

Motivation as a Psychological Force in Language English: Thai University Students

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Motivation is acknowledged to be one of the principal psychological driving forces within individuals that impels them to take action and to succeed. Consequently, motivation is crucial in education in general. Currently, English language learning has become the focal attention because the demands, be they local or global, to ameliorate citizens' English proficiency are increasing. Unfortunately, recently, in comparison with the people from other neighboring countries, Thai people's English has been considered unsatisfactory. Given the role of motivation in determining the outcome of education, it is interesting to examine what type and what level of motivation Thai learners of English have. Specifically, this study focuses on Thai learners in higher education studying in the discipline of humanities. The participants include 1,665 students from four different public universities all over Thailand. The instruments employed in this study are a questionnaire and interview questions. Based on two established motivational questionnaires (Gardner's in 1985 and Dornyei's in 2010, a hybrid questionnaire was developed for this study and subsequently validated by five experts in the field of language teaching. The questionnaire was implemented to undergraduate students in humanities. To substantiate the questionnaire data and to obtain more in-depth information regarding motivation, 40 interview sessions were conducted. The analysis of the questionnaire data and interview data demonstrated that the students had a high level of motivation in learning English for their personal pursuit including employment and professional advancement. Interestingly, the interviews with the students revealed that they also aspired to utilize their English knowledge to enlarge their cultural repertoire. The findings generated from this large scale project suggest that, to maintain these humanities students' motivation and empower them as enthusiastic language learners, a number of pedagogical practices need to be devised to assure that their motivation in learning English is boosted.