

An Ethnographic Inquiry: Exploring the Saudi Students' Motivation to Learn English Language

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Abstract : Although Saudi students' motivation to learn English language as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia have been investigated by a number of studies; these have appeared almost completely as using the quantitative research paradigm. There is a significant lack of research that explores the Saudi students' motivation using qualitative methods. It was essential, as an investigator, to be immersed in the community to understand the individuals under study via their actions and words, their thoughts, views and beliefs, and how those individuals credited to activities. Thus, the study aims to explore the Saudi students' motivation to learn English language as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia employing qualitative methodology via applying ethnography. The study will be carried out in Saudi Arabia. Ethnography qualitative approach will be used in the current study by employing formal and informal interview instruments. Gardner's motivation theory is used as frameworks for this study to aid the understanding of the research findings. The author, an English language lecturer, will undertake participant observations for 4 months. He will work as teaching-assistant (on an unpaid basis) with EFL lecturers in different discipline department at a Saudi university where students study English language as a minor course. The researcher will start with informal ethnographical interview with students during his existence with the informants in their natural context. Then the researcher will utilize the semi-structural interview. The informal interview will be with 14-16 students, then, he will carry out semi-structural interview with the same informants to go deep in their natural context to find out to what extent the Saudi university students are motivated to learn English as a foreign language. As well as, to find out the reasons that played roles in that. The findings of this study will add new knowledge about what factors motivate universities' Saudi students to learn English language in Saudi Arabia. Very few chances have given to students to express themselves and to speak about their feelings in a more comfortable way in order to gain a clear image of those factors. The working author as an EFL teacher and lecturer will provide him secure access into EFL teaching and learning setting. It will help him attain richer insights into the nature EFL context in universities what will provide him with richer insights into the reasons behind the weakness of EFL level among Saudi students.

Keywords : motivation, ethnography, Saudi, language

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