desire, aspiration, hope" (Higgins 1996; Dörnyei and Csizer 2005 as cited in Balenović 2011: 192). The "*Ought self*" refers to "the representation of attributes that one believes one ought to possess and exercise", including a sense of obligation, responsibility (Ibid.). A person who possesses integrative motivation and desire to succeed in learning a foreign language will be characterized by "ideal self" (Dörnyei and Csizer 2005 as cited in Balenović 2011: 192).

Learning a foreign language can cause a feeling of satisfaction, as is the case with Anglo-American students who study Spanish language and such students "enjoy the sound, melody and rhythm of prose or poetry in a foreign language" (Noels 2001: 44 as cited in Balenović 2011: 193). Also, knowledge of two foreign languages (being bilingual) creates a sense of "being educated" (Noels 2001: 47 as cited in Balenović 2011: 193). The methods of teaching English while enjoying its melody lead to the intrinsic motivation. This type of motivation must be *nurtured* if we recognize it in students, because then students are really interested in how language works and what is the structure of the language. We use this opportunity to highlight affective type of motivation, explored by Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović (1998). Affective type refers to the attitude about the English language: whether students find it "interesting, beautiful and whether they like to pronounce words in English" (Mihaljević Djigunović 1988 as cited in Balenović 2011: 194). Mihaljević Djigunović (1988) believes that schoolgirls have a higher level of affective type of motivation than schoolboys because schoolgirls "get emotionally tied to foreign language learning" (Mihaljević Djigunović 1988 as cited in Balenović 2011: 204).

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

On the other hand, the complete absence of motivation for learning a foreign language (a motivation) creates completely opposite effects to the ones mentioned above. A student who is not motivated will not be ready to experiment with strategies for learning a foreign language, since the lack of motivation for learning a foreign language is accompanied by "a sense of apathy, passivity and embarrassment" (Balenović 2011: 193). The task of the environment for learning a foreign language (group, classroom...) is to provide a high level of motivation for learning a foreign language.

There are three dimensions of students' motivation:

1. features of a language;
2. features of a student;
3. learning context (according to Karlak 2014: 162–166).

These dimensions of motivation are similar to the motivational construct proposed by Dörnyei (1994a) which, in addition to the level of student, includes the level of language and the level of learning context (Dörnyei 1994a as cited in Karlak 2014: 202). This structure reminds of the so-called "trilogy of the human mind": motivation, cognition and affect (Dörnyei 2010 as cited in Karlak 2014: 202). The two major factors that affect the motivation for performing various tasks are the expectation of success in performing a given task, and the value that an individual attaches to the success in this task (Dörnyei 1998: 119).

A professor has a three-fold objective (es. *un triple objetivo*) in his/her efforts to motivate students:

1. to awaken interest (es. *suscitar el interés*);
2. to direct and keep the hard work (es. *dirigir y mantener el esfuerzo*);
3. to reach the predetermined learning aim (es. *lograr el objetivo de aprendizaje prefijado*) (Martínez-Salanova 2001).

3. Research methodology on the motivation for learning Business English

Previously in this article we presented the definition and types of motivation (cf. Chapter 2). Next, we will present the paradigm within which the research on motivation for learning Business English is conducted and analyze the research results.

We used the Questionnaire on motivation in order to obtain the data in this research (Salimi 2000: 74–77). All the questions in the questionnaire are translated from English into Serbian. The research is conducted on a sample which consisted of 50 second-year students (M = 22, F = 28) at *Novi Sad Business School*. By providing a reader with both the pedagogical and psychological implications of the research results, motivation for learning English is presented as the driving force for action and an essential factor for success in learning English (foreign) language.

4. Analysis of the research results on motivation for learning Business English

The average respondents' answers to the questions/ statements from the questionnaire on students' motivation to learn Business English are expressed as the arithmetic mean of responses to each question. The table below shows the minimum and maximum values of responses for each question, as well as the standard

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

deviations. The participants expressed their agreement with statements on a continuum from 1 to 5, thus, all values are expressed within this range. Table 1 shows the minimum and maximum results, the arithmetic mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the participants' answers.

Table 1. *Minimum and maximum results, arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the participants' answers*

	Minimum	Maximum	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
1. I like English more than other subjects.	1.00	5.00	3.9000	1.11117
2. I would like to have more personal practice in my English course.	1.00	5.00	3.5800	1.23040
3. If I saw a tourist on the street, I would like to speak English.	1.00	5.00	3.4200	1.05153
4. I would like to have more English spoken.	3.00	5.00	4.3800	.66670
5. In my English study, I get through hard work.	2.00	5.00	3.4800	.88617
6. Doing my homework, I carry on till I really know it.	1.00	5.00	3.6200	1.00793
7. I work more with my English studies than with other subjects.	2.00	5.00	2.9400	.76692
8. If there is a panel discussion on the radio in English, I just do my best to understand it.	1.00	5.00	3.6200	.98747
9. Learning English is more important to me just because I want to get a good job.	2.00	5.00	4.2800	.75701
10. Other people think more highly of me if I know a foreign language.	1.00	5.00	3.9800	1.11557
11. Learning a foreign language makes me a more knowledgeable person.	1.00	5.00	3.8200	1.02400
12. I would like to learn (Business)	1.00	4.00	2.3800	.96658

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

English because I would like to teach it.				
13. Learning English is important to me because I can then get in contact with English-speaking people.	3.00	5.00	4.4600	.61312
14. I would like to learn English because I would like to be like a native speaker.	1.00	5.00	3.4400	1.05289
15. I learn English because I would like to join the English people.	1.00	4.00	2.2400	1.06061
16. I learn English because I would like to get familiar with English culture.	1.00	5.00	2.6939	1.31028
17. I would like to learn English perfectly.	1.00	5.00	4.3800	.92339
18. I am curious about English.	1.00	5.00	3.7000	1.23305
19. I would choose to learn English even if it weren't compulsory.	2.00	5.00	4.3400	.89466
20. I feel learning a foreign language truly helps me to develop my real self.	1.00	5.00	3.3000	1.12938
21. I think academic learning is pleasant.	2.00	5.00	3.8200	.84973
22. I think that the number of academic years should be increased.	1.00	5.00	3.4200	1.24687
23. If I could choose, I would take more courses in English.	1.00	5.00	3.1200	1.37974
24. I think English courses in university should be increased.	1.00	5.00	3.1800	1.30447
25. I love English/American music.	1.00	5.00	3.4286	1.25831

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

26. It is important to know life in the English-speaking world.	1.00	5.00	3.4600	1.18166
27. I found the English way of life exciting.	1.00	5.00	2.8200	.98333
28. I think one should know English history and culture.	1.00	5.00	3.1600	1.16689
29. I love the sound of English.	1.00	5.00	3.8980	1.04572
30. I think English is an exciting language.	1.00	5.00	3.5600	1.12776
31. I think it's useful to know the inner structure of English.	1.00	5.00	3.2200	.95383
32.I would really like to understand how the English language works.	2.00	5.00	3.7400	.82833
33. I love the way English is taught to us.	1.00	5.00	4.2600	.82833
34. I feel I can express myself in the English lessons.	1.00	5.00	3.8400	1.01740
35. I find our English teaching methods useful.	2.00	5.00	4.1000	.86307
36. I find our English teaching methods boring.	1.00	5.00	1.5600	.88433

Adapted from: Questionnaire on motivation (Salimi 2000: 74-77)

Based on the value of the arithmetic mean of the answers to questions, we can see that the respondents showed the highest approval in relation to the following statements: *Learning English is important to me because I can then get in contact with English-speaking people* (M = 4.46). Furthermore, the desire of students to communicate in English is reflected in the following statement: *I would like to have more English spoken* (M = 4.38), and accordingly, *I would like to learn English perfectly* (M = 4.38). The respondents showed a high level of agreement with the following statements: *I would choose to learn English even if it weren't compulsory subject* (M = 4.34), *Learning English is more important to me just because I want to get a good job* (M = 4.28); and inspiringly enough with the following: *I love the way English is taught to us* (M = 4.26), and *I find our English teaching methods useful* (M = 4.1).

Students' motivation for learning Business English language stems from the research results that are related to the statement *Other people think more highly of*

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

me if I know a foreign language (M=3.98), as well *as Learning a foreign language makes me a more knowledgeable person* (M=3.82). These statements only confirm the fact that speakers of foreign languages achieve better results and feel appreciated by others. As we mentioned previously (cf. Chapter 2), the task of the environment for learning a foreign language (group, classroom...) is to provide a high level of motivation for learning a foreign language. Students of Business English feel *they can express themselves in the English lessons* (M=3.84) and *think academic learning is pleasant* (M=3.82). Within the group, there is always a division between introverts and extraverts, i.e. those students who need more time or less time, respectively, to get involved in the teaching process. In addition, anxiety is present in introverts, so it is necessary to include introverts into the teaching process, taking into account their *feelings* or *emotions*.

English is considered a beautiful and romantic language (though not more romantic than Spanish or French!). The students are attracted to the melody of English, they love how it sounds and, overall, they love Business English more than other subjects: *I love the sound of English* (M=3.90) and *I like English more than other subjects* (M=3.90). It is important to make students interested in learning and researching about a foreign language, to "wake up" their minds in order to obtain new ideas, to awaken interest (cf. *suscitar el interés*). *I would really like to understand how the English language works* (M=3.74), *I am curious about English* (M=3.70) and *I think English is an exciting language* (M=3.56) are the statements which show students want to learn the English language and they find it interesting. Students should be provided with a practical work, as well. Their needs for practical knowledge are stated as: *If there is a panel discussion on the radio in English, I just do my best to understand it* (M=3.62) and *I would like to have more personal practice in my English course* (M=3.58).

The participants showed the lowest level of agreement with the following statements: *I find our English teaching methods boring* (M=1,56), *I learn English because I would like to join the English people* (M= 2,24), *I would like to learn (Business) English because I would like to teach it* (M= 2,38).

The average respondents' answers on the total score of the questionnaire on students' motivation for learning Business English are expressed as arithmetic mean summation of scores on the questionnaire, according to the key for a given instrument. The maximum possible score on the questionnaire is 180 points. The table below shows the minimum and maximum values of the results obtained.

Table 2. *Minimum and maximum results, arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the total score on the questionnaire*

	Minimum	Maximum	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
TOTAL SCORE	88.00	159.00	126.5532	19.49338

We can see in Table 2 that the lowest score on the questionnaire reached 88 points, while the highest ammounted to 159 points. On average, the respondents evaluated their motivation for learning Business English with 127 points out of 180, so we can conclude that students are motivated to learn Business English.

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)

5. Conclusion

This paper presented the theoretical assumptions and results of the previous research on motivation. Furthermore, the paper showed the motivation of students for learning Business English through research in which participated the second-year students of Business English at the intermediate level of knowledge (N = 50). The research results showed that students are motivated to learn Business English. It should be taken into account that teaching methods should be modern, and teachers should in an interesting way make teaching material "closer" to students. Teachers care about students and their learning needs, we believe; they follow their success and support them when they fail in the process of learning a foreign language. In the end, their knowledge is our greatest reward.

In order to obtain more relevant data on the motivation for learning English, the next research will be based on a larger sample. The results of this and other research on motivation will be applied and maintained in practice, with the support to instrumental, integrative and internal (intrinsic) motivation for learning Business English.

References

Balenović 2011: K. Balenović, "Motivacija odraslih učenika za učenje engleskog jezika u kontekstu globalizacije." *Napredak* 152 (2); 189–209.

Dörnyei 1998: Z. Dörnyei, "Motivation in second and foreign language learning." *Language Teaching* 31; 117–135.

Karlak 2014: M. Karlak, *Odnos strategija učenja, motivacije i komunikacijske jezične kompetencije u stranom jeziku*. Doktorska disertacija. Sveucilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera, Filozofski Fakultet, Osijek.

Lin-Fang 2013: W. Lin-Fang, "A Study of Factors Affecting College Students' Use of ESL Vocabulary Learning Strategies". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3 (19): 202–208.

Martínez-Salanova Sánchez 2001: E. Martínez-Salanova Sánchez, *La motivación en el aprendizaje*. El portal de la educomunicación: http://www.uhu.es/cine.educacion/didactica/0083motivacion.htm Web.

Salimi 2000: M.R. Salimi, *Affective factors in learning English: A study of filter*. Master's thesis, Shiraz University, Iran.

Taguchi 2002: T. Taguchi, "Learner factors affecting the use of learning strategies in cross-cultural contexts." *Prospect* 17 (2).

Abstract

This research aims to present Business English learners' motivation. The research involves the second year Business English students at the intermediate level of knowledge (N = 50). We use the Questionnaire on motivation (Salimi 2000: 74–77) in this research in order to determine the level of motivation for learning Business English. The theoretical significance of this research is in an attempt to highlight the students' motivation as the key to success for learning a foreign language. The social significance of this study is to examine motivation of the second year Business English students at the intermediate level of knowledge, based on the results obtained by means of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research results showed that the students are motivated to learn Business English.

BDD-A26404 © 2017 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 12:53:56 UTC)