Unveiling Motivational Factors in English Language Learning:

A Study of Intermediate School Students in Basra

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Abstract:

The study investigates the factors influencing English language learning motivation among first intermediate students (ages 13-15) in Basra City, Iraq, and the strategies that the parents follow to motivate their children to study the English language. Conducted during the academic year 2022-2023, the researcher employed a mixed-method approach, including an online questionnaire distributed to 330 students and in-depth interviews with a selected group of the student's parents. The quantitative analysis of the questionnaire revealed a low level of interest in learning English among students, with low confidence in language skills, and hence students suffer from a lack of interest in the English language and difficulty in their language skills. This phenomenon can be described by the term "poor English language skills" or "linguistic retardation." Key factors influencing motivation included student attitude toward learning English, teaching methodologies, classroom environments, lack of practice, and parental and teacher encouragement. Qualitative analysis of the interview highlighted that the parents' personal experiences with English learning varied and they tended to be difficult. Interviews also uncover the strategies that the parents used to motivate their children to study English. According to the survey, parents use three main styles to motivate their children to study English which are the Reward System, Verbal Encouragement, and Constant Explanation of the importance of the language in daily and future life. The study highlights the importance of providing a stimulating and supportive educational environment for learning English in intermediate schools besides the parents' continuous support and encouragement for their children to achieve success in this field. The study extends the application of Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Learning to Iraq, offering insights into the unique socio-cultural dynamics of Basra City. The findings suggest a need for comprehensive curriculum reform and resource enhancement at schools and underline the

importance of family involvement in the language learning process. This research might contribute to the understanding of language learning motivations and provide valuable implications for educators and policymakers in Iraq and similar contexts .

Keywords: English Language Learning, Student Motivation, Public Schools, Basra City, Socio-Educational Model.

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الكشف عن العوامل المحفزة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية
دراسة عن طلاب المدارس المتوسطة في البصرة

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الملخص:

تتناول الدراسة عوامل تأثير الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب الصف الأول المتوسط (بين ١٣ و١٥ عامًا) في مدينة البصرة في العراق، والاستراتيجيات التي يتبعها الآباء لتحفيز أبنائهم على دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية. أُجريت الدراسة خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٣، واستخدمت منهجية البحث المختلطة، بما في ذلك استبيانًا إلكترونيًا تم توزيعه على ٣٣٠ طالبًا، ومقابلات مع مجموعة مختارة من أولياء أمور الطلاب. أظهر التحليل الكمي للأسئلة الموجهة في الاستبيان مستوى منخفضًا من الاهتمام بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بين الطلاب، مع ضعف الثقة في مهارات اللغة، وبالتالي يعاني الطلاب من نقص في الاهتمام باللغة الإنجليزية وصعوبة في مهاراتهم اللغوية. يمكن وصف هذه الظاهرة بمصطلح "ضعف مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية" أو "التأخر اللغوي". من بين العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر في الدافعية تشمل   وجهة نظر الطالب تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية ومنهجيات التدريس، نقص الممارسة وبيئات الصف، وتشجيع الآباء والمعلمين. أظهر التحليل النوعي للمقابلات أن تجارب الآباء الشخصية في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية تختلف وغالبًا ما تكون صعبة. كما كشفت المقابلات أيضًا عن الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها الآباء لتحفيز أبنائهم على دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية. وفقًا للمسح، يستخدم الآباء ثلاثة أنماط رئيسية لتحفيز أبنائهم على دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية وهي نظام المكافآت، والتشجيع اللفظي، وشرح الأهمية المستمرة للغة الانكليزية في الحياة اليومية والمستقبلية. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أهمية توفير بيئة تعليمية محفزة وداعمة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس المتوسطة بالإضافة إلى دعم الآباء المستمر والتشجيع على أبنائهم لتحقيق النجاح في هذا المجال. توسعت الدراسة في تطبيق نموذج غاردنر للتعلم اللغة الثانية الاجتماعي التعليمي إلى العراق، مما يقدم رؤى حول الديناميات الاجتماعية والثقافية الفريدة في مدينة البصرة. تشير النتائج إلى الحاجة إلى تطوير المناهج بما يناسب الطالب و مراعاة اختلاف المستويات بين الطلبة وتعزيزذلك في المدارس وتؤكد أهمية مشاركة الأسرة في عملية تعلم اللغة.

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يمكن أن يسهم هذا البحث في فهم دوافع تعلم اللغات وتقديم توصيات قيمة للمربين وصناع السياسات التعليمية في العراق وسياقات مماثلة

الكلمات المفتاحية:(تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، دافعية الطلاب، المدارس العامة، مدينة البصرة، النموذج الاجتماعي التعليمي).

1. Introduction

English is considered a lingua-franca because it is used in more than fifty countries around the world and is spoken by more than 300 million people worldwide. Being able to speak English enables you to communicate with native English speakers because it is the most common language in the world. In the dynamic landscape of global communication and interconnectedness, the mastery of the English language stands as a pivotal asset for individuals and nations alike. For students in Basra City, Iraq, English proficiency not only opens doors to a world of knowledge but also empowers them to engage with an increasingly diverse and globalized society. However, the journey to attaining proficiency in a second language is fraught with challenges, particularly for those in the first intermediate stage, aged 13-15. The city of Basra, which is located in southern Iraq on the Shatt al-Arab River, comprises both public and private schools. As a teacher with more than 15 years of experience, the researcher has an interest in knowing more and more about English language learning. From this, it becomes evident that the motivations, struggles, and achievements of the students transcend the boundaries of classroom challenges. This study, conducted during the academic year 2022-2023, seeks to explore the factors that influence English language motivation among first-intermediate students and the strategies that parents follow to motivate their children.

In general, students face unique challenges and opportunities that can be shaped by their educational environments. The coexistence of public and private schools provides a rich context for investigation, reflecting the varied access to resources, teaching methodologies, and extracurricular support .The primary focus of this research lies in unveiling motivational factors in English language learning recognizing that these foundational issues are critical in language acquisition. By narrowing the scope to these essential competencies, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence students' love for learning the English language. Through the administration of questionnaires and interviews, this study analyzes the intricate interplay of various factors, including teaching methods, classroom environment,

parental involvement, and personal motivation, in shaping students' attitudes toward English language learning. The findings of this research are expected to shed light on the challenges faced by these young learners and provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to enhance the English language education experience in Basra City. Consequently, the study aims to uncover the underlying motivations that drive students' love for learning English and to contribute to the ongoing discourse on language education in a region such as Basra with its socio-cultural diversity.

2. Research Questions

The goal of the study is to recognize the following questions:

1. What are the main factors that contribute to shaping the motivation and enthusiasm for learning the English language among first-intermediate students?

2. What strategies do parents employ to support and encourage their children in their English language studies?

3. Research Objectives

The study is designed to accomplish the following objectives

1. Identify and analyze the multifaceted factors influencing the motivation and passion for learning the English language among first intermediate students.
2. Investigate and delineate the diverse methods and approaches utilized by parents to facilitate and inspire their children's engagement with English language learning**.**

4. Hypotheses

The study presumes the following

1. Students' motivation for learning the English language is significantly influenced by factors such as teaching methods and classroom environment.

2. Parents use various motivational strategies to boost their children's motivation to study English intermediate schools in the center of Basra City.

5. Significance of the Study

In adolescence, motivation is of special importance as students face social pressures and high academic expectations. Effective motivation can help develop critical thinking skills, mental flexibility, and the ability to deal with failure as part of our life. Thus, the

importance of the study lies in the importance of its subject, which is grasping the factors that affect the learning motivation among students. Understanding the factors that influence students' motivation to learn English can inform educators and policymakers about strategies to enhance language education. Additionally, its importance lies in the importance of its results to teachers, school leaders, educational supervisors, and the education administration in the region as well as improving student learning outcomes and improving educational outcomes. It may lead to the development of more effective teaching methods and curriculum adjustments. Additionally, the study can support teachers and students alike in schools in Basra City. It may help identify areas where additional resources or reforms are needed. This may lead to the development of programs and initiatives to foster a more conducive learning environment and lead to the implementation of more engaging and interactive teaching practices. Additionally, Policymakers can use the results to make informed decisions regarding language education policies and initiatives aimed at improving students' English language proficiency. It also may contribute to the existing body of literature on language education and motivation, especially within the context of Basra City by providing a valuable resource for future research in the field.
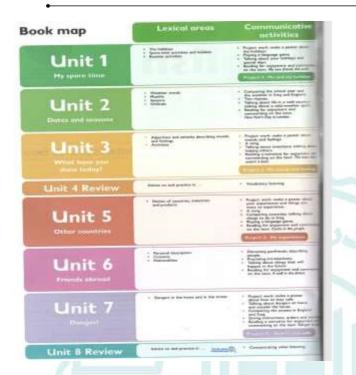
6. English Curriculum for First Intermediate

The English language curriculum for first intermediate students in schools in Iraq *(English for Iraq)* is intended for students between the ages of 13-15 . The curriculum consists of two books: the *Student's Book* and the *Activity Book*. The Student Book includes eight units divided into four units for the first semester and the other four for the second semester. Each unit in the book includes many skills, such as intensive grammar rules, written aspects, and literary aspects which sometimes have more than two in the same unit, and many new vocabularies. The curriculum follows the following strategy: each three units is followed by a fourth unit as a review of them. However, the fourth unit may not be devoid of the written and literary aspects and some new vocabulary that the student must memorize to succeed in the exam. The English language book for the first intermediate grade was updated periodically, and the picture below is the contents of the Student's Book, updated in the year 2022-2023. The curriculum aims for

1. the student to possess the four basic language skills, and to

2. provide the student with an appropriate amount of language vocabulary and word construction by linking them to language rules and grammar through teaching language tenses and ways to use them.

3. to acquaint the student with human and cultural knowledge by teaching the literary aspects, such as Storytime and other enrichment literature.

4. Training the student to practice what he has learned and providing him with high values.

It is worth noting that the book is provided with a CD so that the student can listen to the material from a native speaker of the language.

The book map of the Student's Book for the 1ˢᵗ intermediate in Iraq

7. The Limitations of the Study:

The limitations of this study are as follows:

Sample: 330 students from the first intermediate stage and some parents.

Location: Six schools were selected to conduct the study in the center of Basra.

Period: academic year 2022-2023 AD.

Research method: (mixed methods)using an online questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data.

8. The Population and Sample Selection

In this study, the target population covers all the students of the first intermediate schools in Basrah Center (= 106,207) male and female students. This number is taken from the statistics department/Educational Preparation in the Basrah Education Directorate on 7/4/2022 for statistical purposes. The following table explains in detail

the population of the study, which involves the public and private secondary schools in the center of Basrah:

Type of Schools	Schools of Girls	School of Boys	No. of Schools	No. of students
Private	58	68	126	51,007
Public	66	48	114	55,200
Total	124	116	240	106,207

The Population of the Study

To understand the motivational factors influencing English language learning among first intermediate students in Basra, a strategic approach was adopted in determining the sample size and selection for this study. Putting in mind the diversity and the varying numbers of public and private schools within the city center, a total of 330 students were chosen to participate in this research. Within each chosen school, students were selected through a random sampling technique. This technique is required for highly homogenous populations to ensure that each individual has the same opportunity to be included in the study (Bhardwaj, 2019; Acharya, et al,2013). This method is crucial in minimizing selection bias and enhancing the reliability of our findings. To ensure a comprehensive representation, the schools were selected based on a set of criteria including geographical location, size, and demographic diversity. This approach aims to provide a broad perspective on the English language learning experiences in both public and private school environments.

9. Ethical Considerations

In this study, informed consent was obtained from both the students and their parents. The confidentiality and privacy of the participants are of utmost importance and have been considered carefully throughout the study. This study is conducted in some schools in Basrah, and data collection requires access to students and their parents. The online questionnaire is distributed to students after obtaining the full approval of the students and the school administration. The researcher found the parent-teacher conference, which is held periodically every semester, a golden opportunity to meet parents face-to-face and obtain their informed consent. The researcher asked questions related to the most general obstacles that parents face in teaching their children and the most important strategies that parents follow in teaching their children the English

language. The researcher is keen to obtain the initial consent of the participants before starting the study procedures. All the participants show informed consent and are welcome for inclusion before engaging in the study. Moreover, confidentiality is maintained by using pseudonyms for the parents and the students. This process aims to ensure that the conclusions drawn from this study are both statistically significant and reflective.

10. Education in Iraq

Education in Iraq is divided into four main stages: **(a)** the primary stage consists of six stages and begins with the first grade and ends with the sixth grade and lasts six years. The child is registered at the age of six. The student begins studying the same subjects from the first grade to the fourth grade, which are the basic subjects such as the Arabic language, Science, and Mathematics. In 2013, the English language subject was added and it became taught from the first grade of primary school. **(b)**The Intermediate Stage: It comes after the primary stage and consists of three stages (the first intermediate, the second intermediate, and the third intermediate) and each year is divided into two semesters (Alwan, 2004). **(c)**The Preparatory stage is three years of study, the tenth is called the fourth preparatory, the eleventh is called the fifth preparatory, and the twelfth is called the sixth preparatory. After completing these stages, the student has the right to enroll in one of the technology institutes or universities in Iraq which is called the higher education system. **(d)** Higher education: as shown in the figure below is the highest level in the educational system in Iraq and it's, in turn, involves many levels includes institutions such as universities, colleges, polytechnics, and vocational training institutions offering qualifications at different levels and of varying lengths through formal education programs in either on-site, distance, or blended format.(Alwan, 2004; The Comprehensive Guide to Education in Iraq, Sat, 2022).

The Formal Education in Iraq

11. Motivation and Learning

Each of us is motivated for different reasons and the better you understand your motivations the better you can improve yourself. As a concept, motivation is considered one of the most critical issues in educational psychology. It is defined as an internal feeling that prompts the learner to carry out certain behaviors and actions to satisfy specific needs and desires and it cannot be measured directly, but rather it is inferred through observing and analyzing learners' behavior, actions, and interactions with others. Motivation in learning is fundamental for some whys:

(1) Focuses attention
(2) Goals help mobilize resources
(3) Goals facilitate persistence
(4) Goals facilitate accomplishment in life (Sternberg and Williams, 2002.)

Motivation is very much considered a complex phenomenon, with various definitions proposed by researchers across psychology and scientific disciplines. Kleinginna and Kleinginna(1981) introduce diverse statements on motivation which indicate the challenge of providing a straightforward definition for this concept. According to Chandi (2015), motivation can be defined as the process that is supported by self-

interest with two fundamental external and internal elements that allow for creating beneficial habits, storing creative things, and sustaining productive activities in each effort made. As Kaplan and Asor (2001) put it: *"Motivation is associated with the overall behavior within which the individual chooses between alternative goals and means that can be controlled and directed for the sake of a specific goal."* (Kaplan & Asor, 2001). Daniels (2010) states that two critical classifications of motivation that have been identified by Educational Psychology are of utmost importance in the process of learning: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from the learner's desire to learn something because of some motives such as enjoyment, inherent interest, self-fulfilment, and mastery of the subject. However, extrinsic motivation is how to motivate the learners to perform and at the same time to achieve success so that they can accomplish and gain certain results or outcomes. According to Llanga (2019), "Students who are very grade-oriented are extrinsically motivated, whereas students who seem to truly embrace their work and take a genuine interest in it are intrinsically motivated".The learner who is extrinsically motivated refers to the state in which he or she does not always have the desire to carry out some activities and they need another person to encourage them. In such a case, intrinsic factors involve curiosity (the student's interests), involvement (the student's desire to be involved), challenge (finding out the complexity of a subject(s), and social interaction (creating social relations), compliance and recognition (to be publicly acknowledged). intrinsic motivation is naturally found inside all of us and is incredibly powerful in our brains.

In the same vein, intrinsic motivation is the ability to perform easily and quickly for pleasure, do activities, and be an autonomous and competent individual. Positive motivation is the desire to be rewarded and is driven by the individual. While negative motivation is derived from failure. Consequently, good motivation concentrates on commitment(Reeve and Deci, 1996). However, Keller (1987), whose definition describes motivation as the choices individuals make in approaching or avoiding experiences or goals, and the level of effort invested. This definition captures essential traits of motivated individuals, as revealed through literature reviews. Motivated individuals exhibit goal-directed behavior, expressing effort, persistence, and engagement in tasks to achieve their goals(Nicholls,1984). They possess a strong desire for goal attainment, find enjoyment in relevant activities, and display arousal and self-efficacy in pursuit of success. These characteristics encompass cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. Understanding motivation for second language learning is intricate, requiring a nuanced approach beyond single-scale measurement, and reasons alone may not adequately assess

the full spectrum of motivational factors (Debnath, 2005). Thus, in general, intrinsically motivated individuals tend to develop a high desire to learn course information without seeking external rewards or reinforcement.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is the type of motivation in which the learner seeks an external reward like a prize or praise. Individuals who are motivated extrinsically depend mostly on rewards and desirable results to motivate themselves. In this process, the motivation source is external, such as the teacher, school administration, parents, or peers. The learner may accept to learn to please the teacher, parents, or school administration, and to gain their love, encouragement, and appreciation for his achievements, or to obtain material or moral encouragement from them. Peers are also a source of this motivation through the admiration they express (Lei, 2010). Extrinsic motivation refers to individuals' behavior to perform tasks and learn new skills because of external rewards or to avoid punishment. In this case, he\she engages in the behavior not because of the enjoyment or due to the attractiveness or satisfaction, but to get something of value in return or to avoid something unpleasant. Consequently, students who are motivated externally are at a greater risk of performing lower academically than those students who are intrinsically motivated (Afzal, et al., 2010)

12. Gardner's Socio-Educational Model

The socio-educational model is concerned primarily with motivation and factors that support it, and it assumes that other variables such as personality and strategy use can be explained in terms of the motivation construct. According to the socio-educational model, the motivation of an individual to acquire a second language is linked to two categories of variables. One of these is the individual's Attitudes toward the Learning Situation which involves the learning environment that significantly impacts a student's motivation level, an engaging curriculum, well-designed lesson plans, and meaningful assessment methods are likely to enhance motivation compared to a teacher lacking these attributes (Warden & Lin 2000).

In the 1960s, Gardner started the Socio-Educational Model by studying second language learning and how attitudes and motivations affect the process of learning. Although the model started in the 1960s, it still developing and revising. According to Gardner, the nature of the learning context and the learners' learning culture setting in which the learning process happens are the most fundamental factors because of their

strong influence. The Model focuses on four main variables that are pretty much intertwined in second language acquisition and they are

1. Social Melieu(involves the learner's culture and the learning environment)
2. Individual Differences(involve motivation, intelligence aptitude, and anxiety).
3. Second Language Acquisition Context(involves the different contexts of learning).
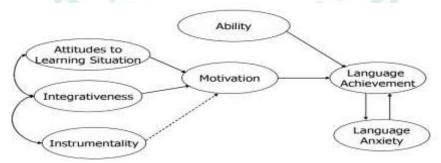4.   The Outcomes include the linguistic and non-linguistic skills and knowledge that the learner has acquired during the learning process.

In 1985 Gardne's model was modified by introducing "integrative motive" as a new concept within the individual differences variable.

He states that "Integrative motive" has two crucial elements and these two are of great importance: attitudes toward the learning situation and integrativeness. The former involves attitudes towards the class environment, reactions to the textbooks, the school environment, the language course, and evaluation of the language teacher. The nature of the learning situation will influence a student's motivation. These two factors are very much related to the human mind. The human mind is an incredibly powerful tool because according to Brain Tracy, 90% of human success lies in our mind. An interesting and skilled teacher with a good command of the language, carefully constructed lesson plans, an exciting curriculum, and successful evaluation procedures will boost higher levels of motivation than a teacher lacking in some of these attributes. Additionally, integrativeness is seen as an interest in the second language group, the learner shows an openness and identification with the target language community and culture. Integrativeness, according to Gardner, is never seen as the learners' desire to become one member of the culture and community but as the learners' intention to talk about the characteristics of another cultural/linguistic group.

  Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) have also identified two reasons for people to learn a different language: integrative motive and instrumental orientation. The first one refers to the ability to relate to the language of a community different than yours and it represents an interchange between "self-concept, attitudes, and motivation".This type of motivation is known as a learner's desire to integrate into the community of the target language. Learners with integrative motivation are interested in the culture and community associated with the language and seek to learn the language to connect with and understand that community better. Instrumental orientation allows the learner to gain something from acquiring the language, for practical reasons, such as in the case of getting a job or enhancing one's education. Gardner emphasized that the two orientations should not be seen as "antagonistic", as they are often positively related to

the acquisition of a second language. (Gardner and Robert,2005). instrumental motivation is reinforced by practical and utilitarian reasons. If the Learners are motivated instrumentally, then they learn a language for specific benefits or practical purposes, such as career advancement, academic requirements, or other tangible rewards(Dornyei, 1994). Verbal behavior, in particular, plays a role, as the child learns that imitating the sounds of the parents provides comfort when they are not around. This gradual adoption of parental characteristics leads to the child's identification with the parents, thus serving as the major motive to learn the first language(Yashima, 2002).

The notion of integrativeness emerged as an extension of a concept put forth by Gardner and Lambert(1972), who suggested a comparable process's significance in second language acquisition. Although not identical to Mowrer's identification concept, it is argued that cultural background, early home experiences, and child-rearing features could make certain individuals more receptive to other ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. This openness could influence the motivation to learn another language. While some individuals might learn a new language to integrate with a different culture (Lambert, 1955), the intention was not for integrativeness, integrative orientation, or integrative motive to imply a desire to become a member of another cultural community but it indicates the individual's openness to adopting features of another cultural or linguistic group. Those who identify strongly with their ethnolinguistic heritage would score low on integrativeness, while those less tied to their ethnicity and interested in other cultures would score high. This interpretation aligns with the longstanding socio-educational model. The socio-educational model is shown schematically in the following figure:

The Socio-Educational Model

Gardner's work acknowledges that motivation in language learning is not just about the task or classroom activities, but also involves a broader social-psychological

perspective, considering how learners view the language's role in their social experiences. The Socio-Educational Model has been influential in guiding how researchers and educators think about language acquisition, especially in understanding the complex interplay between a learner's social experience and their motivation to learn a new language (Dornyei, 1998).

13. Data Collection Methods

Research tools are the means of collecting data to provide strong answers accompanied by evidence to the questions of scientific study or academic scientific research. Achieving the desired objectives of the study requires an effort to access the experiences and opinions of the participants. Two types of methods are employed to consummate this. They include a questionnaire for students and semi-structured interviews with the parents. A questionnaire; is a group of questions asked to individuals to get beneficial information about a specific topic(s)(Roopa and Rani,2012). At the same time, an interview is a vital data-gathering technique for collecting information that involves verbal and nonverbal communication between the interviewer and the interviewee(Fox, 2009).

The researcher prepared an electronic questionnaire format based on the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the research sample. Since the questionnaire measures students' motivation and the parents' strategies used to boost their children's motivation, it has been given the name of the "*Students' Motivation Questionnaire*."The first step that is taken to build the questionnaire is reading and examining the related theories and the updated literature. At the same time, other items are based on the researchers' "experience and intuitiveness" as a teacher practicing the teaching profession for many years. The Google Form is used to facilitate the preparation of the questionnaire. In its initial form, the questionnaire contained 20 items, but after testing the validity and reliability, it settled on 10 items.

The questionnaire begins with a short introduction about the aim of the study. It is mainly divided into two sections. The first section includes demographic information about the student, namely gender, age, and the type of school. The second section is the most important because it is designed to be able to answer the first research question. It includes 10 items and begins with "*the interest in the English language*" and ends with "*the student's wish and desire to learn the language*". All the items in the second section are closed-ended questions. The questionnaire used in this study focused on using a

multiple-choice Likert system to collect data. Questions are designed to provide participants with multiple options to answer each question. Some questions had four options, while others had six or five options, depending on the goal of the question. After collecting responses, the data was analyzed depending on the percentages to assess participants' understanding of the topics presented in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire underwent both initial and final piloting stages, embodying a pivotal process in ensuring its human-centric usability, clarity, and relevance (Dörnyei, 2003). Initially, it was entrusted to three knowledgeable university educators (Asst. Prof. Dr. Juliana Yousif Dawood, College of Translation/University of Basra, Asst. Prof Amal Mehdi Al Behadli, College of Education for Girls/University of Basra, and Prof.Dr.Fatimah Rashid Al Bajalani, Salahaddin University Erbil / Kurdistan Iraq). Their thorough review, encompassing item-by-item scrutiny and insightful feedback on content, led to valuable recommendations regarding wording, item arrangement, and additional suggestions, all meticulously considered. Subsequently, the questionnaire underwent final testing with a small sample of 20 participants from the target population, distinct from the final sample. This final piloting phase aimed to unearth any potential difficulties or ambiguities within the questionnaire, gauge its relevance and clarity, assess response time, and ensure coherence across items. Analysis of participant responses prompted adjustments, including rewording, omission, or modification of certain items to enhance ease of response, thus affirming a human-centered approach to questionnaire development.

On the other hand, the second tool to examine the students' motivation is to interview the student's parents to talk about their experiences and opinions using a semi-structured interview. The interview, which involves "unstructured and structured interview questions," is called semi-structured (Saini,2020). The process allows us to gain insight into the participant's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes toward a specific phenomenon or problem. A semi-structured interview is chosen as the second suitable approach for this study. Some reasons make the researcher choose the interview as one of her research tools. One of these reasons is that the researcher can focus on the topic under study, lead the conversation with the desired goals, and obtain the required valuable information. The most important advantage that the researcher can get is to explore both verbal(words) and nonverbal (e.g., eye contact and facial expression) communication. In addition, the participants can give us feedback and hence provide accurate information.

Furthermore, it is a good way to clarify questions if they are ambiguous to the respondent.

14. Data Analysis and Discussion

The primary objective of this section is to delve into the analysis and interpretation of the data unravel the insights gleaned from the gathered data and engage in a comprehensive discussion regarding their implications

Table (1) Age

Age	Number of Participants	Percentage
13	110	33.3%
14	120	36.4%
15	100	30.3%
Total	330	100%

Table (2) Gender

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage
Male	160	48.5%
Female	170	51.5%
Total	330	100%

Tables (1 and 2) reveal the demographic section of the participants. Age and gender are two key demographic variables that are often used to analyze and understand the characteristics of a population. All the participants are teenagers. From your data, it appears that there are(36.4%) individuals aged 14,(33.3%) aged 13, and (30.3%) aged 15. Regarding gender, it appears that (51.5%) are female and (48.5%) are male. This shows the distribution of males and females within the population across different age groups.

Table (3) Interest in Learning English

Interest Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
Very interested	40	12.1%
Moderately interested	20	6.1%
Slightly interested	120	36.4%
Not interested at all	150	45.5%
Total	330	100%

As shown in Table (3) interest in learning English emerges as a prominent aspect, with the vast majority (45.5%) of students expressing a negative interest, and (36.4%) displaying a slight level of concern and enthusiasm. This data suggests an overall unfavorable attitude toward English language learning among the student population**.** The data indicates that teenagers are not interested in the English language, this may be an indication of several possible factors.

Table (4) Which aspect the students enjoyed the most

Aspect	Number of Participants	Percentage
Reading	70	21.2%
Writing	60	18.2%
Listening	30	9.1%
Speaking	50	15.2%
Grammar	40	12.1%
Vocabulary	80	24.2%
Total	**330**	100%

Table(4) highlights the aspects enjoyed in learning English. It is obvious from the table that vocabulary (24.2%) and reading (21.2%) are the most enjoyable components of the English learning experience. The table also embedded difficulty expressed by the students themselves in other aspects such as listening, writing, and grammar. It appears that the teens have a good interest in learning vocabulary, but have difficulty with writing, reading, and listening skills, this may indicate that there may be a greater emphasis on oral language in the local culture, reflecting a lack of training and education in other skills. The four basic skills should be learned in sequence by the student in school. It appears that there is a major defect occurring in our schools that is a fundamental reason for the weakness in the level of the English language, which is that

most English language teachers neglect, exclude, or ignore the importance of listening and speaking skills and teachers do not use the material recorded on tapes or CDs that was prepared by the curriculum department which involve using language by what is called the Native Speaker, which the student must listen to, especially in the early stages of education to captures the original dialect of the language as much as possible because the language is captured, not taught.

Table (5) Confidence in Learning the English Language

Confidence Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
Very confident	40	12.1%
Moderately confident	80	24.2%
Slightly confident	60	18.2%
Not confident at all	150	45.5%
Total	330	100%

Table(5) reveals that a large number of students (45.5%) feel no confidence at all in their English language which is a serious indicator of the difficulties and obstacles that the first intermediate students face while learning. However, the noteworthy 12.1% who express very confident which is a very small portion, and 18.2% who express slightly confident. These data pinpoint a potential critical educational area and the urgent for need educational support, emphasizing the need for interventions to support and reinforce self-assurance.

Table (6) The prominent Factors that Positively Influence Motivation to Learn English

Factor	Number of Participants	Percentage
Teachers' teaching methods	180	54.5%
Classroom environment	120	36.4%
Parental encouragement	100	30.3%
Friends/Peers	80	24.2%
Media	70	21.2%
Future career prospects	110	33.3%
Total (multiple responses allowed)	456	>100%

Table (6) shows that the most prominent and significant factor that positively influences students' motivation to learn English is the teachers' teaching methods

(54.5%). Data also reveals that the classroom environment (36.4%) is another essential and substantial factor in shaping students' motivation. Additionally, parental encouragement (30.3%) is also a critical positive factor. The findings emphasize the pivotal roles of pedagogical strategies, classroom dynamics, and parental encouragement in positively influencing students' overall learning experiences and motivation.

Table (7) The Effectiveness of School Resources

Response	Number of Participants	Percentage
Yes, they are adequate	60	18.2%
Somewhat adequate	120	36.4%
Not adequate	150	45.5%
Total	330	100%

The data presented in Table (7) above reveals that a substantial majority of participants, comprising(45.5%) apprehend the school resources for learning English as not adequate, and (36.4%) feel that they are somewhat adequate. This suggests a negative overall tendency toward the available resources. On the other hand, (18.2%) of the participants feel that the resources are effective and adequate and this indicates potential shortcomings or deficiencies. The less satisfaction with school resources increased the challenges of learning the English language.

Table (8) Suggestions to Improve Motivation

Suggested Improvement	Number of Participants	Percentage
More interactive classroom activities	160	48.5%
More encouragement from teachers/parents	140	42.4%
Opportunities to use English in real-life	100	30.3%
Additional support resources	120	36.4%
others	10	3.0%
Total (multiple responses allowed)	530	>100%

Table(8) uncovers that interactive classroom activities (48.5%) and more encouragement from teachers/parents (42.4%) emerge as essential areas for increasing and enhancing students' motivation to learn language. This data reflects a desire among students for more engaging learning methods and more encouragement from teachers/parents, providing valuable guidance for educational interventions. One of the challenges encompasses broader reflections on English learning journeys, encompassing

the use of English outside school, future aspirations linked to language skills, and satisfaction with school resources. Participants expressed a desire for increased real-world application of English, tying language proficiency to future aspirations. Overall, the analysis presents a nuanced understanding of students' perspectives, providing valuable insights for educational enhancements and strategies to address challenges in English language learning.

Table (9) Frequency of Using English Outside School

Frequency	Number of Participants	Percentage
Daily	30	9.1%
Sometimes a week	80	24.2%
Rarely	100	30.3%
Never	120	36.4%
Total	330	100%

Table(9) reveals that (9.1%) of the students use English daily which represents the lowest percentage in the table and (36.4%) of them never use English which is the highest percentage. The data reflects the lack of practical use of language.

Table (10) Participation in English-Related Extracurricular Activities

Participation	Number of Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	3.03%
No	320	96.96%
Total	330	100%

Table (10) uncovers a very critical issue i.e. their participation in extracurricular activities in the English language whereas the vast majority (96.96%) do not participate or do not have the opportunity to participate while only (3.03%) have a chance to participate which is a very low percentage. This indicates that the students lack these activities which might negatively influence their level of learning the English language.

Table (11) Perceived Difficulty of Learning English Compared to Other Subjects

Difficulty Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
Much easier	20	6.1%
Somewhat easier	50	15.2%
About the same	40	12.1%
Somewhat more difficult	70	21.2%
Much more difficult	150	45.5%
Total	330	100%

Table (11) reveals that the majority of the students suffer from difficulty in the English language whereas 45.5% perceive that the English language is much more difficult than other school subjects and 21.2% of them feel that it is somewhat more difficult. The table uncovers that most students suffer from difficulty in learning English. Comparing the English language as a school subject with the other school subjects, it is obvious that they find it the more difficult one perhaps because most of them do not have a basic background such as a mental dictionary of vocabulary and the basics of the English language. The comparison with other subjects revealed that while English is seen as less enjoyable, it is also perceived as more challenging, especially in the four skills. This nuanced perspective provides insights into students' attitudes toward different academic subjects.

Table (12) Students' wish and desire to improve their language

Student's Desire	Number of Participants	Percentage
Increased significantly	120	36.4%
Increased slightly	100	30.3%
Remained the same	80	24.2%
Decreased slightly	20	6.1%
Decreased significantly	10	3.0%
Total	330	100%

Table (12) indicates that the vast majority of the students (36.4%) wish to improve their level of language level significantly and (30.3%)of them have the desire to improve their English slightly. This is an indicator of the fact that the students want to improve themselves. These tables represent the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire responses related to English language learning experiences and factors influencing motivation among students in Basra City's intermediate schools. Each table shows the distribution of responses for the specific questions, providing a clear overview of the students' perspectives-and-experiences which indicate the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and the diverse factors influencing students' perceptions in Basra

City. The impact of the school environment emerges as a prominent theme, with students citing the influence of school resources and peer interaction The analysis of the data shows that there is a correlation between the availability of educational tools and a positive learning atmosphere. Effective teaching methods play a crucial role. The factors that affect the student's motivation are shown in the following figure:

The Key Factors that Affect the Motivation and Enthusiasm of First-Intermediate Students:

Student Attitude Towards Learning English	Teacher and Parental Influence	Lack of Practice	lesson Environment	Teaching Method

 Students expressed that they are challenged in learning the English language and they face some fundamental difficulties. Challenges in learning English were also identified, with a recurring theme of difficulty in writing and a lack of opportunities for practice outside the classroom. This underscores the potential for the need for increased real-world application opportunities.

On the other hand, the qualitative analysis of responses to the ten interview questions reveals key themes and patterns in students' experiences with English learning. In exploring personal experiences, an interview with ten parents revealed that there are basic obstacles facing the students in developing their English language, which is as follows.

1. **The Educational Level of the Parents**: All those interviewed 100% agree that one of the most critical obstacles in learning the English language is, what the researcher calls, The Intergenerational Educational Disadvantage. Parents who have a good education or high academic achievements help their children study the language easily while those who don't or those whose educational achievements they obtained don't qualify them to teach their children. As one of the participants says:

 P1": *I am a housewife and my husband is a worker and we have five children. My eldest daughter is in the sixth grade. I don't know how to read English and neither does the father and consequently, we don't teach our son. Sometimes his older sister teaches*

him some of what she knows and other times we are obligated to hire a specialized teacher. So our family struggles with the English language"

2. The Periodic updating of the Curriculum: Most of the parents(nine out of ten) who were interviewed also agreed that the more educational curricula are updated, the more difficult they become because the new curriculum needs new understanding and educational methods. One of the interviewees who works as a teacher says:
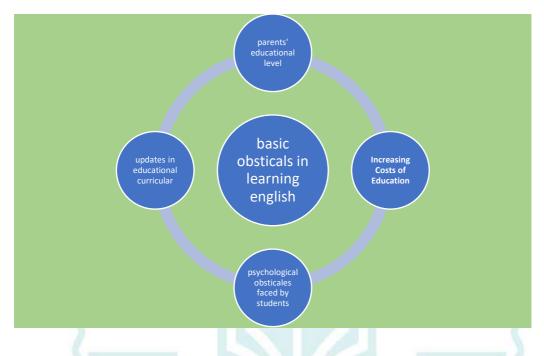
P4:*I'm a teacher and I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Geography, but I face a lot of difficulty in teaching my daughter the English language curriculum, especially after updating the book the year before. After all, it becomes more difficult and directed to more complex and difficult because it involves new English grammar tenses and new literature components.*

3. Educational Cost Conditioning: Most interviewees declared that studying has become expensive. Nine out of ten declare that the economic situation does not help in purchasing booklets related to the curriculum and does not allow sending their children to good private schools or hiring specialized teachers. This means that the cost of obtaining an education is increasing over time, similar to how consumer prices rise due to inflation in the economy. One of the parents works as a service employee in the Ministry of Health says:

P7: "*The situation is really complicated, I am a father of three children, all of them are students at school, and every day there seems to be something new that they need. They need school clothes, stationery, and textbooks, and when the books are updated, we have to buy them with our own money because the school does not provide them directly. This adds huge additional costs to the family, and sometimes it becomes very difficult*"

4. **Language Learning Anxiety**: The vast majority of the interviewees opine that their children in all stages face psychological challenges and they fear speaking the English language and do not even think about practicing the English language at all because they basically have very weak levels and do not have any significant linguistic reserve. This refers to feelings of apprehension or nervousness that individuals experience when learning or using a second language. In the context provided, children may experience language learning anxiety due to their lack of confidence in using English, which can impede their ability to effectively learn and practice the language. Additionally, the unsuitable home environment may contribute to feelings of anxiety or discomfort when

attempting to use English outside of the classroom. These factors indicate major challenges facing parents in developing their children's English language skills in Basra.

Obstacles Facing Students Learning Language in Intermediate School

Regarding the ways that parents utilize to motivate their children, the interviewees agree there are three emerging themes and they are as follows

1. **The Reward System**: All the participants agree that they follow a reward system with their children and that every time the student finishes his studies, he is rewarded by the mother and father with something new. One of the participants says: **P3**: "*I think it's important to give children an extra incentive to achieve success in their lives. So, when they make an extra effort or achieve an important goal, I would consider offering a material reward. For example, if they study hard and get good grades, I might give them a gift or take them out for a meal at a restaurant they love.*"

   It appears that all the parents rely on this style. However, although this style is useful in some cases, it may have some drawbacks. It may lead children to rely on material rewards to do the required work instead of developing internal motivation, and it may also reduce their appreciation for the effort they put in without rewards.

It may also affect the development of internal values and principles in the child if it is not used wisely and in balance while strengthening internal values and principles.

2. **Linguistic Cheerleading**: Parents agree that besides the reward system, they also encourage and support their children verbally. Parents can encourage their children by providing their children with emotional and moral support and motivating them to achieve excellence in the English language. This term emphasizes the role of parents in cheering on their children, offering emotional and moral support, and motivating them to strive for excellence in mastering English. One of the participants shared with us his experience and says
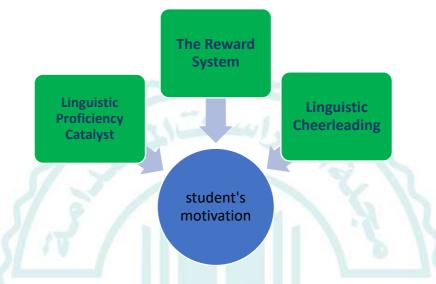
P10: *"I believe that positive praise and encouragement play an important role in motivating my children to achieve their goals, especially in studying English. When they make a noticeable effort to learn, I always make sure to give adequate praise and encouragement for their efforts. For example, I praise their diligent effort when they complete their homework accurately or when they get good grades on tests. I also try to always be supportive and understanding, even in difficult situations, and encourage them to persevere and continually improve in their educational journey."*

It seems that using verbal encouragement and praising children's efforts in studying English indicates the parents' desire to enhance their confidence and positivity towards learning the language. This also reflects the emotional support that parents provide to their children, which helps them achieve progress and success in this field.

3. **Linguistic Proficiency Catalyst** by highlighting the importance of the English language in career life. The majority of the interview explains the importance of mastering the English language in the modern era, and how it opens doors to global employment and educational opportunities. One of the mothers explains

P7:*" I always explain to my daughter that English is not just a school subject, but a tool that enables her to communicate with the entire world. Through social media, she can interact with people from different backgrounds and understand diverse cultures. Also, learning English can open up many opportunities for her in the future, whether in study or in the field of work"*.

Parents' use of explaining the importance of the English language in daily life, in using social media, and in life in general, indicates their desire to guide their children towards understanding the importance of acquiring this language in the modern world. This also reflects their desire to expand their future horizons and

opportunities by mastering a global language like English, and how it can contribute to their success in multiple fields such as education, work, social communication, and general culture.

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        ┌──────────────┐
        │  The Reward  │
        │    System    │
        └──────────────┘
┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
│  Linguistic  │              │  Linguistic  │
│  Proficiency │              │ Cheerleading │
│   Catalyst   │              │              │
└──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
            ╲      ↓      ╱
             (student's
              motivation)
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Ways of motivating children to study the English language

The interview reveals that all the parents agree that one of the most important issues that motivate students to learn in general and learning English, in particular, is the Reward System. School-age students are more likely to be motivated by different things than youths and the reward system should be age-appropriate. Children at this age tend to react to more materialistic rewards such as using a token system or paper money to play, which they can use to obtain a greater reward. Once the child becomes a teenager, he or she may benefit from more complex reward systems such as receiving larger rewards or more freedoms.

The Reward System for children is a style used by parents to modify and discipline the child's behavior or to replace negative behaviors with positive ones. Parents use the reward system for their children when they excel academically to motivate them and enhance their desire to work hard and achieve academic achievement. This system can be a motivational tool for children to work hard and achieve success in their studies. Additionally, encouragement and support appear as another essential theme in motivating students in the learning process in general and learning English in particular. According to them when a child receives, encouragement, positive feedback, and

rewards for making a good choice, he or she will naturally gravitate toward those behaviors again. Most parents agree that highlighting and explaining the importance of English as a global language is one of the tools that they use to motivate students. Eight out of ten agree that from time to time they explain the importance of mastering the English language in the modern era, and how it opens doors to global employment and educational opportunities. The data also delves into external influences, including parental and community support. This aligns with the questionnaire responses in which students noted that encouragement from parents positively motivates them to learn English, showcasing the significance of familial involvement in educational pursuits.

15. Conclusion

According to the results collected, it is observed that students in the first intermediate grade face great challenges in learning the English language, as they see it as more difficult than other lessons. This sense of difficulty reduces their confidence in using English, clouding their ability to apply their language skills outside the classroom. The lack of use of English outside of school is also considered a factor influencing students' perception of the difficulty of the subject inside school. This phenomenon can be described by the term "poor English language skills" or "linguistic retardation." The role of parents in encouraging children to study English plays an important role, no less important than the role of the teacher and the classroom environment. As for motivational factors, the results showed that the student's attitude, lesson environment, teaching method, the role of the teacher, and encouragement from parents are considered among the main factors that affect students' motivation to study and develop their skills. Therefore, it is recommended to adopt teaching strategies that focus on improving students' confidence and promoting English language practice outside the classroom, in addition to training teachers in effective teaching techniques and encouraging the role of parents in supporting students' interest in English....

The qualitative analysis of the interview responses further enriched these findings. Parents' personal experiences with English learning vary and they tend to be difficult. Based on the interview conducted by the researcher with ten parents, the following points were concluded: The poor academic level of some parents hinders their ability to help their children study the English language, as they have difficulty teaching it or even understanding it and this could be termed as "intergenerational educational disparity". Furthermore, continuous and intense updating of school curricula puts economic and scientific pressure on parents, as this requires additional resources and additional costs, in

addition to the need for a deeper understanding of educational materials to be able to help their children. These factors interact with each other and are related to each other, as the poor educational level of the parents can comprehensively affect the economic and educational ability of the family. In general, this analysis shows that there are several challenges that parents face in helping their children study the English language, and that require comprehensive solutions aimed at improving the level of education and providing the necessary support to families.

Based on the results collected from this study, it appears that parents rely on three basic strategies to motivate their children to learn English. The first strategy is to use the rewards system, where parents tend to provide material rewards to their children, such as giving them the mobile phone that was taken from them during the exam period, or giving them some money. The second strategy that parents follow is verbal motivation, where they use motivational and positive words to support and encourage their children, which helps build their self-confidence and motivate them to learn. The third strategy is a constant reminder of the importance of the English language and the necessity of learning it. This is done by talking about the future benefits of using English and emphasizing its importance in everyday life and the job market. Based on these results, it can be said that parents play a vital role in motivating and supporting their children in the English language learning journey, and they find the use of material rewards, verbal motivation, and constant reminders effective methods to achieve this. Based on the findings mentioned above, it could be stated that hypotheses no.1 and 2 are thus accepted. The researcher concludes that: Motivation in learning reflects the energy and will that an individual exerts to achieve success and achieve his educational goals. It is not just an internal force that moves an individual to learn, but it is also an interaction with external factors such as available stimuli and the educational environment. In addition, motivation in learning includes the emotions and feelings that influence an individual's response to learning and motivation.

16. Recommendations

The study recommends some recommendations that might contribute to motivating students, increasing their interest in the English language, and achieving better learning results:

1. Developing motivational programs such as English writing and speaking competitions to attract students' interest.

2. Using e-learning technologies and educational applications to make learning fun and interactive and conducting periodic assessments of students' levels.

3. Regularly organize workshops and seminars on the importance of English in daily life and job opportunities.

4. Organizing training courses for teachers to improve their skills in teaching English.

5. Providing facilities and resources such as libraries, laboratories, and modern technology to enhance English language learning.

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