Attitudes toward English & English learning at an Iranian Military

University

A preliminary survey

Amir Mahdavi Zafarghandi (PHD) & Hojat Jodai

Guilan University-Iran

January 2012

Bio data:

Dr. AMIR MAHDAVI-ZAFARGHANDI did his PhD in SLA at Essex University, Britain in 2001. He has been a Lecturer of Applied Linguistics at University of Guilan since 1991. He has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses including Research Methods in TEFL, ESP and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. He has supervised or advised over 20 M.A. dissertations on TEFL, and published numerous professional papers on SLA, language learning, ESP and translation studies both nationally and internationally.

Hojat Jodai currently is an MA student in TEFL .His area of interest in research is ESP, language teaching methodologies, Pedagogical techniques, Language teaching and Psycholinguistics. He has published some papers both nationally and internationally.

Jodai.hojat@gmail.com

Abstract

This study intends to represent attitudes toward English and English learning at an Iranian military university. Iranian military staff is required to study English in a social environment where there is little immediate need or opportunity to use the language for real communicative purposes .The subject's included 34 of Iranian military personnel who took part in 4 different English classes at Iranian Military University's Foreign Language Center. The present study employed a questionnaire based on the Attitude / Motivation Test Battery provided by Gardner R.C (2004), incorporating some new concepts in SLA research that have come to light since the time of previous surveys. Quantitive treatment of qualitative data was the method of this study. After collecting the qualitative data through questionnaires and using Likert -5 scale, the data converted to the quantative data for analysis. Overall non –negative attitude toward English and English learning was the most important result of this study. Finally some suggestions for further research are given.

Key words: Attitude, motivation, Iranian military, learning, Likert scale

Introduction

Over the past decades a lot of attention has been devoted toward attitude and Motivation (e.g. Lin &Warden, 1996; McClelland 1998; Ogane & Sakamoto, 1999; Teweles, 1996; Warden & Lin, 2000; Lai, 2000; Yamshiro & McLaughlin, 2001).Motivation is the most used concept for explaining the failure or success of a learner. Dörnyei (1998) claimed that motivation is a key to learning. Motivation is an internal momentum, reason, need, and activator, which cause a person to move to reach a particular purpose. The original impetus in second/foreign (L2) motivation research comes from the social psychology since learning the language of another community simply cannot be separated from the learners' social dispositions towards the speech community in question (Moiinvaziri, 2008, p.126). Gardner (1985) proposed a social psychological perspective on explaining the role of motivation and attitude in second or foreign language learning .Gardner (1985), defined second language motivation as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p: 10).

Asking Iranian military personnel what they think of English and English learning may seem trivial. Furthermore, knowing the attitude of small number of Iranian military staff is not likely to affect changes in the current classroom procedures and routines in these kinds of classrooms. Then, why such kind of research has been done? As of 2011, a lot of researches in the area of attitude and motivation of Iranian university students toward English and English learning have been conducted, but as far as we are concerned, there was no study in the area of militarily context. For example, one of the surveys on the attitude and motivation of Iranian university students toward English and English learning was done by Vaezi Z (2008) in which79 non-English major university students were selected to complete a questionnaire, reflecting their

3

attitude and motivation for learning English.

In order to find the students' tendency toward the two kinds of motivation a modified 25 item questionnaire was administered to undergraduate students in a university in the east of Iran. The results showed that Iranian students had very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English, and that they were more instrumentally motivated.

The other study was conducted by Shirbagi N (2008) in which the survey was administered to 400 students in Tabriz and Kurdistan Universities in Iran. The sample comprised 58% female and 42% male; the questionnaire given to students was developed in English and then translated to Persian. The respondents showed favorable attitudes toward English and learning English. In addition, strong correlations were found among integrative orientation and other psychological variables like instrumental orientation, motivation intensity, and desire to learn English as a foreign language. The research also showed that, the changes in the integrative orientations are explained by only instrumental orientation variables. The other major result was that Iranian students learn English because of instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation.

The aims of this study will be investigated through the following research questions:

Research question 1:

What is Iranian military personnel's attitude toward English and English learning?

Research question 2:

Are the Iranian military personnel are motivated intrinsically or extrinsically toward learning English?

Research question 3:

Are the Iranian military staffs motivated instrumentally or integratively toward English?

Method

Brown.J.D (1998) suggested, "Cross sectional studies consider a group of people as a cross section of possible behaviors at a particular point or at several distinct points in time" (page 3) .Then this study can be a kind of cross sectional study and at the same time a survey, in a sense that "survey studies focus on a group's attitude, opinions and/or characteristics" (Brown.J.D, 1998, p.2).

Participants:

The participants of this study were 34 of Iranian military personnel in 4 different classes who took part in the English course every week from Saturday to Thursday from 8-12 o'clock for around 6 month at an Iranian Military University's Foreign Language Center .They participated in the course from different parts of the country; all of them were male with Persian as their native language. Table 1 lists the sample at each class:

Table 1: sample population at 4 different classrooms

Class	Number of students	Survey responses
A	8	8
B	9	9
C	11	11
D	6	6
Total	34	34

Materials:

A modified and contextualized version of the Attitude /Motivation Test Battery (English version) was used for this study. Due to the fact that the setting and context of foreign language learning at Iranian military university was far different from the other educational settings, a number of new questions have been introduced and the main test battery was reorganized. The questionnaire used in this survey consisted of 40 items with responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree; the complete questionnaires construction has been shown in appendix A. The chosen survey items were translated to Persian to be easily understandable by participants, and then translated to English for the purpose of this study. The outline of questionnaires and their categorical structure is followed.

Table 2: categorical structure of questionnaires used in this survey

Category 1	Interest in extracurricular English（6items）
Category 2	Interest in the international community（6items）
Category 3	Perceived utilities of English（5items）
Category 4	Attitude toward studying English（7items）
Category 5	Personality（6item）
Category 6	Organizational influence（4items）
Category 7	Attitude toward English class（6items）

1. *Interest in extracurricular English*: This category tries to investigate the military personnel's interests in outside classroom activities. These activities include being exposed to popular music, TV programs, movies and the other multimedia. Yashima's (2002) observation shows that attitudes of learners are significantly influenced in context with no immediate contact with L2 cultures by what they see through the media (p.52).

2. *Interest in international community:* here identification with and integration into target language community is investigated. This integrative orientation is "a willingness to be like valued members of the language community" (Gardner and Lambert, 1959, cited in Dornye, 2001b:49).

Figure 1: Diagram of Gardner's (1985) _integrative motive construct
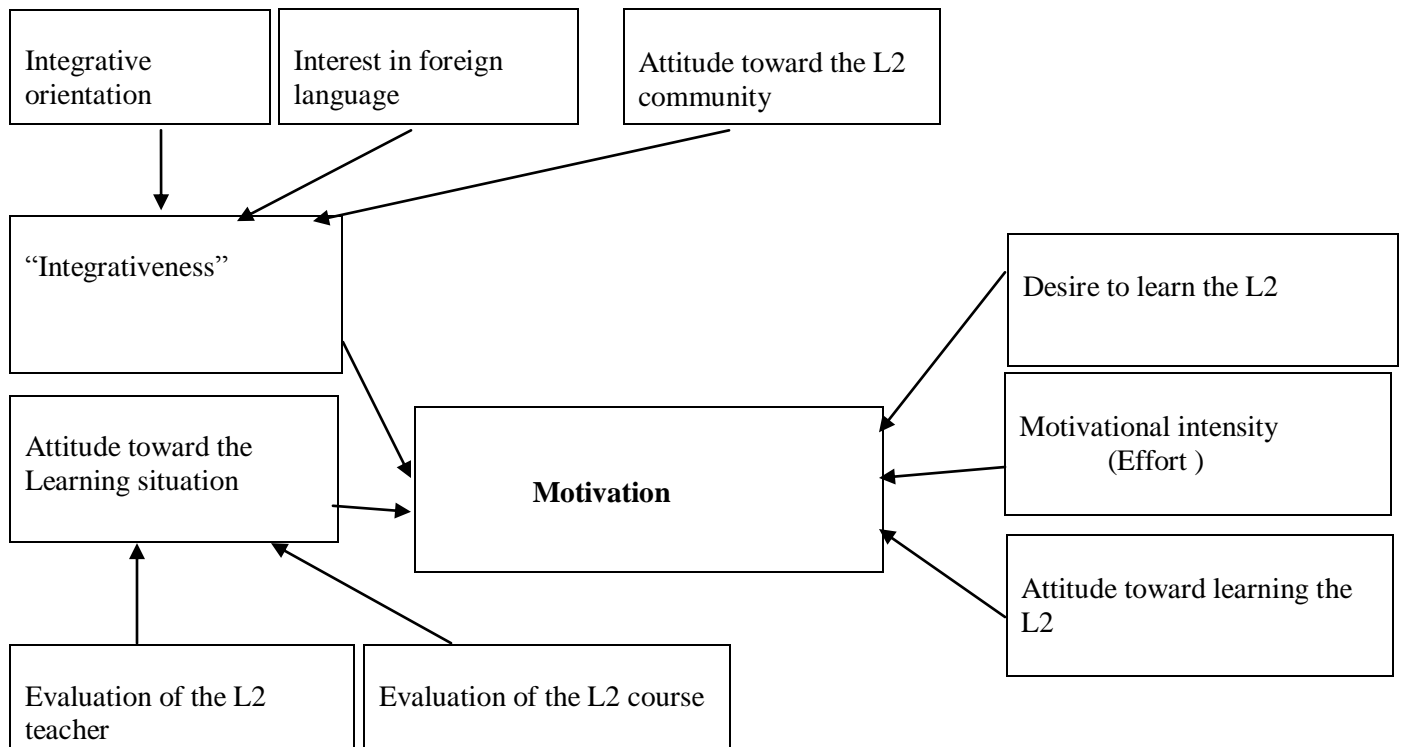
3. *Perceived utilities of English*: this category tries to elicit the utilitarian value of Iranian military personnel's' motivation toward English learning. Gardner and Lambert (1959) labeled this kind of motivation as instrumental motivation; In Yoneyama's (1979) definition ,instrumental motivation exists when a learner places a utilitarian value on the achievement of proficiency in the foreign language , without seeking active contact with the speakers of that language (p.122) . Ellis (1994) defines instrumental motivation using the phrase provision of an incentive to learn (p.514).

4. Attitudes toward studying English: This category is derived from Shirbaghi's study about the Attitudes and motivation of Iranian university students toward English. In the study by Chalak A & Kassaian (2010), this item came by the name of "Desire toward learning English". It seems that both of these categories have been drawn from similar category in the AMTB project (AMTB project used multiple choice items rather than Likert items). Attitude, according to Oxford and Shearin (1994), is one of the six factors that impact motivation in language learning. They defined attitude as "sentiments toward the learning community and the target language" (Oxford & Shearin , 1994 , p.12-28) .

5. Personality: This category incorporates concepts of Gardenerian 'Language anxiety' and WTC 'self confidence '. The 6 items in this category explores how Iranian military personals in this sample rate their own personality. This category also appeared as personality and extroversional categories in Yashima (2002), Koizumi & Matsuo (1993), and Yoneyama (1979).

6. Organizational/professional influence: This category appeared in AMTB as 'parental influence'. We named this category organizational/professional because of specific setting of the study, including factors like the importance of learning English for Iranian Army, the interest of Iranian military commanders toward English learning and the availability of different English resources including books, magazines, and tapes in different parts of the Iranian Army.

7. Attitudes toward English class: This category briefly represents attitudes toward English course and English teacher in Gardner's construct. The AMTB has 25 items for each construct. In this study only 6 contextualized items were used for this purpose. One of the reasons for this brevity can be explained better by (Dörnyei & Csizer (2002), they commented that a comprehensive measure of motivation requires a long and elaborate instrument (p.428) .

Questionnaire construction:

The questionnaire taken from Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery, in order to avoid confusion and to be easily understandable within 20 minutes time frame was translated into Persian. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a set of more than 130 test items in which respondents are asked to rank on one of three scales: Likert, multiple choices and a semantic differential. Numerical index for a number of responses are calculated. These indices in turn are combined to yield a composite _attitude/motivation index'(Williams & Burden, 1997, p.116).   The AMTB is analyzed as follows in table 3:

Table3: Sub-constructs and subscales of the AMTB   (Compiled from Gardner, 2001, p.8-9; Dörnyei, 2005, p.72-73)

Sub-construct 1: Integrativeness

☐ ☐ Subscale 1: Integrative orientation (4 items, Likert)

☐ ☐ Subscale 2: Interest in foreign languages (10 items, Likert)

☐☐ Subscale 3: Attitudes toward the target language group (10 items, Likert)

Sub-construct 2: Attitudes toward the Learning Situation

☐ ☐ Subscale 4: Evaluation of the Language Instructor (10 items, semantic differential)

☐ ☐ Subscale 5: Evaluation of the Language Course (10 items, semantic differential)

Sub-construct 3: Motivation

☐ ☐ Subscale 6: Motivational intensity (10 items, multiple choices)

☐ ☐ Subscale 7: Desire to learn the language (10 items, multiple choices)

☐ ☐ Subscale 8: Attitudes toward learning the language (10 items, Likert)

Sub-construct 4: Instrumental Orientation

☐ ☐ Subscale 9: Instrumental orientation (4 items, Likert)

Sub-construct 5: Language Anxiety

☐ ☐ Subscale 10: Language class anxiety (10 items, multiple choices)

☐ ☐ Subscale 11: Language use anxiety (10 items, multiple choice)

For the first time, the AMTB project was administered to a group of Anglophone Canadian students in a French language immersion program. Its aim was to investigate the relationship between motivation and proficiency test scores. Oller (1981) and Au(1988) criticized The Gardenerian AMTB. They found that the results from extensive surveys of learners in different learning contexts ,using instruments similar to the AMTB , yielded – nearly every possible relationship between various measures of integrative motivation and measures of proficiency : positive ,nil, negative and uninterruptable or ambiguous (Au , 1998, cited in Rian ,1998 ,p.15). Further criticism raised by Williams & Burden (1997) maintained that Integrativeness is not a superlative element of motivation (p.117) and Crookes & Schmidt (1989) argued that Integrativeness has not any causal relationship to L2 achievement (p.221). Dörnyei (2005) questioned the construct validity of the model's sub-constructs (p.71). In short, it has been proposed that self report questionnaires are a poor measure of the degree of motivational intensity (Crookes and Schmidt, 1989, p.222; Ellis, 1994, p.511).

5-point Likert scales:

One of the most common scales used survey studies is Likert scale. It was developed by an American educator and psychologist Rensis Likert in 1932 as an attempt to interpret the qualitative survey questionnaires in quantitative way. A majority of attitude questionnaires use odd numbered Likert scales (7-or 5-point, sometimes 3poit). Over many years, Likert's 5-point scale has taken many new forms. A commonly used 5 point Likert scale format is:

1. Strongly agree, 2-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree (No idea), 4-Disagree; 5-strongly disagree.

In February 2006 Infosurve (a web based research team) conducted a forum of market researchers to understand their preferences between 5-point and 6-point Likert scales. Their conclusion was that most modern researchers agree that the neutral rating in a 5-point scale is needed when conducting survey research (Infosurv White Paper, n.d, para.3). Of the researchers who participated in this study, 71% preferred 5-point Likert scales, 12% expressed preferences for the 6-point scale, and 17% were neutral on the matter. Those researchers preferring the 5-point scale cited the following reasons:

Survey respondents may feel neutral about a particular topic, and presenting to those respondents a scale without a neutral midpoint can introduce respondent bias as respondents are forced to chose a more negative or positive response. Some researchers state that in many cases respondents will emphasize the negative in an experience.

Neutral is a real opinion that exists among respondents. Generally speaking, if we solicit every opinion of the people by survey, the neutral rating needs to be included in the scale.

With a 5-point scale we have a nice midpoint. The three rating is right in the middle and it shows neutrality or mixed satisfaction. When calculating the mean weighted average we have a standard point of comparison.

Procedures:

The 40 items questionnaires were distributed at 4 available classes at the time of survey, chosen by headquarters of the university's language center, for about 20 minutes. As the survey was completely confidential, military personnel should not record their names, and no one except the researchers would see the completed questionnaires. After collecting the completed questionnaires item responses for all participants were converted into numerical form by

assigning the weights 5,4,3,2 or 1 to each of the five responses, while negatively worded items being reversely weighted were based on the 5-point Likert scale which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table of means and standard deviations for all items by class and total respondent population have been shown at the end of the study.

Analyses:

It can be controversial whether scale points used in this study can be interpreted to represent human attitudes; furthermore likert data is ordinal rather than interval (Burns, 2000, p.560). Then because of the mentioned reasons, statistical analysis was not carried out. In addition, Likert scales can only indicate positive, negative, or neutral points. As non-interval data their application can be treated though non-parametric analysis. Due to these facts, many attitude surveys often treat non-interval data as interval. In the current study, the results of the questionnaires have been presented by class, number of the students in each class, and by the total number of student's responses.

Qualitative comparisons from obtained averages of the means have been done. For this purpose, the students' responses were firstly converted into the numerical values according to the Likert's scale. Then the means of these numerical values and related standard deviation (SD) were calculated by surveying the questionnaire item numbers and the category for each class. Finally these numerical values were calculated for the total number of the students.

Results and discussion:

Calculating the mean responses and the standard deviation of each class and tabulating them totally was led to the figures and tables from each questionnaire. Of responses within each of the seven categories in the questionnaire are following analyzed and discussed. The 5- point Likert

scales used in this study assumes an   average rating of 3.4 as above neutral and 2.8 below.

Results are shown by- category and by-item.

Category 1: Interest in extracurricular English

Table 4: Mean responses for each class and for the total number of the students with standard deviation (SD)

survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
2-I wish I could watch foreign (English) films without subtitle or dubbing.	4.66	**4.62**	4.54	4.66	**4.59 SD=0.49**
3-When I hear English songs; I wish I knew what they were saying.	4.5	4.12	4	4.11	**4.14 SD=0.82**
10-If I had some opportunities; I would go to an English language university.	4.33	3.87	4.09	3.77	**4 SD=0.65**
14-The most important thing about studying English is getting good grades .(**Reverse Coded**)	4.16	4.5	3.9	4.3	**4.2 SD=0.8**
33-I would like learn English beyond class and textbooks level.	4.16	4.37	4.18	4.11	**4.2 SD=0.72**
34- While flipping through TV channels if I happen upon an English Language program I watch it.	4.16	3.75	3.54	4.11	**3.58 SD=.92**
Total					**4.11 SD=.32**

The numerical results of this category generally show a positive view on extra- curricular English. These include activities like watching English films, listening to English music; desire to learn English beyond the class. In comparison to the other categories, the standard deviation of the total mean of this category (SD=.32) is the lowest standard deviation, showing the homogeneity responses. The highly positive response to item two with the lowest standard deviation in the category shows that almost all the participants have a strong desire to watch English films without subtitle or dubbing, which seems to be due to the fact that nowadays lots of produced films are available in English language. However, the fact that there are only a few

programs in English language in our country 'TV programs seem to call for a more neutral response to item 34. Items like those that 14 are reversely coded because they are negative statements that appear in the other tables. The reason for bringing these items in the questionnaires is explained in the limitation of the study.

The somewhat negative response to item 10 in comparison to the other responses in this category seems to be due to the fact that in reality the respondents have not such a kind of opportunity. Mean responses to items14 and 33 suggest that respondents want to learn English because of intrinsic motivation (e.g. studying English beyond the class) rather than extrinsic one (e.g. getting good grades).

Category 2: Interest in the international community

Table 5: Mean responses to category 2: Interest in the international community

survey item (with original question number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N= 9	Total N=34
4-I'm interested in English-speaking countries.	3.16	3.37	3.72	3.88	**3.58** SD=0.85
5-I have a good feeling toward English language people.	3.83	2.75	3.18	3.44	**3.26** SD=0.86
18-If I had my organization's permission; I would travel to an English speaking country.	3.83	3.62	4	4.22	**3.88** SD=0.84
21-I'd like to live in an English speaking country in the future.	3	2.25	3.27	2.88	**2.88** SD=1.22
29- If I were to meet a foreigner, I'd like to try talking in English.	4	3.62	4.18	4	**3.97** SD=0.86
1.(part 2): My attitude toward English language people is :	3.33	2.75	3.27	3.33	**3.14** SD=1.13
Total					**3.45** SD=.43

As Responses to this category present, a neutral attitude toward the international community can be perceived. Responses to items 21, which represent a desire to go overseas, where there will be an opportunity to use English in a real context was slightly negative. Conversely, responses to item 29 as well' as item 1 of Category 3: 'In the future, I want to be able to speak English well, were slightly positive. These two slightly positive responses, as well as the positive response to item 18, suggest that students like to interact with an international community, but they would rather do so in their own country.

It must be considered that, in reality, these military personals have no or extremely little direct contact with foreigners. Thus, they are not exposed to any "international exchange" or "communication in English." The responses to items 4 & 5 show Integrative orientation toward the target community. As table shows, the respondents has somewhat neutral attitude toward the target culture and English people.

Category 3: Perceived utility of English

TABLE 6: Mean responses to category 3: perceived utility of English

survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
1. In the future, I want to be able to speak English well.	4.66	4.5	4.45	4.44	**4.5 SD=.1**
11. I want to improve my English to the extent to which be able to talk with a foreigner who can't speak Persian.	4.5	4.37	4.27	4.44	**4.39 SD=09**
12-In the future, it's important to me to work in a department of my organization to be able to use English.	3.66	4	4.27	4.3	**4.05 SD=.29**
13-honestly , in the future I will not need English.**(Reverse coded)**	4.33	4.25	4.45	4.55	**4.39 SD=.13**
35. In the future knowing English well, will help me a lot in my job.	3.83	4.25	4.09	4.55	**4.18 SD=.3**
Total					**4.32 SD=0.65**

As the total mean indicates, this category suggests positive attitudes toward the perceived utility of English. Comparing with the other categories, this category represents the biggest numerical value in the total mean response. The responses to item 1, item 35, and (reverse coded) item 13 in this category suggest that participants perceive the idea of developing English

ability as a foreign language in a generally positive light. These responses resemble "instrumental" items in Shirbarghi (2010) survey, in which students had slightly positive attitude toward instrumentally oriented motivation. The positive responses to the item 11 of this Category and item 29 of Category 2 are interesting; because of several security reasons the general tendency of this organization is avoiding any contact with a foreigner. Mean response to the reverse coded item 13 indicates a positive image toward using English in the future, meaning that they hope the foreign language they learn will be needed in the future. As mentioned previously, the environment in which these staff are working includes no immediate opportunity to experience the events or jobs that involves using English.

Category 4: Attitude toward studying English

Table 7: **Mean response to category 4: Attitude studying English**

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
7. Of the five subjects (science, math, etc.) English is my weakest.**(Reverse Coded)**	3	4	3.72	2.77	**3.24 SD=.77**
16. This is Iran .There is no need to study English so assiduously. **(Reverse Coded)**	4.66	4.75	4.54	4.66	**4.65 SD=.08**
20. To be honest , I have no interest in learning English.**(Reverse Coded)**	4.33	4.25	3.9	4.5	**4.24 SD=.25**
28. Even if English homework is dull, I stick to it until I finish.	3.5	4.25	3	3.55	**3.41 SD=.21**
2(part B):My interest toward learning English	3.83	4.25	3.81	4.22	**4.05 SD=.28**
7(Part B): I have strong desire to know all aspects of English (listening, speaking, grammar…)	4	4.25	4	4.5	**4.15 SD=.23**
10(part B) : it's important to us to learn English	4	4.25	4.27	4.44	**4.33 SD=.22**
Total					**4.04 SD=.51**

Generally, responses to this category suggest a positive attitude toward studying English (total mean >3.4). Slightly neutral response to item 7 (2.8<men<3.4) displays that subjects think their ability in English language skills is not much better than that in the other science subjects like math, physics ,etc.

Item 16, an item designed by Rian (2007) in his study, was inserted into this survey, where the subjects were Iranian military staff. Highly positive response to this item suggests that subjects tentatively place value on the study of English, despite the fact that, as a compulsory course taught, it offers them little in terms of communicative ability. It also represents that these participants do not harbor the feeling that they are being 'subjected' to English against their will. It is interesting and encouraging that participants in the present study do not overall perceive the study of English negatively.

Category 5: Personality (extroversion)

Table 8: Mean responses to Category 5: Personality (extroversion)

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N= 6	class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
8.I get nervous in English class.**(Reverse Coded)**	3.15	3.75	3.54	3.55	**3.49 SD=0.25**
26. During class, even if I don't understand, I try my best.	4.16	4.12	3.72	4.33	**4.08 SD=0.25**
27. When I don't understand, I ask the teacher and other student's questions.	4.16	4	4.18	4.44	**4.19 SD=.18**
30.To be honest , I'm an introvert person .**(Reverse Coded)**	3.33	2.62	3	2.88	**2.95 SD=.29**
31. I like to volunteer answers to questions, regardless of whether I'm right or wrong.	4	3.85	4	3.55	**3.84 SD=0.21**
32. Making mistakes and being wrong is very embarrassing for me.	3.5	3.25	3.63	3	**3.34 SD=0.27**
Total					**3.65 SD=0.49**

Responses to items in category five are relatively neutral. The exceptions are items 26 and 27. The considerably negative responses to the 'reverse coded' item 30 indicate that participants in this study tend to be an introvert person rather than extrovert one. Considering the relatively neutral responses to items 8, 31, and 32 suggest that generally subjects are not highly self-confident. Second or foreign language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Young , 1991 , Cited in Onwuegbuzie et al .,1999 : 217) and it can be defined as " a subjective feeling of tension , apprehension , nervousness , and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system " (McIntyre and Gardner , 1994 :cited in 1999 : 217) . Thus nervousness can be one of the causes of the anxiety. SLA researches have tried to

investigate the reasons for, or sources of the language anxiety. For purposes further studies may be helpful to ascertain to what extent being nervousness in these kinds of classrooms may affect language learning.

Category 6: Organizational influence

Table 9: Mean responses to category 6: Organizational influence

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
22. Our organization thinks studying English is important.	2	3.37	3.72	2.55	**2.91 SD=0.78**
23. Our commanders are interested in English.	2.66	2.87	2.9	1.88	**2.57 SD=0.47**
24. Different sources of English are available in my workplace.	1.33	1.75	1.72	1.22	**1.50 SD=.26**
25. Our commanders think that learning English is important.	2.66	3.62	3.36	2.66	**3.07 SD=0.49**
Total					**2.56 SD=1.32**

In the Attitude /Motivation Test Battery there was an index of parental encouragement toward English and English learning. This category in the Rian study (2007) about the attitudes of Japanese students toward English and English learning was named 'Parental Influence'. The researchers redesigned this category and named 'Organizational influence' because of specific setting of the survey. In comparison to the other categories this category has the lowest total mean and largest standard deviation The standard deviation of the total mean (SD=1.32) indicates that subjects have generally different opinion and attitude toward this Category. Overall, as the total mean of this category (2.56) suggests, the subjects' attitude toward the organization policy about language learning is negative. Except Item 25, which has the highest numerical value in this category, the other items indicate somewhat negative attitude toward

'Organizational Influence'. The highly negative response to item 24 suggests that English textbooks and other sources of language learning are not widely available in different departments of the army. It must be considered here that almost every department of this organization across the country has a center for English learning, but the response to this item suggests that they are not very active. Nevertheless, optimistically speaking it suggests a neutral attitude toward this item. Although there are lots of departments of army that use English textbooks and communications, overall the respondents think that enough attention is not given to English and English learning in their organization.

Category 7: Attitudes toward English class

Table 10: Mean responses to Category 7: Attitudes toward English class

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
6. The English textbooks we use are not beneficial. **(Reverse Coded)**	2.16	3.12	2.18	2.88	**2.58 SD=0.48**
9. I'm looking forward to studying English after this course.	4.16	4.25	4.09	3.88	**4.09 SD=0.15**
17.I find at least some parts of the English textbooks and handouts interesting.**(Reverse Coded)**	3	2.75	2.72	3.11	**2.89 SD=0.19**
19. In general , I like English class	4	4.37	4.09	4.11	**4.14 SD=0.15**
8(part 2) : My English class is really time consuming.**(Reverse Coded)**	4.33	4.75	4	5	**4.52 SD=0.44**
9(part 2): My English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.	3	3.37	2.9	2.66	**2.98 SD=0.29**
Total					**3.52 SD=1.22**

Responses to all six items in this brief representation of the Gardenerian construct 'attitudes toward the L2 classroom' do not stray far from the neutral range 2.8_3.4 , which, at very least, suggests that most participants do not show a negative view towards their own classroom. The negative responses to items 6 and 17 suggest that the textbooks used at the times of the survey did not interest the subjects. It must be considered for that the main textbooks used in this center were the "Interchange" series many years, but currently the textbooks have been changed. Instead of these textbooks the "World View" series are used. On the other hand the relatively positive responses to items 19 & 8 (part 2) suggest that, respondents generally have a positive view toward their classrooms. The teaching method used in the classroom was mainly communicative approach, but responses to the item 9 (part 2) indicate that subjects in this study does not have a positive view regarding the teaching style.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes and orientation at an Iranian military university toward English and English learning. Overall non –negative attitude was the most important conclusion that can be drawn from the above results. The exception is the total mean responses to category 6, where subject's attitudes toward "organizational influence' is negative Perceived utilities of English and mainly the need for English in the future for the job purposes, and desire to study more than class textbooks can be motivating factors to explain the findings, which do not stray far from the results of the previous findings of researches about the attitudes and motivation of Iranian university students, one of which has been done by Shirbagi N (2008), suggesting that Iranian students learn a foreign language mainly for its utilitarian value rather than integrative motivation (p.59). The results of the Category 3 indicate that the attitudes of participants toward utilitarian value support this claim. But, in comparison with the findings of

the research by Vaezi (2008), it seems that subjects are less motivated and that their attitudes toward English and English learning seems to be more neutral.

Limitation for further studies, researches need to consider the limitations of the study refer to the scaling of the responses. Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative response to a statement (Dawes. J, 2008, p.61-77). Whether individual Likert item can be considered as an interval- data, or whether they should be considered, as o data is the subject of disagreement. Many consider such items as ordinal because particularly when, using only 5 levels one cannot assume that subjects perceive all pairs of adjacent levels with the same distance. The best explanation about this limitation can be found in the quoted text.

> Likert scales may be subject to distortion from several causes. Respondents may avoid using response categories (central tendency bias); agree with statement s presented (acquiescence bias); or try to portray themselves or their organization in a most favorable light (social desirability bias). Designing a scale with balanced keying (an equal number of positive and negative statements) can obviate the problem of acquiescence bias, since acquiescence on positively keyed items will balance acquiescence on negatively keyed items, but central tendency and social desirability are somewhat more problematic. (Dawes. J, 2008, p.61-77).

The second limitation is inherent in self-report based surveys. It is assumed that respondent will make a good-faith effort to respond as truthfully as possible; However, there is a chance that the question items sometimes, no matter how well worded, skew the results by prompting some respondents to 'flatter themselves', or to attempt to 'appease' what they may perceive as an unseen authority behind the questionnaire (Hashimoto, 200 2, p.35).

Cultural differences and questionnaire responses are the third limitation, which must be taken into account, when applying items from another culture- oriented questionnaire. The possible example can be found in category 5 (personality) – extroversion, Iranian cultures tend to value humble state and modesty. Being extrovert may imply negative connotation in an Iranian context, such as the claim to be a volunteer, answering questions (item 31). The final limitation was the context in which the study was conducted. A military organization has its own rules,

e.g., confidentiality which was one of the main obstacles for conducting this research.

A need for the better model appropriate for such kind of context can open up further research avenues. As Yashima's (2002) questionnaire reflects, her Japanese –EFL WTC model, the similar questionnaire can be designed for the Iranian context. Moreover, this can be a major step in the area of the attitudes and motivation study. Achievement score comparison can be another research area in this context.

References

Brown.J.D, (1998).*Understanding research in second language learning,* Cambridge
University Press, 2th edition.

Burns, R. (2000). Introduction to research methods. London: Longman Press.

Chalak, A. & Kassaian, Z. (2010). Motivation and Attitudes of Iranian undergraduate EFL
students toward Learning English. *GEMA online journal of language studies
Volume 10(2)2010.*

Dawes, John (2008). "Do Data Characteristics Change According to the number of scale
points used? An experiment using 5-point, 7-point and 10-point scales".
International Journal of Market Research **50** (1): 61–77.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in
Second language acquisition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dornyei Z. Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning. *Language Teaching: The
International Abstracting Journal for Language Teachers*, 1990, 31 (3), p. 117–135.

Gardner, R.C. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes
and motivation. London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R.C. (2000). Correlation, causation, motivation, and second language acquisition.
Canadian Psychology, 41 (1), 10-24.

Gardner, R.C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Z.
Dörnyei& R. Schmidt (Eds.), Motivation and Second Language Acquisition
(Technical Report No. 23, pp.1-19). Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi, Second
Language Teaching and Curriculum Center

Gardner, R.C. (2002). Social psychological perspectives on second language
Acquisition. In R. Kaplan (Ed.), the Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics
(pp.102-169). Oxford: Oxford University Press

Gardner, R. C. Lalonde, Richard N. (1985) Second Language Acquisition: A social
Psychological Perspective, Retrieved June 10, 2011. From <http:
//WWW.ERIC.ED.GOV / > ED.262624

Gardner, R.C. & Lambert, W.E. (1959). Motivational variables in second language
acquisition. Canadian Journal of Psychology, 13, 266-272.

Gardner, R. & Tremblay, P. (1994a).On motivation, research agendas, and theoretical frameworks. The Modern Language Journal, 78 (iii), 359-368.

Gardner, R. & Tremblay, P. (1994b). On motivation: Measurement and conceptual considerations. The Modern Language Journal, 78 (IV), 524-527

Gwinner .C. (n.d). *Infosurv white paper: 5_point vs., 6_point LikertScales.Infosurv*, Suit. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://www.infosurv.com /

Hashimoto, Y. (2002). Motivation and willingness to communicate as predictors of Reported L2 use: The Japanese ESL context. Second Language Studies, 20 (2), 29-70.

Koizumi, R. & Matsuo, K. (1993). A longitudinal study of attitudes and motivation in Learning English among Japanese seventh-grade students. Japanese Psychological Research, 35, 1-11

Lai M, L. Motivation of English language learners in Hong Kong: Use of case histories. *Asia Pacific Journal of Language and Education*, , 3, p. 43–60.

Lin H. J., Warden C. Different attitudes among non-English major EFL students, 1996. *The Internet TESL Journal.* Retrieved july,2011, from <http://iteslj.org / Articles Warden

McClelland .D. N (1998). An investigation into the socio-psychological orientations of Japanese college students learning EFL. MA thesis, English Language institute University of Surrey.

Moiinvaziri, M.(2008).M. (2008).Motivational orientation in English language learning : A study of Iranian undergraduate students .Global practices of language teaching .Proceeding of International Online Language Conference (IOLC).Universalpublishers.Boca Raton, Florida, US, 126-135.

Ogane, E., Sakamoto M.SEM: Relationships among EFL motivational and proficiency factors in: Working papers in applied linguistics: Individual differences in the Japanese EFL context .Ed.A.D.Yamashiro .Retrieved December 18, 2002. <http://www.tuj.ac.jp/newsite/ main/tesol/press/>.

Onwuegbuzie , A ,J.,Bailey ,p., and Daley , C , E .(1999) ' Factors Associated With Foreign Language Anxiety' , Applied psycholinguistics , Vol. 20(2) ,217-239

Oxford, R. L & Shearin, J. (1994). *Language learning motivation*: Expanding the theoretical frame work. The modern Language Journal, 78, 12-28

Pennycook, A. (2001). English in the world/The world in English. In A. Burns & C. Coffin (EDS), Analyzing English in a Global Context (pp.78-89) .London Roultledge

Rian, J.P. Attitudes toward English and English learning at three rural Japanese middle schools: A preliminary survey. , Retrieved June 10, 2011. From <http: www.asian. *efl-journal.com/Thesis/Thesis-Rian.pdf*

Shirbagi N, 2010. Orientations and attitudes Of Iranian University Students for English Language Learning. PEDAGOGIKA.2010.99

Tanveer. M, 2007. Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language. Retrieved July, 30, 2011 from http: www. Asian –efl journal.com/thesis)_M_Tanveer.pdf.

Taylor D. M., Meynard R., Rheault E. Threat to ethnic identity and second-language learning. In: *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations.* Ed.

Teweles B. Motivational differences between Chinese and Japanese learners of English as a foreign language. *JALT Journal,* 1996, 18, p. 211–228.

Tremblay, P. & Gardner, R. (1995). Expanding the motivation construct in language learning. The Modern Language Journal, 79 (IV), 505-520.

Vaezi, Z, 2008, Language Learning Motivation among Iranian Undergraduate Student**s,** World Applied Sciences Journal 5 (1): 54-61,

Warden C. A., Lin H. Ju. (2000). Existence of integrative motivation in Asian EF L setting. *Foreign Language Annals*, p. 535–547.

Yamashiro A.D., McLaughlin J. Relationships among attitudes, motivation, anxiety, and English language proficiency in Japanese college students. In : Second Language Acquisition Research in Japan .Eds. P.Robinson, M. Sawyer, S. Ross. Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching, 2001, p. 113–127.

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. The Modern Language Journal, 86 (I), 54-66

Yoneyama, A. (1979). Attitudinal and motivational factors in learning English as a

    foreign language. Niigata Daigaku Kyoikugakubu Kiyo (Memoirs of the Faculty of

    Education: Humanities and Social Sciences), 21, 121-144.

Appendix A:

Questionnaire construction with original question numbers

Interest in extracurricular English

2. I wish I could watch foreign (English) films without subtitle or dubbing.
3-When I hear English songs; I wish I knew what they were saying.
10-If I had some opportunities; I would go to an English language university
14-The most important thing about studying English is getting good grades **(Reverse Coded)**
33-I would like learn English beyond class and textbooks level.
34- While flipping through TV channels if I happen upon an English Language program I watch it.

Interest in international community
4-I'm interested in English-speaking countries.
5-I have a good feeling toward English language people.
18-If I had my organization's permission; I would travel to an English speaking country.
21-I'd like to live in an English speaking country in the future.
29- If I were to meet a foreigner, I'd like to try talking in English.
1. (Part 2): My attitude toward English language people is:

Perceived utility of English

1. In the future, I want to be able to speak English well.
11. I want to improve my English to the extent to which be able to talk with a foreigner who can't speak Persian.
12-In the future, it's important to me to work in a department of my organization to be able to use English.13-honestly, in the future I will not need English. (**Reverse coded)**
35.In the future knowing English well, will help me a lot in my job.

Attitude toward studying English
7. of the five subjects (science, math, etc.) English is my weakest**. (Reverse Coded)**
20. To be honest, I have no interest in learning English. **(Reverse Coded)**
28. Even if English homework is dull, I stick to it until I finish.
2(part B): My interest toward learning English.
7(Part B): I have strong desire to know all aspects of English (listening, speaking, grammar…)

Personality (Extroversion)

8. I get nervous in English class. **(Reverse Coded)**
26. During class, even if I don't understand, I try my best.
27. When I don't understand, I ask the teacher and other student's questions.
31. I like to volunteer answers to questions, regardless of whether I'm right or wrong.
32. Making mistakes and being wrong is very embarrassing for me.

Organizational influence

22. Our organization thinks studying English is important.

23. Our commanders are interested in English.

24. Different sources of English are available in my workplace.

25. Our commanders think that learning English is important.

Attitude toward English class:

6. The English textbooks we use are not beneficial. **(Reverse Coded)**
9. I'm looking forward to studying English after this course.
17. I find at least some parts of the English textbooks and handouts interesting**. (Reverse Coded)**
19. In general, I like English class
8(part 2): My English class is really time consuming**. (Reverse Coded)**
9(part 2): My English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.

Appendix B:

Complete table questionnaire responses with standard deviations

Category 1: Interest in Extracurricular English

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
2-I wish I could watch foreign (English) films without subtitle or dubbing.	4.66 SD=.51	4.62 SD=.51	4.54 SD=.52	4.66 SD=.5	**4.59 SD=0.49**
3-When I hear English songs; I wish I knew what they were saying.	4.5 SD=.54	4.12 SD=.64	4 SD=1.9	4.11 SD=.78	**4.14 SD=0.82**
10-If I had some opportunities; I would go to an English language university.	4.33 SD=.51	3.87 SD=.99	4.09 SD=.53	3.77 SD=.44	**4 SD=0.65**
14-The most important thing about studying English is getting good grades .(**Reverse Coded**)	4.16 SD=.40	4.5 SD=.53	3.9 SD=1.1	4.3 SD=.7	**4.2 SD=0.8**
33-I would like learn English beyond class and textbooks level.	4.16 SD=.40	4.37 SD=.51	4.18 SD=.87	4.11 SD=.92	**4.2 SD=0.72**
34- While flipping through TV channels if I happen upon an English Language program I watch it.	4.16 SD=.75	3.75 SD=.88	3.54 SD=1.2	4.11 SD=.33	**3.58 SD=.92**
Total					**4.11 SD=.32**

Category 2: Interest In international community

survey item (with original question number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N= 9	Total N=34
4-I'm interested in English-speaking countries.	3.16 SD=.75	3.37 SD=.74	3.72 SD=1.01	3.88 SD=.78	**3.58 SD=.85**
5-I have a good feeling toward English language people.	3.83 SD=.75	2.75 SD=.46	3.18 SD=.87	3.44 SD=1.01	**3.26 SD=.86**
18-If I had my organization's permission; I would travel to an English speaking country.	3.83 SD=.98	3.62 SD=.91	4 SD=.63	4.22 SD=.66	**3.88 SD=.84**
21-I'd like to live in an English speaking country in the future.	3 SD=.63	2.25 SD=1.03	3.27 SD=1.42	2.88 SD=1.36	**2.88 SD=1.22**
29- If I were to meet a foreigner, I'd like to try talking in English.	4 SD=.63	3.62 SD=.51	3.27 SD=1.16	4 SD=.86	**3.97 SD=.86**
1.(part 2): My attitude toward English language people is :	3.33 SD=.81	2.15 SD=1.03	3.27 SD=1.34	3.33 SD=1.22	**3.14 SD=1.13**
Total					**3.45 SD=.43**

Category 3: perceived utility of English

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
1. In the future, I want to be able to speak English well.	4.66 SD=.51	4.5 SD= .53	4.45 SD=.68	4.44 SD=.52	**4.5 SD=.1**
11.I want to improve my English to the extent to which ,be able to talk with a foreigner who can't speak Persian .	4.5 SD=.54	4.37 SD=.51	4.27 SD=.46	4.44 SD=.52	**4.39 SD=09**
12-In the future, it's important to me to work in a department of my organization to be able to use English.	3.66 SD=1.3	4 SD=.92	4.27 SD=0.78	4.3 SD=.7	**4.05 SD=.29**
13-honestly , in the future I will not need English.**(Reverse coded)**	4.33 SD=.81	4.25 SD=.46	4.45 SD=.68	4.55 SD=.52	**4.39 SD=.13**
35. In the future knowing English well, will help me a lot in my job .	3.83 SD=.75	4.25 SD=.7	4.09 SD=.7	4.55 SD=.52	**4.18 SD=.3**
Total					**4.32 SD=0.65**

Category 4: Attitude toward studying English

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
7. Of the five subjects (science, math, etc.) English is my weakest.**(Reverse Coded)**	3 SD=1.5	4 SD=.92	3.72 SD=1	2.77 SD=1.48	**3.24 SD=.77**
16. This is Iran .There is no need to study English so assiduously. **(Reverse Coded)**	4.66 SD=.51	4.75 SD=.46	4.54 SD=.52	4.66 SD=.5	**4.65 SD=.08**
20. To be honest , I have no interest in learning English.**(Reverse Coded)**	4.33 SD=.81	4.25 SD=.46	3.9 SD=1.22	4.5 SD=.52	**4.24 SD=.25**
28. Even if English homework is dull, I stick to it until I finish.	3.5 SD=1.04	4.25 SD=.47	3 SD=1.48	3.55 SD=1.23	**3.41 SD=.21**
2(part B):My interest toward learning English	3.83 SD=1.6	4.25 SD=.48	3.81 SD=1.07	4.22 SD=.44	**4.05 SD=.28**
7(Part B): I have strong desire to know all aspects of English (listening, speaking, grammar…)	4 SD=1.26	4.25 SD=.50	4 SD=1.41	4.5 SD=.72	**4.15 SD=.23**
10(part B) : it's important to us to learn English	4 SD=1.26	4.25 SD=.51	4.27 SD=.9	4.44 SD=1.01	**4.33 SD=.22**
Total					**4.04 SD=.51**

Category 5: personality (Extroversion)

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N= 6	class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
8.I get nervous in English class.**(Reverse Coded)**	3.15 SD=0.98	3.75 SD=0.88	3.54 SD=1.36	3.55 SD=1.13	**3.49 SD=0.25**
26. During class, even if I don't understand, I try my best.	4.16 SD=.75	4.12 SD=0.35	3.72 SD=1.10	4.33 SD=.5	**4.08 SD=0.25**
27. When I don't understand, I ask the teacher and other student's questions.	4.16 SD=0.40	4 SD=0.53	4.18 SD=0.60	4.44 SD=.52	**4.19 SD=.18**
30.To be honest , I'm an introvert person .**(Reverse Coded)**	3.33 SD=1.03	2.62 SD=1.06	3 SD=.77	2.88 SD=1.36	**2.95 SD=.29**
31. I like to volunteer answers to questions, regardless of whether I'm right or wrong.	4 SD=0.63	3.85 SD=0.99	4 SD=.89	3.55 SD=1.01	**3.84 SD=0.21**
32. Making mistakes and being wrong is very embarrassing for me.	3.5 SD=0.83	3.25 SD=1.16	3.63 SD=1.20	3 SD=1.22	**3.34 SD=0.27**
Total					**3.65 SD=0.49**

Category 6: Organizational influence

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
22. Our organization thinks studying English is important.	2 SD=1.54	3.37 SD=1.30	3.72 SD= 1.19	2.55 SD=1.42	**2.91 SD=0.78**
23. Our commanders are interested in English.	2.66 SD=1.63	2.87 SD=1.12	2.9 SD=1.04	1.88 SD=0.92	**2.57 SD=0.47**
24. Different sources of English are available in my workplace.	1.33 SD=0.51	1.75 SD=.7	1.72 SD=0.64	1.22 SD=0.44	**1.50 SD=.26**
25. Our commanders think that learning English is important.	2.66 SD=1.50	3.62 SD=1.30	3.36 SD=1.2	2.66 SD=1.11	**3.07 SD=0.49**
Total					2.56 SD=1.32

Category 7: Attitude toward studying English

Survey item (with original questionnaire number)	Class A N=6	Class B N=8	Class C N=11	Class D N=9	Total N=34
6. The English textbooks we use are not beneficial. **(Reverse Coded)**	2.16 SD=.98	3.12 SD=0.99	2.18 SD=0.87	2.88 SD=1.16	**2.58 SD=0.48**
9. I'm looking forward to studying English after this course.	4.16 SD=0.75	4.25 SD=0.46	4.09 SD=0.94	3.88 SD=1.16	**4.09 SD=0.15**
17. I find at least some parts of the English textbooks and handouts interesting. **(Reverse Coded)**	3 SD=1.26	2.75 SD=0.88	2.72 SD=1.00	3.11 SD=1.26	**2.89 SD=0.19**
19. In general, I like English class	4 SD=1.09	4.37 SD=0.51	4.09 SD=0.83	4.11 SD=0.60	**4.14 SD=0.15**
8(part 2) : My English class is really time consuming. **(Reverse Coded)**	4.33 SD=1.21	4.75 SD=0.70	4 SD=1.41	5 SD=0	**4.52 SD=0.44**
9(part 2): My English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.	3 SD=1.41	3.37 SD=0.91	2.9 SD=1.04	2.66 SD=1.32	**2.98 SD=0.29**
Total					**3.52 SD=1.22**