

## The University Student's Motivation Level on Learning English

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the university students' level of motivation in terms of different variables. A study group of this research has been designed through one of the non-random sampling methods. Using appropriate sampling, 606 students from Faculty of Education of C.U. have been involved in this study. Motivation scale in English Language Learning developed by Mehdiyev, Usta, Uğurlu (2015) was used as an instrument of data collection. T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to resolve problems of this research. As a result of the research the motivation level of university students hasn't been revealed significantly different regarding to the gender variable. However, considering the t-test results of motivation scale dimensions, confidence, attitude and personal use, significant difference is seen in favour of women in personal use dimension. The level of language learning motivation of female students is higher than men's regarding to personal use dimension. However, men's and women's views don't differ significantly in attitude and confidence dimensions. University students don't present significant differences in terms of birth place, parent's education level, total motivation scores and confident, attitude and personal dimensions. Students' motivation levels are seen not to be influenced by the places such as village, provision or city where they have spent the most of their lifetime. At the same time the findings revealed that parental status variable in terms of primary, secondary and university graduates has no effects on students' motivation.

**Keywords:** Language Learning, Motivation Scale, Level of Motivation

### Introduction

The process of learning English as a second language in addition to mother tongue can make a difference in motivation level of learners under the influence of different variables. In this case, motivation is emerging as an important element in learning a second language. Lightbown and Spada (2006) notes the importance of motivation and the interest of individuals in learning a second language. The learning motivation can also be affected by students' personalities, as well as the learning process and the environment. Ellis (1994) describes 'a successful learner' as someone who uses metacognitive strategies in the learning process. In addition to these skills, however, the importance of motivation may also be focused on. For example, less talented but highly motivated students can get better results.

Learning a second language and using this language appropriately requires ample of time. Therefore, motivation is seen as an important factor in this process. Namely, sufficient motivation may accelerate students' learning speed. It is important to reveal the students' views on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sources that will stimulate their learning process in terms of managing the students' motivation. William and Burden (1997) in a similar way, draws attention on the importance of finding out the factors that will motivate the students in terms of teaching process and the environment.

Today learning English as a second language has an important role. Especially learning English is required for university students to increase the international literacy and to follow the current world actively. In this context, the level of motivation of university students and the variables that affect the learning motivation is emerging as a problem. Determining the students' motivation level and the factors their motivation affected by is very important in terms of improving the existing situation through increasing both students' and instructors' awareness.

Therefore, this study is determined at evaluating the students' motivation level and variables that may cause differentiation of their motivation levels in terms of gender, the place of residence, and father's education level.

## Method

### Study group

606 undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education of Cumhuriyet University constitutes the working group of the research. Distribution according to the independent variables of the study, such as gender, the place of residence and father's education level of the 606 students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

	Gender		The place of residence			Father's education level		
	Female	Male	Village	District	City	Primary school	High school	University
f	425	181	112	168	326	323	167	116
%	70.10	29.90	18.50	27.70	53.80	53.30	27.60	19.10

As seen in Table 1. 425 female (%70.10) and 181 male (%29.90) students were involved in this study. 112 (%18.50) of these students reside in village, 168 (%27.70) in district and 326 (%53.80) in city. In terms of father's education level, 323 (%53.30) of students' fathers have primary school, 167 (%27.60) high school, and 116 (19.10) university education level.

### Data Collection Tool

As a Data Collection Tool, the Motivation Scale in Learning Language (MSLL) developed by Mehdiyev, Usta and Uğurlu (2015) was used. MSLL consists of three dimensions: Personal use, Attitude and Self-confidence. Personal use, the first dimension of the scale, consists of seven items. The item load factor has been found between 585 and 822 in this dimension. Cronbach Alpha value of this dimension was found to be 85. The second dimension of this scale, Attitude, consists of five items. The item load factor in this dimensions ranged from 562 to 793 and Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as 77. The third dimension of the scale is Self-confident, which consists of four items. The item load factor in this dimensions ranged from 598 to 849 and Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as 78. When construct validity of MSLL was examined, as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis  $\chi^2=296,23$ ,  $sd=98$ , the p value was found significant ( $p=.000$ ).  $\chi^2/sd$  was calculated for evaluation of the model goodness of fit. Calculated  $\chi^2/sd$  is 3,02'. This value is an indicator that MSLL shows a good association in general (Şimşek, 2007; Kline, 2011). It seems to be an acceptable range of calculated values when given criterions and calculated values are analyzed.

### Data Analysis

SPSS 18 package program was used in data analysis. First, missing value and outlier value analysis were carried out on data. As a result, a datum was identified as a missing value and it was excluded from the analysis. Also normality test was performed on the data to choose parametric and nonparametric analysis. The data obtain from the MSLL has been observed of normal distribution. However, due to the unbalanced number of students in groups, a non-parametric test was preferred. In this direction, to resolve the sub-problems of the research Mann Whitney-U was used in bilateral comparison and Kruskal Wallis was used in comparison of three or more groups (Pallant, 2003). For descriptive statistics in this study frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were calculated. Assessment ranges according to Likert-type five-point rating scale are considered as 1,00 to 1.80 "Strongly disagree"; 1.81 to 2.60 "Disagree"; 2.61 to 3.40 "Partly agree"; 3.41 to 4.20 "Agree"; 4.21 to 5.00 "Strongly agree".

## Results

In this section, students' views on the motivation in language learning were analyzed according to variables such as gender, age, the place of residence and father's education level of the students. First, the level of motivation of students in learning language were examined. Total points and descriptive statistics calculated for the sub - dimensions are given in Table. 2

**Table 2. MSLL Descriptive Statistics Results**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total	1,00	5,00	3,27	,89	,001	,414
Self-confidence	1,00	5,00	3,27	1,28	-,114	-1,090
Attitude	1,00	5,00	3,28	1,00	,253	-,421
Personal use	1,00	5,00	3,76	1,02	-,763	,159

Students' motivation level in English language learning for total and subscale scores seems to be moderate. It also offers that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients show nearly normal distribution of the group within the whole scale and subscales.

These findings were obtained as a results of the study on student's perceptions related to the language learning in terms of their gender, age, the place of residence and father's education level variables.

How the level of students' perceptions on motivation differ between male and female students according to total scores and sub-scales is given in Table 3.

**Table 3. Test results of Mann Whitney U carried out to determine how MSLL Scale Scope Size Sub-scale Scores differ between groups according to Gender Variable.**

	Group	N	ST	SO	U	Z	p
Total	Female	425	132646.50	312.11	33953.50	-2.095	.036
	Male	179	50063.50	279.68			
Self-confidence	Female	425	127787.50	300.68	37262.50	-.399	.690
	Male	179	54922.50	306.83			
Attitude	Female	425	129741.00	305.27	36859.00	-.606	.544
	Male	179	52969.00	295.92			
Personal Use	Female	425	132386.50	311.50	34213.50	-1.966	.049
	Male	179	50323.50	281.14			

As it is seen in Table 3 there is a significant level of differentiation between male and female students in terms of language learning motivation. Motivation level of girls is higher than boys. When we make comparison according to sub-dimensions, we can see that Self-confidence and Attitude dimensions scores don't show significant differentiation between students, however, in terms of personal use dimensions female students' scores are significantly higher than male students' scores.

**Students' motivation perception in terms of the place of residence variable.**

It is seen that to the question, 'Where had they lived most before they came to university?', 101 students pointed *village*, 160 students pointed *district* and 345 students pointed *city*. Due to the differences between these numbers of categories, non-parametric test, Kruskal Wallis, was applied. The results of the analysis are given in Table 4.

**Table 4. The results of the Kruskal Wallis-H Test, which was applied to reveal whether MSLL Scale scores differ according to the Place of Residence variable.**

Score	Groups	N	$\bar{x}_{sıra}$	$\chi^2$	sd	P
Total	Village	112	288	2.54	2	.280
	District	168	320.20			
	City	326	300.22			

Self-confidence	Village	112	290.94	4.14	2	.126
	District	168	326.47			
	City	326	295.98			
Attitude	Village	112	295.67	.491	2	.782
	District	168	300.25			
	City	326	307.87			
Personal Use	Village	112	288.25	1.14	2	.564
	District	168	310.16			
	City	326	305.31			

As it is seen on the Table 4, students' total scores of motivation level in learning language according to the self-confidence, attitude and personal use sub dimensions don't vary significantly in terms of their place of residence. Thus, students' place of residence, village, district or city can't be accounted as a variable causing the differentiation of students' motivation level in language learning.

#### **Students' motivation perception in terms of the Father's education level variable.**

Examining the students' Fathers' education level, we can see that 323 students pointed primary school, 167 students pointed high school and 116 students pointed University. Due to the fact that the number of the categories is more than two and the number of groups is unbalanced Kruskal-Wallis analysis were carried out and the results were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. The results of the Kruskal Wallis-H Test, which was applied to reveal whether MSLL Scale scores differ according to the Father's Education Level variable.**

Score	Groups	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$\chi^2$	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>
Total	Primary	323	306.71	.274	2	.872
	High School	167	298.13			
	University	116	302.28			
Self-confidence	Primary	323	301.33	2.181	2	.336
	High School	167	318.36			
	University	116	288.15			
Attitude	Primary	323	294.07	5.565	2	.059
	High School	167	297.89			
	University	116	337.84			
Personal Use	Primary	323	296.55	2.583	2	.275
	High School	167	300.96			
	University	116	326.50			

As it is seen on the Table 5, students' total scores of motivation level in learning language according to the self-confidence, attitude and personal use sub dimensions don't vary significantly in terms of Father's education level. It means that student's father's education level, being either primary, high school or university, can't be counted as a variable causing the differentiation of students' motivation level in language learning.

## **Results and Discussion**

According to the results obtained from this study, it has been seen that students' motivation level in learning English language was found moderate. According to the gender variable, significant difference was observed in favor of girls in total motivation points. However, it has not been observed significant differentiation in self-confidence and attitude, sub-dimensions of the motivation scale, while significant differentiation was observed in favor of girls in personal use sub-dimension. It has been revealed that the motivation level in language learning of females is higher than that of males. According to Hurst (2015), in order to improve communicative skills in English, it is necessary for learners to use this language in their daily life. Using the target language on campus life, in the language classes, they are developing their language skills day by day. However, students' language learning aptitude shouldn't be ignored on this point.

Examining the total scores of the motivation, it has been seen that according to the place of residence and father's education level variables and self-confidence, attitude and personal use sub scales, scores don't show significant differentiation. The students' motivation level isn't seen to have been affected by the place of residence; village, district or city, where they had spent the most part of their life. At the same time, father's education level variable in terms of being primary school, high school or university, doesn't seem to be significant on motivation of university students. However, according to both the place of residence and father's education level variables, motivation shows higher scores than average on personal use sub-dimension. University students are seen to have high perception in terms of personal use sub scale motivation level; their motivation level is high on learning English for personal use but they seem to be lack of necessary self-confidence and attitude towards putting their wish into practice.

According to the findings, students' attitude towards English learning and their self-confidence level are seen to be moderate. As stated Nizkodubov, Zyubanov and Johnson (2015) barriers, such as, fear to make mistakes, low interest to learn English, lack of time, much obligations, lack of self-confidence and lack of belief in own skills, makes difficulties to learn English language.

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