

# Attitudes and Motivation of Second Language Learners: Particular Reference to Second Year Students of Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages in Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

I. Weerakoon<sup>1\*</sup> and R. Hettiarachchi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of English Language Teaching, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, P.O. Box 02, Belihuloya 70140, Sri Lanka.*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Mass Media Studies, Sripalee Campus, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.*

\*Correspondence: [iromi1984@gmail.com](mailto:iromi1984@gmail.com)

ARS 2015

The competence in English language has now become an inevitable key to succeed in any scenario since it has become a pre-eminent international language today. Having learnt this phenomenon, the government had taken several steps to make English a compulsory subject in schools from grade three onwards and now most of the higher education institutes and universities have introduced English as a subject and most of them conduct their study programs in the medium of English. However, in spite of the great efforts exerted in the universities to teach English as a second language, one can hardly come across undergraduates fluent in English. In Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL) as well, most of the undergraduates' performances in the examinations raise serious questions on their English knowledge. The author assumes that even though many factors affect the second language learning, the undergraduates' attitudes and motivation play a major role in determining second language learning. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the attitudes and motivation of second-year students of Faculty of Social Science and Language (FSSL) in SUSL towards learning English. It also attempted to examine the relationship between undergraduates' attitudes and the grades they earned and the attitudes and the departments into which they are attached. In addition, it explored the undergraduates' overall motivation, motivation orientation levels, and looked into the correlations between the undergraduates' motivation with respect to their grades and departments. The study was carried out with hundred and ten second-year undergraduates at FSSL in SUSL using a survey designed on a five-point likert-scale. Informal interviews and classroom observations were also used to gather data. The data collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation procedures. The study achieved its objectives by ascertaining that almost seventy percent undergraduates possess positive attitudes and high motivation towards learning English. The study also revealed that the undergraduates' attitudes and motivation do not differ in terms of the grades they earned and the departments they attached in to. However the study recommends taking necessary implementation to make better attitudes and create high motivation in language learners and enhance the quality of graduates in Sri Lanka by building their competency in English language.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, motivation, motivation orientation, second language learners