

Attitudes toward English & English Learning at an Iranian Military University: A Preliminary Survey

By

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Abstract

This study tries to represent attitudes toward English and English learning at an Iranian military university. Iranian military staffs are 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 Languages Center. The present study employed a questionnaire based on the Attitude / Motivation Test Battery provided by Gardner (2004), incorporating some new concepts in SLA research that have come to light since the time of previous surveys. Quantitative 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 quantitative 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 avenues are given.

Keywords: *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, activator, that causes 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's what they think of English and English learning may seem trivial. Above all, they have to learn. Furthermore, knowing the attitude of small number of Iranian military staffs 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, I am aware of a lot of researches in the area of attitude and motivation of Iranian university students toward English and English learning which currently are published. For example one is the survey was done by Vaezi, Z. (2008) in which 79 non-English major university students were selected to complete a questionnaire, reflecting their 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 conducted to undergraduate students in a university in the east of Iran . The results had shown that Iranian students have very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English and they were more instrumentally motivated.

The other study had been conducted by Shirbagi N (2008) in which the survey was administered in Tabriz and Kurdistan Universities in Iran. A total of 400 students participated. the sample comprised 58% female and 42% male .The questionnaire given to students was developed in English , then translated to Persian .The respondents showed favorable attitudes toward English and learning English. Also, 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 is 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 (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. This study is also a survey study because “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 personnels 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 Imam Ali Military University’s Foreign Languages Center in Tehran. They participated in the course from different military basis around the country; all of them were male with Persian as their native language. Their experience as military personnel ranged from 3 to 17 years. Table 1 lists the population 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 other educational settings, I have introduced a number of new questions and reorganized the main test battery. 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 the appendix A. The chosen survey items were translated to Persian for the purpose of easily understandable by participants, and then translated to English for the purpose of this study. The outline of questionnaires and some considerations about it follows below.

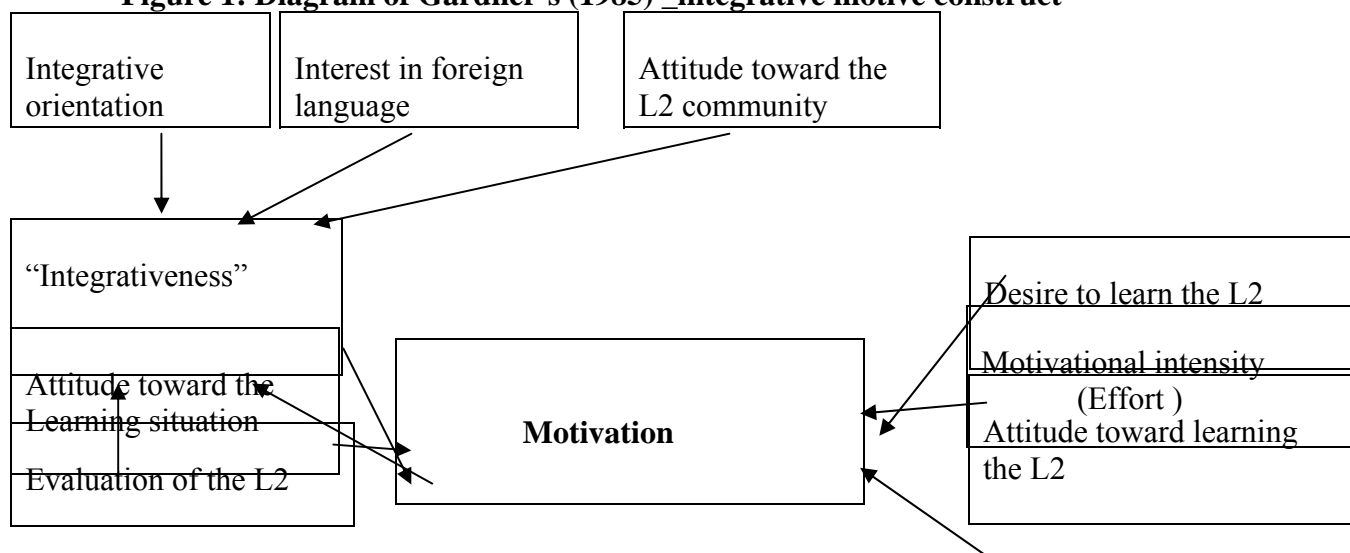
Table 2: categorical structure of questionnaires used in this survey

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 personnels interests in outside classroom activities. These activities include being exposure to popular music, TV programs, movies and other multimedia. Yashima’s (2002) observation shows that attitudes of learners in context with no immediate contact with L2 cultures are significantly influenced 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



teacher

Evaluation of the L2
course

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 student 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 try to see 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'. I named this category organizational/professional because of specific setting of the study. This category includes 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 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 translated to Persian. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a battery of more than 130 test items in which respondents are asked to rank on one of 3 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)

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- 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 conducted to a group of Anglophone Canadian students in a French language immersion program. Its aim was 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 context s ,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) that Integrativeness is not a superlative element of motivation (p.117) and Crookes & Schmidt (1989) 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). Although Tremblay and Gardner (1995, p.507) disagreed, 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 in used in survey study 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 3point). 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 that are surveyed, 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 at4 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's should not record their names, military ranks, and no one except me 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 , with

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, and further, Likert data is ordinal rather than interval (Burns, 2000, p.560). Then because of the mentioned reasons, I have not attempted statistical analysis of the figures. In addition, Likert scales can only indicate positive, negative, or neutral points. As non-interval data their application can be treated 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 of each class, and by total number of the student's responses.

Qualitative comparisons from obtained averages of the means have been done. For the sake of this purpose first the student's responses converted to the numerical values according to the Likert's scale. Then the means of these numerical values and related standard deviation (SD) were calculated by survey item's questionnaire numbers and 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 admittedly an arduous task. But, watching the figures and tables emerged from each questionnaire seemed an invaluable reward. Following are the results and discussions of responses within each of the 7 categories in the questionnaire. The 5- point Likert scales used in this study assumes an average rating of 3.4 is above neutral and a 2.8 is below. I have shown the results in raw, by- category, by-item in the hopes that readers may draw their own interpretation as well as my own analysis and comments.

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 show generally a positive view on extra-curricular English. These includes activities like watching English films, listening to English music, desire to learn English beyond class. In comparison to the other categories, the standard deviation of the total mean of this category (SD=.32) is the lowest standard deviation. That shows all in all, responses have the homogeneity. The highly positive response to item 2 with lowest standard deviation in the category shows that almost all the participants have strong desire to watch foreign (English) films without subtitle or dubbing. It Seems to be due to the fact 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 countries' TV programs seems to call for a more neutral response to item 34. Items like 14 are reversely coded, because they are negative statement which has been appeared in 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 kind of opportunity. Mean responses to items 14 and 33 suggest that respondents want to learn English because of intrinsic motivation (for example studying English beyond the class) rather than extrinsic one (for example 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 presents, a fairly neutral attitude toward the international community can be perceived. Responses to the items 21, which represents a desire to go oversea, in which there will be an opportunity to use English in 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 fairly positive response to the item 18, suggest that students are not averse to interacting with an international community, but they would rather do so on their own ground.

It must be considered that, in reality, these military personals have no or extremely little direct contact with events and peoples that are non-Iranian. Then there will be no “international exchange” or “communication in English”. The responses to items 4 & 5 show Integrative orientation toward the target community. As table resembles the respondents has somewhat neutral attitude toward the target culture and English language 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
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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, all in this entire 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 in this category to item 1, item 35, and (reverse coded) item 13 suggest that participants perceive the idea of having English ability as a foreign language in a generally positive light. These responses resemble the similarly titled category as “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 the Category 2 are interesting; because of the some 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, and this means that they hope the foreign language they learn will be needed in the future. As mentioned previously, the environment in which these staffs are working includes no direct 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
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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 non-negative toward studying English (total mean >3.4). Slightly neutral response to item 7 ($2.8 < \text{mean} < 3.4$) displays that subjects think their ability in English language skills is not much better than other science subjects like math, physics ,etc.

Item 16, an item designed by Rian (2007) in his study, was inserted into this survey .But in this case instead of Japanese students; the subjects were Iranian military staffs. Highly positive response to this item suggests that subjects tentatively place value on the study of English, despite the fact that it is a requirement and that the way it is have been taught offers 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. Pennycook (2001, p.82; cited in Rian, 2007) refers to this concept of being subjected to foreign language study as ‘linguistic imperialism’. It is interesting and encouraging that participants in the present study do not overallly 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

Generally speaking, Responses to items in the category five are relatively neutral. The exceptions are the 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 the 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 or sources of the language anxiety. For purposes of future studies, it 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 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'. I 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 biggest standard deviation The standard deviation of the total mean (SD=1.32) , indicates that subjects have generally different opinion and attitude toward this Category. But overallly, as the total mean of this category (2.56) suggests, the subject's attitude toward the organization policy about language learning is negative. Except the Item 25 which has the biggest numerical value in this category, the other items indicates 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. I must consider 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. But optimistically speaking it suggests a neutral attitude toward this item. Although there are lots of departments of army which includes using English textbooks and communications like military pilots and maintenance engineers, but overallly the respondents think that the attention toward English and English learning in their organization is not enough.

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 for all six items in this summarized 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 have a negative view of their own classroom . The negative responses to the items 6 and 17 suggest that the textbooks used at the times of the survey absorbed little attention of the subjects. It must be considered for many years the main textbooks used in this center were the "Interchange" series, but currently the textbooks have been changed. And instead of these textbooks the "World View" series are used. On the other hand the relatively positive responses to item numbered 19 & 8(part 2) suggest that generally respondents have a positive view toward their classrooms. The teaching method used in the classroom was a kind of communicative approach, but response to the item 9(part 2) indicates that subjects in this study have not a positive view the teaching style.

Conclusion:

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes and orientation of Iranian military personals toward English and English learning. Overall non –negative attitude was the most important conclusions that can be drawn from the above results. The exception is the total mean responses to category 6, which 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 explaining such kind of findings. The findings of this study do not stray far from the results of the previous findings of researches about the attitudes and motivation of Iranian university students, one of them which have been done by Shirbagi N (2008), suggested 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 the participants toward utilitarian value support this claim. But in comparison with the findings of the research by Vaezi (2008), here it seems that subjects are less motivated and their attitudes toward English and English learning seems to be more neutral .

The limitation of the study mainly refers 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-level data, or whether they should be considered as ordinal data is the subject of disagreement. Many consider such items as ordinal data, because, particularly when using only 5 levels, one cannot consider that subjects see 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 statements 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 other limitation 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 sometimes, no matter how well worded, will 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 other limitations which must be taken into account, when applying items from a questionnaire oriented from the other culture. The possible example can be found in the category 5 (personality) – extroversion, Iranian cultures tend to value humble state and modesty. Being extrovert may imply negative connotation in an Iranian context, Such that claiming to be volunteer, answering questions (item 31). The final limitation for this study was the nature of the organization in which the study was conducted .An organization with military nature has its own rules, for example confidentiality was one of the main obstacles for conducting this research.

A need for the better model appropriate for such kind of context can be a suggestion for further research avenues. As Yashima's (2002) questionnaire reflects her Japanese –EFL WTC model, the similar questionnaire can be designed for the Iranian context. And this can be a big step in the area of the attitudes and motivation study. Achievement score comparison can be another research area in this context. Such comparison between motivation and attitudes toward English and achievement scores would be useful in further analyzing the connection between attitude and achievement.

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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.

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- 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)**
English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.

9(part 2): My

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
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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
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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=0.9 9	2.18 SD=0.8 7	2.88 SD=1.1 6	2.58 SD=0.48
9. I'm looking forward to studying English after this course.	4.16 SD=0.7 5	4.25 SD=0.4 6	4.09 SD=0.9 4	3.88 SD=1.1 6	4.09 SD=0.15
17. I find at least some parts of the English textbooks and handouts interesting. (Reverse Coded)	3 SD=1.2 6	2.75 SD=0.8 8	2.72 SD=1.0 0	3.11 SD=1.2 6	2.89 SD=0.19

19. In general , I like English class	4 SD=1.0 9	4.37 SD=0.5 1	4.09 SD=0.8 3	4.11 SD=0.6 0	4.14 SD=0.15
8(part 2) : My English class is really time consuming.(Reverse Coded)	4.33 SD=1.2 1	4.75 SD=0.7 0	4 SD=1.4 1	5 SD=0	4.52 SD=0.44
9(part 2): My English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.	3 SD=1.4 1	3.37 SD=0.9 1	2.9 SD=1.0 4	2.66 SD=1.3 2	2.98 SD=0.29
Total					3.52 SD=1.22