

Motivation and Attitudes toward Learning English and German as Foreign Languages among Sudanese University Students

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Abstract : Motivation and attitudes are considered as hypothetical psychological constructs in explaining the process of second language learning. Gardner (1985) – who first systematically investigated the motivational factors in second language acquisition – found that L2 achievement is related not only to the individual learner's linguistic aptitude or general intelligence but also to the learner's motivation and interest in learning the target language. Traditionally language learning motivation can be divided into two types: integrative motivation – the desire to integrate oneself with the target culture; and instrumental motivation – the desire to learn a language in order to meet a specific language requirement such as for employment. One of the Gardner's main ideas is that the integrative motivation plays an important role in second language acquisition. It is directly and positively related to second language achievement more than instrumental motivation. However, the significance of integrative motivation reflects a rather controversial set of findings. On the other hand, Students' attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and the learning context may all play some part in explaining their success in learning a language. Accordingly, the present study aims at exploring the significance of motivational and attitudinal factors in learning foreign languages, namely English and German among Sudanese undergraduate students from a psycholinguistic and interdisciplinary perspective. The sample composed of 221 students from the English and German language departments respectively at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. The results indicate that English language's learners are instrumentally motivated and that German language's learners have positive attitudes towards the German language community and culture. Furthermore, there are statistical significant differences in the attitudes toward the two languages due to gender; where female students have more positive attitudes than their male counterparts. However, there are no differences along the variables of academic grade and study level. Finally, the reasons of studying the English or German language have also been indicated.

Keywords : motivation and attitudes, foreign language learning, english language, german language

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