



## A Correlation Study on Achievement of English Learners

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### ABSTRACT

This present study was conducted to re-examine motivation and attitude of language learners and its correlation to their learning achievement. Low English language proficiency among Malaysian students has drawn researchers' attention to conduct the study within higher learning institution. This cross-sectional study was carried out involving 329 participants those were required to respond for self-administered questionnaire and taking four language skills test which was developed by researchers with the assistant of experience language lecturers. Descriptive and inference analysis were adopted to answer the research objectives. The finding has demonstrated that participants of the study have higher integrative motivation (8.07) and moderate level attitudes towards the learning of English language (6.81). However correlation test has shown a there is a low correlation ( $r = 0.111$ ) between students' motivation and English language achievement tests. Whereby there is a moderately low correlation ( $r = 0.224$ ) between students' attitude and English language achievement tests. In future investigations it might be possible to study other types of motivation such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to determine the success for language learners.

### 1. Introduction

Many Malaysian students have poor command of English even after graduation (Engku Suhaimi, E.A., Zailani, J., Alia Nabila, A., 2012). Poor English proficiency may affect employment prospect since English is undoubtedly widely used in IT Communication and in commerce and industry not only internationally but also locally (The Star, Sept. 11/2013). Following this statement, The Federation of Malaysian Manufactures (FMM) requested that English be made a must-pass subject by 2018 (The Star, Sept. 11/2013).

Low English language proficiency among Malaysian students is a never ending issue. Marlyna, Siti Hanim and Mohamad Subakir (2012) indicate that through their study a majority of the students' proficiency levels in English were below the entry level of the university's requirement. Education Minister II Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh claims that many English language teachers are "incapable" or "unfit" to teach the subject in schools when the results for the English Language Cambridge Placement Test sat by them showed that 70% out of the 60,000 performed poorly (The Star, Sept. 11/2013). Therefore this research is carried out to observe students' English language achievement in terms of their four basics English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) at one of the universities in Terengganu.

Many researchers have shown that students' attitudes towards the learning of English language are negative and less interest (Zanily Abidin, Mohammad and Alzwari, 2012 & Lasagarbaster, 2007). Ghazvini and Khajepour

(2011) state that motivation has been shown by educators and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the success of learning in foreign or second language. Attitudes are related strongly to motivation (Petrides, 2006) and right attitudes will make everything fall in place such as learning will be easy and enjoyable (Abu-Melhim, 2009).

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. English Learning in Malaysia***

The history of English in Malaysia began when the British came to colonize the country and now English is taught as one of the compulsory subjects at all levels of education in Malaysian from the primary to the tertiary level (Foo & Richards, 2004). Earlier, English education in Malaysian schools was based on KBSR for primary schools and KBSM for secondary schools. The purpose of English language in KSSR curriculum in Malaysia was to furnish the primary and secondary school students with the knowledge of English language and its four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) including grammar and daily communication skills or social life skills. Now the Ministry of Education have changed the system to the assessment system which is called PBS or known as “Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah”(School based assessment). The program is still new and it is being implemented now. Stated below is the English for Science and Technology syllabus since this study involved Science & Technology students.

“Lay the foundation in the use of English in the fields of science and technology not only for the present but also for the future studies at the tertiary level. This programme does not aim to teach the subject matter of science, rather, it is designed to help students develop an ability to grasp basic concepts and ideas in science and to understand methods of scientific thoughts and enquiry in English common to all kinds of scientific and technical discourse. The knowledge gained will not only enhance personal learning but also enable learners to think critically of issues in science and technology” (Curriculum Development Center 2001) as cited in (Foo & Richards, 2004 p. 238)

### ***2.2. Students’ Motivation and Attitude towards the Learning of English Language***

Gardner and Lambert (1972) look at motivation into two categories which are Integrative motivation that reflects the learners’ willingness or desire to be as though a representative member of the target language community. In this situation, the learners have high level of interest, motivation and attitude to learn the target language because the learners aim to have for a better communication with the related group. Learners with instrumental motivation on the other hand will learn the target language because they have a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). According to Johnson (2001) instrumental motivational learners have a strong willingness to master the target language because of pragmatic and utilitarian benefits such as a high paid, good career and management power.

Researchers (such as Gardner & Lambert,1972; Bobkina, Dominquez & Fernandez, 2007) claim that normally students would rather choose instrumental reasons more often than integrative motivation for language learning. Learners who possess integrative motivation in language learning prefer to become a resident in a new community and use English in its social interactions. Integrative motivation promotes the learners to master proficiency in English language. Learners who possess instrumental motivation is more utilitarian in the learning of English language as they learn the language because of requirement for schools and universities, job application and high income. Naser (2010) found strong correlations among integrative orientation and other psychological variables.

Attitude is defined as a mental state that includes belief and feelings that lead to the success of language

learning (Latchanna & Dagneu, 2009). An attitude depends on the individual and it becomes parts of one's behaviour and it can impact the outcomes of learning process. Both attitude and behaviour have strong relationship between students' performance in the learning of English language. Positive behaviour brings positive performance in students' education and language learning as it influences students' outcomes (Lane, Robertson, & Graham-Bailey, 2006) (as cited in Lane et al., 2008). It is like an intrinsic motivation where the students have self-motivation to improve their English and feel the pleasure and satisfaction to learn the language. According to Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) the interest of learners differ from one learner to another due to influence by immediate context such as the subject of the language and the teaching environment that takes place.

Some might think that teaching and learning of English is hard because the subject is dull and dry. Thus, having a positive or negative attitude towards the learning of the language will determine the level of achievement that the students will obtain (Unal & Sari, 2013). According to Hogg and Vaughan (2005, p.150 – 151):

“positive attitude is a decision of acceptance or reaction that agrees the attitude we met or it is the attitude that reveals the advantages of the subject to take up its value whereas, negative attitude reveals the disadvantages of the subject to dismiss it and to weaken its strong attitude.”

### ***2.3. Students' English Language Achievement***

English proficiency will be based on the fluency and master of four basic skills which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. These four skills are connected to each other, and all of them are equally important as students use these four skills in their lessons. Listening and reading are considered as receptive skills because someone will receive the information whereas speaking and writing are categorized as productive skills due to the fact that these skills need to be produced. Students need to be adequately equipped with proficiency in English since 70% of the students registered when entering the university do not met the minimum level of English proficiency to cope with their academic survival (Marlyna, Siti Hamin & Mohamad Subakir, 2012).

#### ***2.3.1. Listening***

Known as receptive skill, listening is the first steps to learn the target language before a student is able to speak and in order to understand the message delivered, the listening process uses various tasks and background knowledge to activate the schemata (Majzub & Abu, 2010). According to Brown (1978) listening skills was not that popular until the existence of Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) methodology that put listening as part of the important activities for effective oral communication. Core listening skills for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology are listening for details, listening for main idea, forecasting, listening for specific information and making inference. Listening tasks should be properly plan, monitor and examine.

Bekleyen's (2009) study shows even L2 English teachers also face anxiety in listening because of the lack of exposure and practice in listening. Some of the teachers find it difficult to understand certain vocabularies and hardly recognize different pronunciations. To overcome this problem, English learners could listen to different kinds of listening materials such as various dialects of native speakers and allow extra listening practice to improve their listening skill. According to Newman (2010) students' listening comprehension are poorer when it was measured using an open-ended verbal response format. News and current media are authentic tools for listening lessons and they are relevant to cope with the challenging communication skills needed by English language learners. Proper guidance in listening will lead to the successful of language learning (Goh, 2008). The ability to comprehend listening effectively will help to improve English language achievement (Feyton 1991). Therefore, it is really important for the students to do a lot of listening practices in order to improve their English language.

### **2.3.2. Speaking**

There are several factors that lead to students' difficulties in speaking. A high percentage of students' difficulties in speaking is mainly relied on their mother tongue (Turkish), lack of confidence, afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, poor pronunciation and cannot find the correct word at the time of speaking (Fatma, 2014). Most of the students find it difficult to speak in English fluently because lack of words and contents knowledge, limited exposure towards English language after class and insufficient materials used in the classroom. They are having trouble with poor pronunciation of some vowels, consonants and intonation. Lack of practice in speaking English is another reason why the students are left behind since many teachers and educators do not really encourage the students to use the target language in their day to day interaction even though in English class (Fatma, 2014).

Teachers should encourage their students to speak out in English not only in classroom but also after class. Positive reinforcements and having clear goals and instructions will help to make the passive students become active and involve in classroom discussion. Students should be involved in variety of speaking activities in English and frequent practice that related to oral communication such as role play, public speaking, debate, group discussion need to be done because these activities will help raise their self-confidence and increase their proficiency. The more they practice speaking in English, the higher they rate their ability to communicate in English and vice versa (Littlewood, 2004). According to Lee and Ng (2010) to promote students' participation in the English language discussion, teachers' classroom-based strategy and pedagogical factors are major determinant to capture their interest and involvement.

### **2.3.3. Reading**

Students face reading difficulties through the challenges of reaching grade-level of expectation when extracting and constructing meaning from written text (Snow et al., 1998); wider range of challenges in word reading and reading comprehension, the weakness to decode morphologically complex words accurately and problem to extract meaning from text (Kieffer, 2014). In academic reading, students face difficulty to extract and synthesize the information from various academic sources and acquire academic vocabulary which is hard to remember. They also face difficulty to synthesize information in order to avoid plagiarism in academic writing and to extract key points out of the passage (Phakiti and Li, 2011).

Better English language achievement can be obtained by the students if they are taught on how to smartly use the reading skills. New approach need to be done in order to help students to identify their learning styles and strategies together with the ability to use the effective reading strategies. Traditional language teaching should be revised for better improvement (Kök, 2010). Motivation to read in English is a gateway to develop a high level of English language proficiency especially for those who are having limited opportunities to use the English language. Reading materials, reading abilities, and students' attitudes are major influence on motivation to read in English.

### **2.3.4. Writing**

The beauty of language can be captured and appreciated through good quality of writing and it stays there forever and can be reproduced generation after generation. Awang (2007) states that through writing, a collection of memories can be retold in glorious colour. Nevertheless, many students fear of writing and to them writing is the most difficult component in English, particularly problematic for those who speak English as a Second Language (ESL) (Gimenez, 2008). Writing is the most difficult components in the teaching and learning of English. The skills involve are grammar, wider vocabulary knowledge, spelling, sentence production, creativity, quality and originality.

Writing is very important in English Language syllabus and it has been taught in schools and universities. It consists of everything in one set of English Language skills including the good knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and creativity. High levels of academic writing are one of the requirements of higher education and it is important in demonstrating scholarship and promoting student progression (Salamonson, Koch, Weaver, Everett & Jackson, 2010). However, it is a prevailing belief that academic writing problems consist of language usage, syntax, structure and organization.

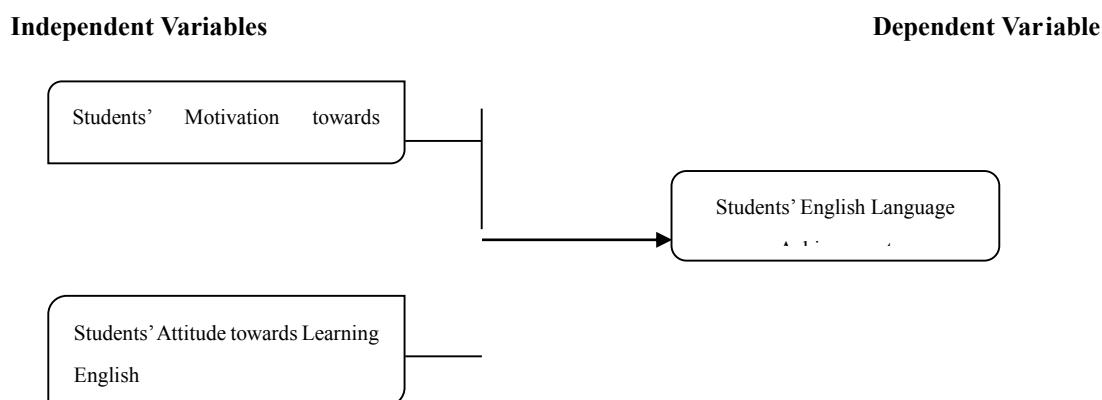
Muhammad Shahid, Muhammad Uzair and Wahid (2012) affirm that students' difficulties in writing include lack of vocabulary, a poor in grammar structure, incorrect use of punctuation marks, wrong spelling, disorganize paragraph and sentence structure, and illogical sequence that lead to learners' academic and career failures. According to Phakiti and Li (2011, p.240) "students face a wider variety of academic writing difficulties including composing an extensive text, plagiarisms, understand the nature of academic writing, lack of own voice in writing, differences between L1 and L2 writing styles, writing coherence, synthesizing ideas for writing, linking theory to practice." Motivation to write in English requires patience, encouragement, proper guidelines and strategies. Encouragement to read in English among students need to be emphasized because the more they read, the better they will write.

#### ***2.4. The Influence of Motivation and Attitude in the Learning of English Language towards Their English Language Achievement.***

Motivation and attitude give major movement to instigate English learning and later the dynamic force to maintain the long and wearisome learning process since these two elements are sets of beliefs that can influence efficiency to language learning (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). As mentioned by Yvonne and Gurnam (2013), motivation, attitudes and anxiety are necessary for second language learning nevertheless, students' perception, belief, feelings and behaviors are also depend on the uniqueness of the language learning process. Millington (2011) argue that songs can be used as a valuable teaching and learning tools because they are enjoyable; help to improve students listening skills and pronunciation; and useful for teaching vocabulary and sentence structures.

Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) state that in order to maintain high motivation and attitude levels of students towards the learning of English language, educators should handle the teaching techniques that can immerse students' attention and interest to learn the language even more. The following six strategies are recommended by them 1) create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom 2) Encourage students to personalize the classroom environment 3) create situations in which students will feel a sense of accomplishment 4) Encourage students to set their own short-term goals 5) Provide pair and group activities to develop students' confident and finally connect Language Learning to students' interest outside of class. Revell and Norman (1999), state that the classroom learning environment and activities should satisfy all kinds of learners' needs from those who are visual, or auditory or kinesthetic. These will help to enhance their motivation towards the learning of English language and automatically will improve their academic achievement.

## 2.5. Framework of the Study



**Fig.1.** The Framework of the study

This framework is designed to investigate the relationship between students' motivation and attitude towards English their language achievement. The independent variables consist of students' motivation and students' attitude in the learning of English language and the dependent variable is students' English language achievement.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate students' motivation and attitude toward the learning of English language
2. To investigate students' English language achievement (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
3. To determine the relationship between students' motivation and attitude toward their English language achievement.

### 4. Research Methodology

#### 4.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach using descriptive-correlational design in order to investigate the relationship between students' motivation and attitude in the learning of English language toward their English language achievement. Students' motivation and attitude in the framework of this study were categorized as independent variables, whereas English language achievement was represented as the dependent variable. The independent variables were the factors that may influence the dependent variable.

Based on this quantitative method, the data for students' motivation and attitudes were obtained through questionnaires that had been distributed to students and the data for English language achievement was based on the test scores that the students obtained from listening, speaking, reading and writing tests in their final semester examination.

#### 4.2. Population and Sampling

The study was carried out at UiTM Dungun Terengganu involving Diploma students that came from different faculties in UiTM Dungun which are the Faculty of Social Science and Science & Technology. Total number of

population is estimated around 1200 students came from different backgrounds of the family, different states in Malaysia and their proficiency and achievement in English differ from each other. Based on the table of sampling by Sekaran (2007), 329 samples were randomly selected through stratified random sampling technique.

### 4.3. Research Instruments

#### 4.3.1. Questionnaire

Students' motivation and attitude questionnaire was adapted from Bobkina's study (2013) and it intends to measure the level of motivation in three motivational constructs established in the works by Gardner (1985) and Cooper & Fishman (1977). The three motivational constructs were instrumental motivation, integrative motivation and personal motivation. Table 1 shows the components of each variable or dimension in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Components of each variable / dimension in the questionnaire

Part	Variable / Dimension	No. of Item
A	Respondents' Demography	8
B	Students' Motivation towards Learning English	
	(i) Instrumental Motivation Reasons	4
	(ii) Integrative Motivation Reasons	3
	(iii) Personal Motivation Reasons	4
C	Students' Attitude towards Learning English	4

In comparison to previous research, the original rating used was ranging from 1 to 5, however the rating was changed from 1 to 10 as to give a greater freedom and choices for students to rate their motivation and attitude in the learning of English language and more importantly for the scale to assume an interval measurement for data analysis purposes.

Students' attitudes towards learning English questionnaire also came from the same source that looks into the matters of using English in the social and educational contexts or the culture of English speaking countries. Similar to motivation, the rating was changed from 1 to 10 instead of 1 to 5 from the original questionnaire. For this section of questionnaires, some modification, refinement, and improvement for several wording constructions and phrases were made. In order to make the questionnaire suitable and the participants comprehend the item better, the actual questionnaire for part C item no. 13 and 14, the word "Spanish" in the questionnaire has been changed to "Malay" since Malay is the mother tongue of the respondents and it is the National language in Malaysia.

Original item no. 13: If I were on a holiday at an English speaking country, I would try to speak Spanish if possible.

Modification for item no. 13: If I were on a holiday at an English speaking country, I would try to speak Malay if possible.

Original item no. 14: In fact, I prefer our English teacher to explain things in Spanish.

Modification for item no. 14: In fact, I prefer our English teacher to explain things in Malay.



#### 4.3.2. English Language Achievement Tests

The English language achievement test was based on students' scores obtained in the final semester examination. The English language achievement scores were obtained based on the components of listening, speaking, reading and writing. All the questions were prepared by eight English lectures in a team including the researcher and the questions were given to senior and experts lecturers to confirm their validity.

Table 2. Components of English language tests

	Test	Full Marks
English language test	Listening	15
	Speaking	15
	Reading	20
	writing	20
Total Scores		70

\*Total test score is 70

Table 2 shows that the score for listening test was 15, speaking test was 15; reading test was 20; and writing test was 20. The total raw scores for the English language achievement are 70.

The listening test consisted of 15 questions where each of the items carried one mark. The subjects listened to the CD player and answered all the related questions based on what they had listened. The questions for listening test were divided into three dimensions which were listening to the news items, listening to the article and listening to the conversation. The questions for listening test consisted of multiple choices questions and fill in the blanks.

The speaking test was in a group discussion which consisted of four students in a group at one time. The students were given a situation that they have to discuss based on the argumentative discussion and these involved two tasks. The first task or Task A, every student was given two minutes to express their opinions and ideas regarding the related topic and points that had been given to them. When Task A had finished, and all the students had the opportunity to speak, they were given two minutes to prepare points that they want to voice out in Task B which was the second task. In Task B, every student was given another two minutes to express their agreement or opposition towards their friends' opinions and ideas in earlier discussion which was in Task A.

The reading test consisted of 2 short articles for the participants to read and understand the contents and they were tested on the reading comprehension questions. Reading comprehension questions were based on WH questions, True/False questions and Multiple Choice questions. The mark on each item was based on the criteria of the question itself.

The writing test consisted of one essay question and the students wrote approximately 250 words in one hour. The writing test was graded based on the contents (8 marks), language (8 marks) and organization (4 marks) of the essay. Eight lecturers including the researcher were involved in these four English skills test (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and all of them had been given proper instructions on how to handle and mark the test accordingly in a workshop and meetings. The lecturers or the examiners including the researcher were given rubrics on how to mark the tests for all those four skills tests.



### 4.3.3. *Validity and Reliability of the Instrumentation*

Validity is to determine whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or in other words how truthful the research results are [Joppe (2000) as cited in Golafshani (2003)]. The reliability of a measure is established by testing both consistency and stability. Consistency indicates how well the items measuring a concept that hang up together as a set. Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha is the most frequently used procedure for estimating reliability for questionnaire and it is one type of internal consistency reliability. Under most condition, reliability coefficients range from 0 to 1.00 and the closer Cronbach's Alpha to 1.00, the higher the internal consistency reliability (Helms et al., 2006).

#### 4.3.3.1. *Validity and Reliability of Instruments for Questionnaires*

The content validity for the instrument of motivation and attitude was given to three experience lecturers who are experts in psychology and they have over five years of experiences teaching the university students. The suggestions of the experience lecturers were taken into consideration and minor changes were made on the instrument. The instrument of motivation and attitude were administered to a group of 30 students from different programs and they are not the subjects for actual study. However, the subjects shared similar characteristics in terms of their level of English proficiency, knowledge background and learning environment. The questionnaires for motivation and attitude towards learning English were tested their reliability through Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha for Students' Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English

	No. of item	Cronbach's Alpha
Motivation	11	0.898
Attitudes	4	0.737

The Cronbach's Alpha for students' motivation is 0.898 and attitude is 0.737. Based on the results presented, all constructs are highly reliable as all values display alpha coefficient surpasses the value of 0.60 suggested by (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, this questionnaire can be considered having an accepted level of reliability.

#### 4.3.3.2. *Validity and Reliability of Instruments for English Language Tests*

The questions for English language test (listening, speaking, reading and writing) were prepared by eight experienced English lecturers including the researcher. They are experts in the English language and they have over five years' experience in teaching English to university students. All the questions were validated by the expert lectures before the questions were released to the respondents. Since the questions were set by professionals or experts and based on table of specifications from previous semester, it can be considered as valid and reliable for the purpose of the research.

### 4.4. *Data Collection Procedure*

Before the study was conducted, a permission letter was written to the office of administration asking for their approval. Once the permission letter was approved, the questionnaires were delivered randomly by hand to

students through their English lecturers that taught different groups including the researcher. Every lecturer that involved has been clearly explained on the purpose of the study and how to monitor the questionnaires. In the classroom, the instruments were administered after the participants had been informed on how to answer the questions. It took approximately twenty to thirty minutes for the task to be completed and collected back by the lecturers. The lecturers took back the questionnaires and returned them to the researcher.

380 copies of instruments were distributed however, only 329 copies returned. The missing instruments were because some of the participants were absent and they were regarded as missing. All the questionnaires that were answered by the participants were kept confidential.

Eight English lecturers were involved in the process of conducting the test for listening, speaking, reading and writing since the researcher cannot handle and manage 329 students alone. All the English lecturers that involved were clearly explained regarding the terms and procedures of the test. They were given the rubrics and guidelines on how to give marks to the respondents on their listening, speaking, reading and writing test so that the grades would be fair and justice. There would be two examiners to check the students' grades during the marking process in order to ensure the inter-rater reliability. The moderations of the marks were carried out by the researcher and the other lecturers to enhance the validity and reliability of the results.

**4.5. Data Analysis Procedures and Measurement**

This study utilized the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20 to analyze the said data. The data about respondents' demographic in Section A which is under Population and Sample, the data was analyzed by using descriptive analysis that shows the number of respondents according to the various characteristics. This section interpreted the information of respondents like gender; type of programs; and social economics status (SES). The purpose was to obtain the number of responses associated with different values of variable and it was presented in tabular form of frequency table.

Table 4. Data analysis procedures and measurement

No.	Research Objectives	Analysis
1	RO1	Descriptive
2	RO2	Descriptive
3	RO3	Pearson Correlation

Table 4 gives details procedures on how the data were analyzed. For research objective 1, the data collected were analyzed by using descriptive analysis which refers to the statistic of the frequencies, mean and standard deviation that provide descriptive information. This analysis gives the mean value and the comparison on the mean value among the data can be obtained as well as to determine the descriptive analysis of mean range.

Research objective 2, the data collected were analyzed by using Independent Samples t-test which is most commonly used in determining if there exists a difference in means between two independent groups or related groups.

Research objective 3, data were analyzed using Pearson Correlation which is one of the most common forms of data analysis that underlies many other analyses and capable of supporting conclusion after primary analyses have been completed. A correlation coefficient has a value ranging from -1 to 1. Value that are closer to the

absolute value of 1 indicate that there is a strong relationship between the variables being correlated whereas values closer to 0 indicate that there is little or no linear relationship.

**5. Findings**

**5.1. Demography of Participants**

Table 5. Demography of respondents

No.	Item	Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Major Programme	<b>Social Science</b>		
		Business Management	75	22.8
		Hotel and Tourism	87	26.4
		Public Administration	50	15.2
		Accountancy	26	7.9
		<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>72.3</b>
		<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>		
		Electrical Engineering	61	18.5
		Computer Science	30	9.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>27.6</b>
2.	Gender	Male	114	34.7
		Female	215	65.3
3.	Low SES	RM1999 & Below	142	43.2
	Medium SES	RM2000 - RM3999	102	31.0
	High SES	RM4000 – RM7999	54	16.4
	Very High SES	RM8000 & Above	31	9.4
<b>N</b>			<b>329</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 indicates that participants in this study came from six different programs, Business Management (BM), Hotel and Tourism Management (HM), Public Administration (AM), Electrical Engineering (EE), Computer science (CS) and Accountancy (A). Based on these programs, two programs, CS and EE were Science & Technology; meanwhile, the other four programs were Social Science based programs. The distribution of the samples according to gender found 114 of the participant (34.7%) are male and 215 (65.3%) are female. Meanwhile the frequency and percentage of students according to their social economics status (SES) displayed 142 of the participants (43.2%) came from low SES family where the monthly income is RM1999 & below; 102 (31%) of the participants came from medium SES family with the monthly income of RM2000 – RM3999; 54 (16.4%) of the participants came from high SES family with the monthly income of RM4000 – RM7999; and 31 (9.4%) of

the participants came from very high SES family with the monthly income of RM8000 & above.

## 5.2. Research Objective 1

To investigate students' motivation and attitude toward the learning of English language.

### 5.2.1. Motivation

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for students' instrumental motivation in the learning of English Language

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation	
1.	I learn English because I need it for my studies	329	7.67	2.06	
2.	I learn English for my professional career	329	8.07	1.76	
3.	I learn English because it makes me more competitive person	329	7.88	1.74	
4.	I learn English because it helps me to get a well-paid job	329	7.98	1.90	
*scale 1 to 10		Overall	329	7.90	1.63

Table 6 of the instrumental motivation illustrates that students are more motivated to learn English for their professional career 8.07 (SD = 1.76) followed by learning English helps them to get well-paid job 7.98 (SD = 1.90); English makes them become a more competitive person 7.88 (SD = 1.74) and they need English for their studies 7.67 (SD = 2.06). The overall mean for instrumental motivation for learning English is 7.90 (SD = 1.63). This indicates that students involve in this study have a moderately high level of instrumental motivation for the learning of English language.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for students' integrative motivation in the learning of English language.

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation	
1.	I learn English because it makes easier to contact with English speaking people	329	8.28	1.63	
2.	I learn English because it allows me to participate in cultural activities	329	7.86	1.81	
3.	I learn English because I need it to travel abroad	329	8.06	1.86	
*scale 1 to 10		Overall	329	8.07	1.63

Table 7 of integrative motivation for learning English illustrates that students are more motivated to learn English because it makes easier for them to contact with English speaking people 8.28 (SD = 1.63); they need the language for the purpose of travelling abroad 8.06 (SD = 1.86); and participation of cultural activities 7.86 (SD = 1.81). The overall means for integrative motivation reasons for learning English is 8.07 (SD = 1.63) which simply depicts that students have a high level of integrative motivation for the learning of English language.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for students' personal motivation in the learning of English language

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation	
1.	I learn English because I would like to live in an English speaking country	329	7.47	4.41	
2.	I learn English because I would like learning new things	329	8.12	1.66	
3.	I learn English because I like learning foreign languages	329	7.88	1.77	
4.	I learn English because learning is a rewarding process	329	7.74	1.72	
	*scale 1 to 10	Overall	329	7.80	1.81

Table 8 illustrates students' interest in learning English based on personal motivation reasons. The results in descriptive statistics for personal motivation reasons for learning English indicates that students are more motivated to learn English because they would like to learn new things 8.12 (SD = 1.66); they like learning foreign languages 7.88 (SD = 1.77); learning is a rewarding process 7.74 (SD = 1.72); and they want to live in English speaking country 7.47 (SD = 4.41). The overall mean score for personal motivation is 7.80 (SD =1.81). This indicates that students in this study have a moderately high level of personal motivation.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for students' overall motivation in the learning of English language

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation
1.	Instrumental motivation	329	7.90	1.63
2.	Integrative motivation	329	8.07	1.63
3.	Personal motivation	329	7.80	1.81
	Overall Motivation		7.91	1.52

Scale: 1 – 10

Table 9 shows all the three motivational constructs towards learning English and indicates that students are more motivated to learn English through integrative motivation reasons as this element of motivation received the highest mean score of 8.07 (SD =1.63) as compared to 7.90 (SD = 1.63) for instrumental motivation reasons and 7.80 (SD = 1.81) for personal motivation reasons. The overall mean score for motivation in learning English is 7.91 (SD = 1.52). This simply means that students who are involved in this study have a moderately high motivation level towards the learning of English language.

### 5.2.2. Attitude

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for students' attitude in the learning of English language

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation	
1.	I like to speak English in the language classroom as much as possible.	329	7.02	1.77	
2.	*I believe in luck or intelligence as far as I don't put too much effort to learn English	329	6.01	1.72	
3.	If I didn't have a chance to study English at the University, I would try to follow practicing the language somehow.	329	7.09	1.85	
4.	*If I were on holiday at an English speaking country, I would try to speak Malay if possible.	329	6.14	1.61	
5.	When I hear an English song on the radio or watch a movie, I try to understand what it says.	329	8.21	1.64	
6.	*In fact, I am more interested in learning the other foreign language (not English)	329	6.04	1.10	
7.	*In fact, I prefer our English teacher to explain things in Malay	329	6.02	1.80	
8.	*When I finish my studies at the university, I will not continue with English classes	329	6.70	2.08	
9.	I am interested to speak English very well.	329	8.07	1.80	
	*Negative items	Overall	329	6.81	1.71

Table 10 depicts that the two highest mean scores for students' attitude towards the learning of English language are they have high interest in listening to the English song or watch a movie and make an effort to understand the language 8.21 (SD = 1.64); and they have a desire to speak English very well 8.07 (SD = 1.80). The two lowest mean scores for students' attitude are they prefer their English teacher to explain things in Malay 6.02 (SD = 1.80); and they believe in luck or intelligence as far as they don't put too much effort to learn English 6.01 (SD = 1.72). The overall mean scores for students' attitudes towards the learning of English language is 6.81 (SD = 0.91) which implies the moderate level of students' attitudes towards the learning of English language.

### 5.3. Research Objective 2

To investigate students' English language achievement (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for students' English language achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing test.

	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Percentage %
Listening (Max = 15)	329	9.75	2.51	65
Speaking (Max =15)	329	10.36	1.58	69.10
Reading (Max = 20)	329	11.37	2.42	56.85

Writing (Max =20)            329    11.44    2.54            57.2

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\*Total test score is 70

The table 11 shows that the mean score obtained by listening test is 9.75 with a SD = 2.51 [max score = 15], the mean for speaking test is 10.36 with a SD = 1.58 [max score = 15], the mean for reading comprehension test is 11.37 with a SD = 2.42 [max score = 20] and the mean score for writing test is 11.44 with a SD = 2.54 [max score = 20]. In terms of percentage listening test score is 65%, speaking test score is 69.10%, reading comprehension test score is 56.85% and writing test score is 57.2%. This indicates that the students obtained highest score in speaking as followed by listening, writing and reading.

Table 12. Descriptive statistics for students' overall in English language achievement.

	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Students' overall achievement in English	329	42.92	6.71

\*Total test score is 70

Table 12 shows the overall mean score obtained by the students in the English language achievement is 42.92 (SD = 6.71). This indicates that the students in this study have an approximate score of 61.3% (42.92/70 x 100) which is a moderate low score in the test.

#### 5.4 Research Objective 3

To determine the relationship between students' motivation and attitude toward their English language achievement.

Table 13. Pearson Correlation of students' motivation and attitudes in the learning of English language (N = 329)

		Motivation	Attitude	English language achievement
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.617**	.111*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.045
	N	329	329	329
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.617**	1	.224**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	329	329	329
English language achievement	Pearson Correlation	.111*	.224**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.000	



\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows that there is a moderately high correlation ( $r = 0.617$ ) between students' motivation and attitude towards the learning of English language. This correlation is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) at the 0.05 level. This simply means that 38.1% ( $r^2 = 0.381$ ) of students' attitude can be explained by their motivation score and vice-versa.

Therefore this is a low correlation ( $r = 0.111$ ) between students' motivation and English language achievement tests. However, the correlation is significant ( $p = 0.045$ ) at the 0.05 level. Although the correlation is significant but with a low correlation coefficient, this might be due to the large sample size ( $N = 329$ )

The table also illustrates that there is a moderately low correlation ( $r = 0.224$ ) between students' attitude and English language achievement tests. However, the correlation is significant ( $p = 0.000$ ) at the 0.05 level. Although the correlation is significant but with a low correlation coefficient, this might be due to the large sample size ( $N = 329$ ).

## 6. Discussion of Findings

This section outlines the discussion of the findings of this study in relation with the research objectives outlined. These findings were integrated with literature review in the related areas of study concerned.

### 6.1. Students' Motivation and Attitude toward the Learning of English Language

From the research, it was found that students are more motivated to learn English through integrative motivation as this element of motivation received the highest mean score as compared to instrumental motivation and personal motivation reasons. Integrative motivation indicates that students are more motivated to learn English because by mastering the language it would be easier for them to contact and communicate with English speaking people. However, the finding of the current study do not support the previous researches (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Bobkina, Dominquez & Fernandez, 2007) that claimed normally students would rather choose instrumental reasons more often than integrative motivation for language learning. Nevertheless, the findings of this study were quite close to Naser's (2010) where strong correlations were found among integrative orientation than other psychological variables.

The findings also reveal that there is a moderately high correlation between students' motivation and students' attitude towards the learning of English language. This simply means that attitudes are strongly related to motivation where people with positive attitude could be motivated learners towards the learning of English language. This finding of the current study is consistent with those of Petrides (2006) who found motivated students with positive attitudes toward the learning of English language enjoy being in the classroom and they feel that the language they are learning is useful to them in their life will perform better than those who are less motivated. The study also reveals that students from high SES have higher level of motivation and attitude towards the learning of English language as compared to the counterparts from the lower SES. This shows that the richer the students come from, the more motivated they are to learn English.

### 6.2. Student's Achievement in the Learning of English language

The findings reveal that the students in this study have an approximate score of 61.3% ( $42.92/70 \times 100$ ) which

is a moderate low score in the test even though their motivation towards the learning of English language is quite high. Majority of the students obtained higher score in speaking (69.10%) as followed by listening (65%), writing (57.2%) and reading (56.85%). The score for English language achievement for writing and reading are considered moderately low. Results from the study show that students are having difficulties from these two components of skills especially writing.

Few comments have been written on the test papers of the respondents during the marking by the lecturers who are involved in the study. In writing, marks are given based on three categories which are content, language and organization and language seems to be the most difficult parts for the students. Some of the comments written are L1 (Malay) interference; lack of vocabulary to express the contents and ideas from their minds; spelling error; wrong grammatical structure and the interference of SMS language such as the students write 'i' instead of "I" and 'gonna' instead of 'going to'. The current study found that males students perform better than female students in the English language achievement tests even though there is no significant difference between them and these findings regarding gender and writing difficulties have similarities with the study of Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan & Wahid (2012) that found female students face more problems in writing than their male counterparts and students in Pakistan also face difficulties in vocabularies, spelling errors, grammar and L1 interference which is Urdu.

Reading and writing are two complementary skills and develop simultaneously. Students face reading difficulties through the challenges in reaching grade-level expectation for extracting and constructing meaning from written text (Snow et al., 1998); wider range of challenges in word reading and reading comprehension, the weakness to decode morphologically complex words accurately and problem to extract meaning from text (Kieffer, 2014). All these problems face by students in this study due to their vocabulary weaknesses and lack of reading practice in English language.

Listening comprehension test was measured using a multiple-choice response format and an open-ended verbal response format. Based on the lecturers' feedbacks who are involved, the most common weaknesses in students' listening comprehension performance are the word-finding difficulties and the expressive language difficulties. The students encounter more problems when answering an open-ended verbal response questions due to their lack of vocabulary knowledge, spelling errors, wrong grammatical structure such as subject-verb agreement ('two house' instead of 'two houses' and the difficulties to understand the construct of English language in audio. The errors made by the students are due to lack of listening skills and carelessness when they wrote the answer most probably because they cannot devote their minds in two situation at one time, which are listening and writing. This finding of the current study are similar to (Newman, 2010) who found students' listening comprehension are poorer when it was measured using an open-ended verbal response format.

The most common difficulties faces by students in their speaking test are the interference with L1. They tend to add the words 'lah' or 'kan' at the end of the conversation and lack of confidence to express their ideas in English right in front of the examiners and friends. Vocabulary weaknesses are part of the problems facing by them as these become the barrier for them to deliver all the contents that they have in their minds. These findings is in agreement with Fatma's (2014) findings which showed a high percentage of students' difficulties in speaking is mainly relied on their mother tongue (Turkish), lack of confidence, afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, poor pronunciation and cannot find the correct word at the time of speaking.

The mean score of English language achievement for Science & Technology students is slightly higher than Social Science students in their English language achievement test. Nevertheless there is no significant difference in students' English language achievement between Social Science students and Science & Technology students

Contrary to the expectation, Science & Technology students overcome Social Science students in English language achievement test even though there is no significant difference between them. This is due to the fact that

Science & Technology students are selected to enter the programme based on their excellent academic performance. From the research, it was determined that there is a significant difference between students' social economics status (SES) and English Language achievement tests and in all aspects of basic English skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field.

### ***6.3. The Relationship between Students' Motivation and Attitude towards the English Language Achievement***

The findings from this study revealed that students who are involved in this study have a moderately high level of motivation and they have a moderate level of attitude towards the learning of English language. However, there is a low correlation between students' motivation towards the learning of English language and their English language achievement tests. The students have a moderate level of learning attitude towards English language and the study depicts that there is a moderately low correlation between students' attitude and English language achievement tests. These indicate that as a whole, both Social Science students and Science & Technology students are highly motivated to be competent in the language. They realized the importance of English for their future career, self-development and the need for the country to ensure the survival of nation in the competitive world. However, high motivation and positive attitude only are not enough to obtain an excellent English language achievement among students as the two findings below further support the idea of the statement.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study has discussed on students' motivation and attitude towards the learning of English language; students' English language achievement (listening, speaking, reading and writing); and the relationship between students' motivation and attitude towards their English language achievement. The research found that students are being more motivated to learn English through integrative motivation as compared to instrumental motivation and personal motivation. Students who are involved in this study have a moderate level of learning attitude and they like to learn English through songs.

The English language achievement indicates that students score higher marks in speaking followed by listening, writing and reading. There is no significant difference between male students and female students toward their English language achievement and same goes to Science Social and Science & Technology students. However, the findings reveal that students from high SES obtained higher scores in their English language achievement and all of the components (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

## **8. Recommendation**

Besides motivation and attitude, there must be other factors that contribute to the successful of English language achievement since the results of these two elements do not have a very strong relationship with the dependent variable. Thus, future research should be conducted to investigate more factors that have the relationship with students' English language achievement such as family background, parenting style and involvement, single parents, poverty, classroom management, school activities, reading habits, vocabulary enlargement, speaking and listening activities, writing clinic etc. According to Yvonne and Gurnam (2013) motivation, attitudes and anxiety are necessary for second language learning nevertheless, students' perception, belief, feelings and behaviors are also depend on the uniqueness of the language learning process.

Motivation in this study is focus more on the adaptation of Gardner & Lambert (1972) under the three level of motivation such as instrumental motivation, integrative motivation. Personal motivation or also known as

developmental motivation is adapted from Cooper and Fisherman (1977). In future investigations it might be possible to study other types of motivation such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to determine the success for language learners.

Findings for research objective 2 reveal that the students have a moderate level of learning attitude. Two items that show the highest mean scores for students' attitude towards the learning of English are (i) they have high interest in listening to the English song or watch a movie and make an effort to understand the language; and (ii) they have a desire to speak English very well. Therefore this finding gives lecturers ideas to make their teaching style more interesting to the students by inserting some of the English songs in their lesson plan. According to Millington (2011) songs can be used as a valuable teaching and learning tools because they are enjoyable; help to improve students listening skills and pronunciation; and useful for teaching vocabulary and sentence structures.

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