

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Students' Motivation and Attitude towards Learning Foreign Languages: A Case Study of Moroccans' Learners of English, German, and Spanish

**Dr. Rabia Redouane**

Associate Professor, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Montclair State University, USA

### **Abstract:**

*This paper attempts to investigate the types of motivation that influence Moroccan students' choice of learning a foreign language and their attitudes towards this language. Also, it aims at looking at these students' attitude toward the language type, learning environment, teaching pedagogy and content, as well as their self-assessment of the four skills and their self-ranking in class. Ninety-one university Moroccan students enrolled in English, German, and Spanish languages took part in this study. Data were collected summer of 20 14 in Morocco through a survey questionnaire. Findings reveal that for English and Spanish learners integrative and personal orientations were predictors of their motivation to learn these languages. For German learners, on the other hand, instrumental motivation was preferred over integrative and personal motivations. One-way Anova analysis shows that there are no statistically significant differences in motivation within groups or between groups of learners of these three foreign languages. It was also found that only English learners hold a positive attitude towards the language of study and its level of difficulty, and one-way Anova indicates that is a statistically significant difference in opinion between the three groups of learners. In addition, only English learners manifest favorable attitude towards the practicality of the foreign language, its use in higher education especially in Science and technology, and its future increase in Moroccan society. With regard to the learning environment, content, teacher's pedagogical approach, and types of activities used in the class, all the three group of learners expressed negative attitudes and did not approve of the ways these foreign languages are taught. The findings of the present study have important implications for teachers of foreign languages because of the lack of motivation and negative attitude most of these learners' manifest.*

### **1. Introduction**

In research on second (L2) and foreign language acquisition, motivation has long been considered as the main factor for learners' choice of the L2 language in early studies (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). This concept is defined as "the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language" (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991:10). Gardner (1983) differentiated between two types of orientations of motivation. On the one hand, instrumental orientation which implies that a learner's reason for learning a language is to achieve instrumental goals, such as academic achievement, and/or professional and economic advancement; and on the other hand, integrative motivation that entails a learner's motive for learning a language is to be integrated into the society of the target language (203). Cooper and Fishman (1977) added a third type of motivation known as "developmental or personal motivation" (243). Lightbown and Spada (2006), however, define motivation "in terms of two factors: Learners' communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community" (63); which means that learners will seek to achieve proficiency in terms of the communicative aspect of a language because they may want to fulfill personal achievement, or because they want to succeed in achieving professional ambitions.

Others researchers (e.g., Dornyei, 1994, and Oxford & Shearin, 1994) have called for broadening the definition and scope of motivation by including other variables from other fields like psychology. The application of these variables has shown that it is difficult to account for only one type of motivation during learning since this depends on the learner and the way he/she perceives the language, and that there may be factors that play a role in shifting his or her orientation. The importance of motivation in enhancing second/foreign language learning is unquestionable. According to Brown (2000), "it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation" (160). With similar views, Gardner (2006) posits that "students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels" (241). Moreover, he adds that "if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc." (243). More importantly, it was claimed that learners with integrative orientation would be more motivated than those with instrumental orientation since integrative motivation came from positive attitudes toward the speakers of the target language (Gardner & al., 1972).

Needless to say that motivation to learn a foreign language can be determined by dispositions and personality characteristics such as learner's attitude and perception towards foreign individuals and their target language (Gardner, 1985). According to many researchers

(e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Freedman, 1997; Kaballa, 1988) attitude is a mental perception that portrays favorable or unfavorable feelings toward an object. Wenden (1991), adds that attitude includes three components namely, cognitive, affective and behavioral. Van Els et al. (1984) suggest that “it does not really matter whether all or only one of the three components are measured; the relationship between these three components is so close that sufficient information on an attitude can be obtained by measuring only one component, no matter which” (116). Positive beliefs about a language are argued to help a learner to have a more positive attitude and orientation towards learning the language and influence his/her success or failure in their learning (Karahan, 2007:84).

## 2. Empirical Evidence

There is an abundance of L2 research that has examined learners' motivational orientations of learning second or foreign languages such as German, English, Spanish, French, Hebrew and other languages in different settings, for example, Vijichula and Lee (1985); Kruidenier and Clément, (1986); Noels and Clément, (1989); Belmecheri and Hummel (1998); and Al-Haq (2000), among others. In Kruidenier et al., (1986) study which involved eight groups of students studying English, French or Spanish as an L2, the findings reveal that the two orientations instrumental and integrative were significant predictors of the student's motivation to learn the L2. Likewise, in Vijichula and al., (1985) study, investigating Malaysian students' motivation for learning English, it was found that students were both integratively and instrumentally oriented towards learning this language. In addition, findings of Noels and al. (1989) study that compared the motivational orientations of first-year L2 German students with heritage learners at the University of Ottawa at Carleton, Canada, indicate that L2 learners' motivation was manifested by an integrative orientation, while German heritage learners did not show any motivation. On the other hand, results of both Belmecheri and al., (1998) study, which examined motivation for learning ESL in Francophone Grade 11 high school students from Quebec City, and Al-Haq (2000) study, which looked at the attitudes of Jordanian university students to the Hebrew language, reveal that learners in both studies were driven only by instrumental orientation.

A considerable number of studies also examined the relationship between L2 learners' motivation and attitude, students' attitudes towards the functionality of the target language as well as their self-assessment of skills in the foreign language of study. Some worthwhile mentioning studies are (Borromeo-Samonte, 1981; Benson, 1991; El-Dash and Busnardo, 2001; Lai, 2005, 2009; and Majumder, 2005). In Benson's study which assessed motivation and attitudes of 300 learners of English in a Japanese university, their self-assessment of English skills, and their opinions on the practicality and utility of English, it was found that integrative and personal reasons for learning English were preferred over instrumental ones, and English was seen as being useful for a selection of modern functions. Similarly, in Borromeo-Samonte's (1981) study investigating Filipino college students' attitudes towards English, it was found that these particular students favored English, and their attitude was influenced by their integrative motivation as they could easily identify themselves with the culture. Differently in El-Dash and Busnardo (2001) study conducted in Brazil, the majority of the Brazilian adolescents' favor English to the Portuguese language in terms of status and solidarity. However, the findings of Majumder's study (2005) indicate that the positive attitude of Oriya Migrants towards English is due to their learning of English for instrumental purposes namely for better education and job opening. Likewise, the results of both Lai's studies (2005) and (2009) in Hong Kong reveal that English was perceived “as the language of the highest instrumental value and social status” as well as “a gate-keeper for higher education and job opportunities” (cited by Al Mamun, Rahman, and Hossain, 2012: 203).

In the context of Morocco, studies were carried out mainly to investigate Moroccans' attitudes towards all the languages spoken during different periods of Moroccan history and implementation of linguistic policies and new reforms. These languages include the two national official languages (Modern Standard Arabic and Tamazight), Darija, the Moroccan dialect and the two foreign languages, French and English (e.g., Ennaji, 2002; Marley, 2004; Reino, 2007; Abedlali, 2014, etc.). For instance, in Abedlali's study that investigated university students in the department of Philosophy attitudes towards the five languages, it was found that students' attitudes vary from one language to another; while these university students expressed negative attitude towards Tamazight, they held positive attitudes towards both varieties of Arabic, and French and English. What is evident in the findings of most of these studies about Moroccans' attitudes towards languages is that same attitudes are still retained notwithstanding the changes and modification in the status of these languages throughout Morocco's history due to new constitutional reforms.

The few studies I am aware of that examined Moroccans' motivation and attitude towards foreign languages mainly English are Guebel's (1976), Sadiqi's (1991); Ennaji's, (2002); Buckner's (2011); and Yearous's (2012). For example, in Guebel's study which examined secondary school students' choice and preference of foreign language study, it was found that most students favor English over Spanish, German, and Russian. Also, the results of Yearous's study, investigating attitudes of high school students, who had been taught under Arabized educational system, towards French, revealed that some of these students express a positive attitude towards French, while others hold a negative attitude. Moreover, in Sadiqi's (1991) study which looked into university students' and ordinary Moroccans' attitudes toward English, it was found that while the majority in both groups chose English for an instrumental reason, almost equal number of these participants' motivation was initiated by personal interest or by the importance of the foreign language. Most of the university students were favorable toward English. 87% embrace the idea of seeing English spread in Morocco and 81% believe that English is valuable for Moroccan population (108). Similarly, ordinary Moroccans had positive perception about English and besides its usefulness and its practicality in business and travelling, they believe that English “has no colonial connotation for them and welcome the idea of seeing it spread in Morocco” (111). Last but not least is Buckner's (2011) study which examined perceptions of two groups of young Moroccan university learners from different social classes (English language learners at public and private universities and higher institutions, and university learners from different disciplines) towards English, French and Standard Arabic. The findings reveal that both groups tend to have positive opinions and attitudes towards English. While learners

from upper class view English as a means to uphold their privilege and benefit, those representing lower class consider English as a way to access to a middle-class profession (213).

Apart from these few studies that surveyed specifically English language alone or in comparison with other languages, to my knowledge, no research study has been conducted so far comparing university students' motivation and attitude towards learning different foreign languages in Morocco. The controversies around the types motivation and attitudes on learning second and or foreign language in different settings and the scarcity of research studies on motivation and their attitude for learning foreign languages and their comparison in Morocco suggest the utility of this current study which intends to fill up this identified research gap.

### 3. The Study

This study attempts to investigate the types of motivation that influence Moroccan university students' choice for learning a particular foreign language, and their attitude towards the foreign language of study, its learning environment and pedagogical approach in teaching it, and their self-assessment on the four skills and their ranking in class. 91 university students (35 learners of English, 30 of German, and 26 of Spanish) from "Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humanités" (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences) Dhar El Mahraz in Fès took part in this study. These Moroccan university students were enrolled in the department of languages and majoring either in English, German, or Spanish.

#### 3.1. Research Questions

The study addresses the following four research questions:

1. Does students' motivation to learning the foreign language differ depending on the language type?
2. Does students' attitude towards the foreign language differ depending on the language type?
3. Do students' self-assessment of the four skills and their ranking in the class differ depending on the language type?
4. Do students hold different opinions about instructional methods used to teach the foreign language of choice?

#### 3.2. Instrument & Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through a questionnaire which consists of 40 questions divided into four sections. Section I gathers demographic information including gender, age, educational level, L1 background, and knowledge of other languages. Section II comprises questions about the target language, motivation and desire for learning it. The reasons given stress the three motivational orientations (instrumental, integrative, and personal). It also includes ten questions about students' attitude and perception towards the foreign language of study, its use in the educational system, in the social context, and its importance in the future of Morocco. The third section consists of questions about students' self-assessment of their four skills in the target language and their self-ranking in class. The last section asks about students' opinion on instructional methods used in teaching of the target language. Two versions (English and French) of the survey questionnaire were prepared (see appendix for the English version). The French version was for German and Spanish learners since they are supposed to know French and since I do not know neither German nor Spanish to interpret participants' responses. The questionnaire was administered summer of 2014.

Types of questions in the four sections are either Yes or No answers, multiple choice answer options, giving answers, or rating scales. Examples of the rating scales used are four-point scales: 4 = Very good, 3=good, 2= Average, and 1=Below average; or 4=most of the time, 3=very frequently, 2=frequently, 1=seldom. Quantitative analysis was conducted on the participants' responses with respect to motivation, attitude, type of language of study, and their self- assessment of their skills and performance in comparison to their peers in the class. The data were analyzed in terms of means, using SPSS and percentages.

### 4. Findings

Sex	English N= 35	German N=30	Spanish N=26
Male	2263%	1550%	934%
Female	1337%	1550%	1765%

Table 1: Frequency of Participants' Gender

As presented in Table 1 the initial summary of frequencies revealed a predominance of males for English learners, with 63% in comparison to 37% for females. For Spanish more female learners (65%) are enrolled than males with 34%, however German had equal numbers of male and female participants. With regard to age, Table 2 shows that the category between 20 and 25 represents the largest portion with 69%, 80% and 70% for English, German, and Spanish respectively followed by the category below 20 that represents 20% for both English and German, and 27% for Spanish. This distribution is logical, if we consider that generally students are enrolled at the university at the age of 18 or 19, and most of the participants in this study are in their second year or third years of their program.

Age	English N= 35	German N=30	Spanish N=26
<b>Below 20</b>	720%	620%	727%
<b>Between 20 &amp; 25</b>	2469%	2480%	1870%
<b>Above 25</b>	411%	00%	13%

Table 2: Frequency of Participants' Age

Also when asked to identify their first language, nearly all learners (32 English learners, 24 German learners, and 20 Spanish learners) said it is Moroccan Arabic. The rest said Berber. For the knowledge of other languages besides the first language and the target foreign language of study, only two learners of English out of 35 mentioned Modern Standard Arabic. For knowledge of other languages including national and official languages and other foreign languages, most of all of these learners listed Modern Standard Arabic and French which were both learned in school. Three English learners listed Italian and Spanish and said that they learned them in another environment without identifying it.

When students were asked to give their perception about the foreign language of study, German learners judge that German is very difficult language (see Table 3). Their mean score is higher ( $M=4.0000$ ,  $SD=0.44549$ ), compared to Spanish learners who consider Spanish neither difficult nor easy with the mean score of ( $M=2.9615$ ,  $SD=0.44549$ ). English learners, however, consider English an easy language with the mean score of ( $M=2.6857$ ,  $SD= 1.02244$ ).

	N=91	Mean	St. deviation
Level of difficulty of the language of study	English	2.6857	1.02244
	Spanish	2.9615	0.44549
	German	4.0000	0.44549
Linguistic aspect of difficulty of the language of study	English— <b>Pronunciation</b>	2.1143	1.18251
	Spanish--- <b>Vocabulary</b>	1.1154	0.43146
	German--- <b>Grammar</b>	1.6667	0.80230

Table 3: Means of Participants' Attitude towards the Language of Study

There was also a difference in identifying the linguistic aspect that makes the foreign language difficult to learn. Most German learners identified grammar as the most difficult aspect of the language while Spanish learners labeled vocabulary and English learners chose pronunciation as the hardest linguistic element. The investigation of the difference in the respondents' opinions towards the level of difficulty of the target language and the linguistic aspect that makes the language difficult was conducted by using one-way Anova test. Table 4 shows that there is a significance difference between the three groups with regard to their opinion about the level of difficulty of the foreign language ( $F=26.080$ ,  $p.000<0.05$ ) and the linguistic aspect that makes its learning difficult ( $F=9.248$ ,  $p.000<0.05$ ).

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Level of difficulty</b>	Between Groups	29.935	2	14.968	26.080	.000
	Within Groups	50.504	88	.574		
	<b>Total</b>	80.440	90			
<b>Linguistic Aspect of Difficulty</b>	Between Groups	14.895	2	7.447	9.248	.000
	Within Groups	70.863	88	.805		
	<b>Total</b>					

Table 4: One-way Anova Comparing Participants' Attitude towards the Language of Study

To identify type of motivation, participants were asked to select among three reasons that stress instrumental, integrative, or personal orientation for learning the target language.

Target Languages	Motivation			Total
	Personal Motivation	Instrumental Motivation	Integrative Motivation	N=91
English	14	6	15	35
	40%	17.1%	42.9%	100%
Spanish	13	3	8	26
	50%	11.5%	38.5%	100%
German	5	20	5	30
	16.7%	66.6%	16.7%	100%

Table 5: Type of Motivation by Language

Table 5 presents the percentages of learners' motives for learning the foreign language. The findings reveal that for learners of English the percentages are nearly identical with 42. % for integrative motivation and 40% for personal motivation. Personal motivation received the lowest percentage with 17%. For Spanish learners, however, personal type of motivation received the highest percentage (50%), followed by integrative reason (38.5%), and then instrumental with (11%). German learners considered instrumental reason is an important motive to learn the target language with 66%, followed by both personal and integrative motives with 16.7% each. One-way Anova analysis shows that there is no significant difference in motivation within groups or between groups for the learners of the three foreign languages with ( $F=.439, p=.646$ ).

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	.814	2	.407	.439	.646
<b>Within Groups</b>	81.647	88	.928		
<b>Total</b>	82.462	90			

Table 6: ANOVA Test: Comparison between and within Groups' Motivation

Attitude towards the foreign languages was obtained by 10 statements that aim to elicit respondents' preference, perception and opinion about the foreign language, its instrumental value, its use in education and other domains in Morocco, and its increase use in the future. Only four statements are discussed here for length constraint. Table 7 displays the means of learners' perception and impression about the foreign language of study and its prestige through the two statements "I like speaking \_\_\_\_\_ (the target language of study)", and "When someone speaks \_\_\_\_\_ (the target language of study) it shows that he is educated."

Statements 1 & 2	Language Learners	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1. I like speaking _____ (the foreign language)	English	1.1667	.590209	35
	Spanish	1.0857	.28403	26
	German	1.0769	.27175	30
		<b>1.1099</b>	<b>.40690</b>	<b>91</b>
2. When someone speaks _____ (the foreign language) it shows that he/she is educated	English	1.1143	.32280	35
	Spanish	1.0769	.27175	26
	German	1.0667	.36515	30
		<b>1.0879</b>	<b>.32140</b>	<b>91</b>

Table 7: Means' of Participants' Attitude

As seen in Table 7 the means for all learners of the three languages for the first statement differ. The mean scores of the English learners ( $M=1.1667, SD=.590209$ ) is higher than that of the Spanish learners ( $M=1.0857, SD=.28403$ ) and that of German learners ( $M=1.0769, SD=.27175$ ). Also English learners' means and standard deviations for the second statement "When someone speaks \_\_\_\_\_ (the foreign language of study) it shows that he/she is educated." are also higher than those of ( $M=1.1143, SD=0.2280$ ) Spanish learners ( $M=1.0769, SD=0.27175$ ); and German learners ( $M=1.0667, SD=0.36515$ ). But Anova analysis comparing between learners of the three languages revealed no significant difference between the three groups as shown in Table 8.

Statements 1 & 2		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. I like speaking _____.(the foreign language of study)	<b>Between Groups</b>	.145	2	.073	.434	.650
	<b>Within Groups</b>	14.756	88	.168		
	<b>Total</b>	14.901	90			
2. When someone speaks _____ (the foreign language of study) it shows that he/she is educated.	<b>Between Groups</b>	.041	2	.021	.195	.823
	<b>Within Groups</b>	9.256	88	.105		
	<b>Total</b>	9.297	90			

Table 8: Anova Test: Comparison between/within Groups' Attitude

For statements 9&10: “ \_\_\_\_\_ (the foreign language of study) is an important lingua franca in globalization”, and “Morocco needs to increase the use of \_\_\_\_\_ (the foreign language of study) in the era of globalization”, 96% English learners positively agreed with statement# 9 however a great number of Spanish and German learners (68.5% and 80% respectively)disagree with this statement. For statement #10,nearly all learners of the three languages agree with the statement that Morocco should increase the use of the foreign language in this globalized world(as seen in Table 9).

Statements: 9&10	Yes			No		
	English	German	Spanish	English	German	Spanish
_____ (the foreign language of study) is an important lingua franca in globalization.	96%	20%	31.5%	4%	80%	68.5%
Morocco should increase the use of _____(the foreign language of study) in this era of globalization	99%	85%	90.5%	1%	15%	9.5%

Table 9: Percentages of Participants' Attitude towards the Value and Importance of the foreign Language of Study

In the same way, the pattern of responses for other statements on the instrumental value of the foreign language, its use in higher education and in different social spheres indicates that English learners were more positive towards English language and showed the highest attitude towards English in comparison to Spanish and German learners. Spanish learners showed a slightly higher attitude in comparison to German learners who were reluctant in most cases to give their opinions on statements.

Comparing learners' self-assessment of the following skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) in the foreign language and their ranking in the class, the results reveal that there are differences in these learners' self-assessment of the foreign language skills. English learners judge that their reading and speaking skills are very good than other skills and in comparison to Spanish and German learners, their mean scores in these two skills are higher (M=3.7429, SD=1.06668; M= 3.2857, SD=.89349) than those of Spanish learners'(M=3.4615, SD=1.13950; M=2.9231, SD .97665), and German learners ((M=3.4667, SD=.86037; M=2.9667, SD= .99943). Spanish learners, on the other hand, rated writing skillas highest with the mean score (M=3.5385, SD=1.13950)compared to German (M=3.4000, SD=.96847) and English learners (M=3.2000, SD= 1.13241). However, German ranked highly their listening skill with the mean score of (M=3.7000, SD=1.11880) compared to that of English learners (M= 3.6000, SD=.94558), and Spanish learners (M=3.6923, SD=1.08699). For ranking themselves in the class in comparison to their peers, nearly all English learners ranked themselves highly within their group. Also their mean score (M=2.4000, SD=.55307) compared to Spanish (M=2.3077, SD=.61769) and German learners (M=2.0333, SD= .31984).

Skills	Languages	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Listening Skill	English	3.6000	.94558	35
	Spanish	3.6923	1.08699	26
	German	3.7000	1.11880	30
Speaking Skill	English	3.2857	.89349	35
	Spanish	2.9231	.97665	26
	German	2.9667	.99943	30
Reading Skill	English	3.7429	1.06668	35
	Spanish	3.4615	1.13950	26
	German	3.4667	.86037	30
Writing Skill	English	3.2000	1.13241	35
	Spanish	3.5385	1.13950	26
	German	3.4000	.96847	30
Self-Ranking	English	2.4000	.55307	35
	Spanish	2.3077	.61769	26
	German	2.0333	.31984	30

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics about Learners' Self-assessment of the Four Skills and their Ranking in the class

The fourth section about teaching pedagogy and classroom condition comprises fourteen questions about the learning environment, content, skills stressed, teachers' approach, etc. When learners were asked about their attitude about the learning environment, all learners in the three groups said it is teacher centred where the language is seldom practiced orally, and the interactive classroom activities are used rarely. Nearly everyone expresses a negative attitude towards the content of the lesson that focusses mainly on grammar and on traditional exercises and drills in order to memorize the conjugation of verbs. In response to the question # 10 "Is culture an integral part of the course?" for example, almost every student in the three groups answered "No", and suggested art, music, fashion, food, and traditions and customs among others in question # 12 when asks about what aspects of culture they would like to be included a lot of use of videos, films, songs, poems in the target language and magazines to make the class livelier and interesting.

### 5. Discussion of the Findings

The findings showed that most of these Moroccan learners of the three foreign languages are Arabic speakers and their first language is Moroccan Arabic. Since the city of Fes is surrounded by most Berber villages and exhibits an important interaction between urban and rural population, we hypothesized that the majority of these students would be of Berber ethnicity whose first language is Berber, but the data reveal the opposite. The knowledge of these learners of other languages mostly Modern Standard Arabic and French beside the foreign language of study reveals that these are multilingual speakers fluent in more than two languages. The assumption is that these learners are likely to have their high school education in private French schools where French is the language of instruction and another foreign language is taught as a second language, or in public private schools where French is also the dominant medium of instruction.

Learning a new language with different phonetic sounds, new vocabulary and grammatical structure is challenging and difficult, but the perception about the foreign language type and the linguistic aspect that makes this language more difficult to learn vary from one group of learners to the other. English learners expressed a positive attitude towards the language of study since they viewed it as an easy language with a pronunciation as the most difficult element whereas German learners expressed negative attitude towards German by perceiving it as a difficult language and the linguistic aspect that makes it difficult to learn is grammar. Spanish learners were unsure and hesitant to give a specific label to Spanish with the right adjective "difficult" or "easy" but chose "as neither easy nor difficult" and selected vocabulary as the hardest linguistic aspect to learn.

The motives and reasons for studying the foreign language are also different among these learners. English learners exhibit equally integrative and personal orientations. Their reasons for learning English is to live in the country where the target language is spoken and to integrate with the culture and also because of they prefer and like English. Spanish chose first personal motivation followed by integrative motivation. This finding runs counter to my own assumption that both English and Spanish learners would choose an instrumental reason "to enable me to get a better job in the future" because these two languages are deemed important in Moroccan societies and because of the job opportunities in various domains in Morocco such as teaching, business, tourism, etc. English is emerging rapidly and gaining ground in Morocco in comparison with French. Since the new linguistic policy and the new reform with the publication of the National Charter for Education and Training in 2000 that calls for diversifying the use of foreign languages for science and technology education, English becomes an important language in business and private sector and in higher education especially in private institutions. It is portrayed among Moroccans as a tool for modernization and a prerequisite for finding jobs, particularly in the private sector, and for entering prestigious private universities like Al-Akawayn and institution for higher education. For Spanish language, the proximity with Spain provides opportunities for Moroccans either to continue with their studies in Spanish or to work in Spain. Spanish is still widespread in the North of Morocco and taught in schools. There are also Spanish institutions for higher education, and Spanish centers and companies that hold various businesses in different parts of Morocco. I expected that Spanish learners as English learners will be influenced by an instrumental motivation but the data revealed the opposite. The data also runs counter to Sadiqi's (1991) study which revealed that the majority of university learners chose English for instrumental motives.

The results also reveal that English learners' attitude towards the four statements analyzed quantitatively in the previous section about the importance and prestige of the foreign language of study, its functionality of English, its use in the educational system and other domains, and increase in Morocco hold predominantly more favorable attitude than Spanish and German learners towards the language of their study. This positive and favorable attitude of English learners could be explained by their integrative motivation and their personal preference and interest for learning and speaking this language, or, it could be because of the general opinion in Morocco nowadays that views Morocco as a vital language. In fact, government representatives, heads of political groups, and Moroccan teachers of English have advocated lately for replacing French with English as a first foreign language, or at least making it more essential in Moroccan education. But nothing is made official about this initiative. For statement # 10 that asks about the increase of the foreign language in Morocco in this world of globalization most learners of the three foreign languages approved of this statement and expressed positive opinion. This could be due to class status of all these learners no matter what foreign language they are studying. Since most of them are multilingual, knowing at least French and another foreign language confirm the attitudes of the new Moroccan generation that praises foreign languages in this era and time where Morocco. These findings are consistent with previous studies that find Moroccans have very positive attitudes towards English (Sadiqi, 1991, Buckner, 2011) and towards French in Ennaji's 2002 study where the majority of students and teachers were not in favor of Arabization, but favor bilingualism with the use of French in the higher education in scientific subjects and Arabic for humanities.

The positive judgment of English learners of their self-assessments of the four skills and their high-ranking in the class confirm that they have a positive attitude towards English because they are very motivated to do better. Of the four skills, they rated great two skills (speaking and reading) than the Spanish and German learners who stated that they performed better only in one skill.

With regard to attitudes and opinions towards the learning condition, content taught and instructional methods used, all the learners of the three foreign languages were disapproving. Most learners stated that the method used is traditional focusing on grammar and not on communicative activities that encourage practice of the language orally. One of the issues identified by these participants is the teaching approach of the teachers which is based on dictations, grammar worksheets, and reading aloud. The textbooks are the only source used in teaching all the three languages and the focus is mainly on grammar. Another issue noted by these students is the lack of authentic materials that enhance the learning. This negative attitude asks for some pedagogical steps to be taken into consideration. For example, I recommend that teachers of these foreign languages in Morocco create an encouraging atmosphere to promote the students' positive attitudes. They should motivate students to learn these languages and examine how students' motivational factors affect their language development and see what might be added or changed in their teaching to better meet students' needs. They should also design the lessons to meet the needs and interests of their students and consider that learners have different perceptions about learning different languages due to their differences. They should reevaluate the lesson design and content so that students could see something different concerning the activities, content, topics, teaching practices, etc. and be more motivated to learn foreign languages. They should also provide comprehensible input in the target language in the classroom and outside the classroom and create an encouraging atmosphere that motivates students and promotes their positive attitudes. This can be achieved by implementing the appropriate methods and activities of teaching these foreign languages effectively. Furthermore, they should integrate up-to-date teaching materials and authentic materials that complement textbooks. This can help them capture students' attention to learn the foreign language successfully. Moreover, they should implement and use effective and appropriate pedagogical methods, contextualized and communicative task-based activities that focus on oral competency and performance and improve students' attitudes, motivation and language performance as well. Teachers should respect and think about students' perception, opinions and cognitive abilities. Performance can be achieved if the foreign language learners possess positive attitudes and enjoy acquiring the target language. Furthermore, curriculum makers, educators and teachers should review and reevaluate the content and the design of the program and curriculum of the foreign language instruction to meet the needs and the interests of the students. Foreign language learners have different perceptions about learning languages due to their differences regarding specialization, year of study, etc.

## 6. Limitations of this study

This study investigated university students' motivation and attitude towards three foreign languages in Morocco. There were some limitations that were beyond my control such as time constraints to collect the data. I could not go to Morocco and conduct the research myself, but one of my colleagues had to do it for me during the final exam in July. So the data was not collected in once in a regular class and time, but on different days whenever students were present on campus. Another limitation is related to the research findings as they cannot be generalized. As it is true in any sample, the findings are not a perfect reflection of all students. The findings might be a reflective of the motivation and attitudes of the students who participated in the study and not of all Moroccan university students majoring in one of these languages in other universities. More research on motivation and attitudes of Moroccans from different social and ethnic backgrounds is needed. Further comparative studies between English, Spanish, and German students in different universities in Morocco are also needed.

## 7. Conclusion

We have attempted in this study to compare motivation and attitude of Moroccan learners of English, German, and Spanish. The study makes an important contribution to foreign language education and shed some light on motivation variable in learning a language and on attitude and perception towards the foreign language and its validity, towards the learning environment and condition and teachers' instructional method and technique. It serves as a model for other researchers who are interested in investigating other foreign languages. As more research of this type should be conducted, so foreign language teachers will be able to design courses more effectively to motivate students more and have them unfold positive and favorable attitude towards the language of study.

## 8. References

- i. Abedlali, S. (2014). The Attitudes of students towards languages in Morocco. Geography department as a case study. ScienceLib Edition Merseme, 6 (141111), 1-3.
- ii. Al-Haq, F.A.A. (2000). Changes in the attitudes of Jordanian university students to the Hebrew language. Journal of Sociolinguistics, 4(2), 263-273.
- iii. Ajzen, I, & Fishbein, M. (2000). Attitudes and the attitude behavior relation: reasoned and automatic processes. European Review of Social Psychology, 1-33.
- iv. Al Mamum, A., Rahman, M, Rahman, M, & Hossain, A. (2012). Students' attitudes towards English: The Case of Life Science School of Khula University. International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities, 3(1), 2000-209.
- v. Belmecheri, F., & Hummel, K. (1998). Orientations and motivation in the acquisition of
- vi. English as a second language among high school students in Quebec city. Language Learning, 48(2), 219-44.
- vii. Benson, M.J. (1991). Attitudes and motivations towards English: A survey of Japanese freshmen. RELC Journal, 22(1), 34-48.



- viii. Borromeo-Samonte, J. (1981). Attitudes of college students towards English as a second language, Unpublished Thesis, University of Santo Thomas, Manila, Philippines.
- ix. Brown, H.D. (2000). Principles of language learning and teaching. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- x. Buckner, E. (2011). Culture, Class and Status Competition: The Growth of English
- xi. Language Learning in Morocco. In Al-Assa & Dahan (Eds.) Global English Issues of Language, Culture & Identity in the Arab World. (213-248). New York, Peter Lang Publishers.
- xii. Cooper, R.L., & Fishman, J.A. (1977). A study of language attitudes. In J.A. Fishman, R.L.
- xiii. Cooper, & A.W. Conrad (Eds.), The Spread of English. (pp.33-276). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- xiv. Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R.W. (1991). Motivation: reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512.
- xv. Dornyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the language foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*. 78(3), 373-284.
- xvi. El-Dash, L.G., & Busnardo, J. (2001). Brazilian attitudes toward English: Dimensions of The Modern Language Journal. 78(3), 373-284.
- xvii. Ennaji, M. (2002). Language contact and Arabization in Morocco. In AleyaRouchdy.(Ed.), *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic*, New York: Routledge/Curzon.
- xviii. Freedman, M.P. (1997). Relationship among laboratory instruction, attitude toward science and achievement in science knowledge. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 34, 231-243.
- xix. Gardner, R.C. (1980). On the validity of affective variables in second language acquisition:
- xx. Conceptual, contextual, and statistical considerations. *Language Learning*, 30, 255-270.
- xxi. Gardner, R. (1983). Learning another language : a true social psychological experiment. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 2, 21-240.
- xxii. Gardner, R. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning: the role of attitude *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 2, 21-240.
- xxiii. Gardner, R. (2006). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition: a research paradigm. *EUROSLA Yearbook*, 6, 237-260.
- xxiv. Gardner, R.C., & Lambert, Wallace, E. (1972). Attitude and motivation in second language learning. Rowley: Newbury House.
- xxv. Guebels, V. (1976). La motivation pour les langues étrangères chez les lycéens de Rabat. Rabat : E.N.S.
- xxvi. Kaballa, Jr. T.R. (1988). Attitudes and related concepts in science education. *Science Education*, 72, 115-126.
- xxvii. Karahan, F. (2007). Language attitudes of Turkish students towards the English language and its use in Turkish context. *Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 73-87.
- xxviii. Kruidenier, B., & Clement, R. (1986). The effect of context on the composition and the role of orientations in second language acquisition. Quebec City: International Center in Research and Bilingualism.
- xxix. Lai, M.L. (2005). Language attitudes of the first postcolonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools. *Language in Society*. 34(3), 363-388.
- xxx. Lai, M.L. (2009). I love Cantonese but I want English- A qualitative account of Hong Kong students language attitudes. *The Asia Pacific Education Research*. 18(1), 79-92.
- xxxi. Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2006). How languages are learned. New York: Oxford University Press.
- xxxii. Majumder, S. (2005). Language attitude of the Oriya migrant population in Kolkata.
- xxxiii. Language in India, 5, 1-16. [online] Available at: <http://www.languageinindia.com>. (Accessed on 9 February, 2006).
- xxxiv. Marley, D. (2004). Language attitudes in Morocco following recent changes in language policy. *Language Policy*, 3, 25-46.
- xxxv. Noels, K. A., & Clément, R. (1989). Orientation to learning German: The effect of language heritage on second language acquisition. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 45(2), 245-57
- xxxvi. Oxford, Rebecca & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(1), 13-28.
- xxxvii. Reino, T. (2007). Language attitudes: Amazigh in Morocco [Online] Available at:
- xxxviii. [https://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/linguistics/2007\\_reino\\_tania.pdf](https://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/linguistics/2007_reino_tania.pdf) 1-57.
- xxxix. Sadiqi, F. (1991). The spread of English in Morocco. *International Journal of the Sociology of the Language*, 87, 99-114.
- xl. Van Els, T., Bongaerts, T., Extra, G., Van Os, & Jansen-Van Dielen, A. (1984). Applied linguistics and the learning and teaching of foreign languages. London: Edward Arnold.
- xli. Vijichula, B. & Lee, G. (1985). A survey of students' motivation for learning English. *RELJ Journal* 16(1), 68-81.
- xl.ii. Wenden, A. (1991). Learner strategies for learner autonomy. London: Prentice Hall.
- xl.iii. Yearous, J. (2012). French in the face of Arabization: Language attitudes among high school students in Rabat. *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research XV*, 1-12.

## Appendix

### Survey Questionnaire

#### I. Demographical Information

##### 1.1. Personal Information

1. Name: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender:      M  F

3. Age:  
Older than 20       Between 22-24       Over 25

4. Nationality: Moroccan Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your current educational status? (Please check one)

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> year of undergraduate program
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> year of undergraduate program
- c. Graduate student
- d. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 1.2. First Language

1. What is your first language?  
Moroccan Arabic Berber Ot Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What language do you speak at home?  
Moroccan Arabic Berber Ot Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 1.3. Knowledge of Other Languages (Including Official and Foreign Languages Beside the Language of Study)

1. Are there any languages you know other than your **FIRST** language?

Yes   
No

If you answered **NO** please go to **SECTION D**

2. If the answer is **YES**, what is/are this/these other language(s)? List them.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where did you learn this/these language(s)? (Please check one box for each language)

**Environment    At home    At school    Other**

Language a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language b	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language c	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 2. Target Language

##### 2.1. Perception about Learning English

1. Have you learned English before?

Yes

If YES, please specify where and for how long.  
\_\_\_\_\_

No

2. Compared to other language(s) that you know or you have learned, how do you find learning English? (Please check only ONE choice)

- a. a very difficult language
- b. a difficult language
- c. neither easy nor difficult
- d. an easy language
- e. a very easy language

3. According to you, what makes English a difficult language to learn? (Please check only ONE choice)

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Pronunciation
- d. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 2.2. Motivation for Learning English

1. What is your reason and motive for learning English? (Please check ONLY one choice that applies on you)

- a. for personal preference
- b. to enable me to get a better job in the future.
- c. to learn the culture and to be able to live in the foreign country and integrate.

### 2.3. Attitude towards English

1. I like speaking English.

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. When someone speaks English it shows that he/she is educated.

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. English should be introduced early in schools

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. English should be the medium of instruction of science and technology.

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. English should be the language in private sectors.

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. English opens the door to pursue higher education abroad.

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. English is most useful for finding a good job in Morocco.

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. English is the useful language for the future in Morocco.

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. English is an important lingua franca in globalization.

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Morocco needs to increase the use of English in the era of globalization

- a. Yes
- b. No

**3. Self-Assessment of the Four Skills in English and Self-Ranking in Class**

1. On a scale of 1 to 4 how would you rate yourself in English on the following skills?

Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Average	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Below average	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How would you rank yourself compared to your peers in Class?

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Below average

**4. Teaching Pedagogy and Classroom Condition**

1. How would you describe the general learning environment?

- a. Learner centered
- b. Teacher centered

2. Which of this/these skill(s) are stressed in the class?

- a. speaking
- b. writing
- c. reading
- d. listening

3. Is grammar a major subject of teaching?

- Yes
- No

4. How often do you get to practice the language in the classroom?

- a. Most of the time
- b. Very frequently
- b. Frequently
- c. Seldom

5. What are the pedagogical activities used in the class?

- a. Questions-Answers
- b. Dictation
- c. Oral pair and group activities
- d. Grammatical exercises and drills

6. How would you rate the level of interactive classroom activities?

- a. Very high
- b. High
- c. Moderate
- d. Low

7. What aspect of the teacher's instructional approach do you find most helpful?

- a. Explicit explanation of grammar
- b. Lectures
- c. Writing practices
- d. Reading practices

8. Is technology used in the class to enhance the learning process?

- Yes
- No

9. Is there any aspect of the teacher's approach that you would like to see improved, implemented or emphasized?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Is culture included in the class?

- Yes
- No

If you answer **YES**, please answer question 7

If you answer **NO**, please go to question 8

11. What aspect(s) of English culture is/are included in the class?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

12. What types of culture would you like to be included in the class?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are there any extracurricular activities in which you get to practice your English skills?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. If you answer YES to question 13, please specify

- a. English clubs
- b. American Council
- c. British Council
- d. Online chats