



The Relationship Between Attitude and Motivation in English Language Learning Behavior of North Bangkok University Students

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Abstract

Background and Aims: In the modern globalized world, English language proficiency stands as a vital skill. Students in Thailand continue to demonstrate poor English skills despite sustained educational advancements because their academic results and career potential suffer from this deficiency. To improve classroom teaching and student performance, we must understand the psychological and behavioral elements that affect English language acquisition. The research aimed to understand the attitudes of North Bangkok University students towards learning English, while also examining their motivation to learn the language, analyzing their learning behavior, and exploring how these elements interact.

Methodology: The research study selected a sample of 282 students from the ENG102 course at North Bangkok University using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Researchers compiled data through a validated questionnaire, which included sections about learners' attitudes as well as their motivation and language learning habits. The statistical analysis consisted of calculating the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results: The research uncovered high levels across students' attitudes, motivation, and English language learning behavior. Students displayed slightly higher motivation (mean = 4.39) compared to attitude (mean = 4.33), while their learning behavior exhibited a comparable level of performance (mean = 4.41). Research identified a significantly strong positive relationship ($r = .753$, $p < .01$) between attitude and motivation in English language learning behavior, while motivation displayed the highest correlation ($r = .853$).

Conclusion: Research findings indicate that learning behavior in English language acquisition is heavily influenced by both attitude and motivation levels. When students develop intrinsic motivation together with positive attitudes toward English, it leads to better outcomes in learning the language. The results provide important information that curriculum developers and educators can use to enhance English teaching methods at Thai universities.

Keywords: Attitude; Motivation; English Language Learning Behavior

Introduction

English language proficiency is increasingly vital in Thai education and the Thai professional world, providing essential skills for global participation, career, and international business engagement. Thailand is striving to promote English language teaching and learning in all aspects, such as the concept of Communicative Language Teaching. Integrated language learning (The Whole Language Approach) has been around for over two decades. However, success in using English for communication has not been fully realized, as evident from the EF English Proficiency Index 2018. In 2018, Thailand ranked 64th out of 88 non-native English-speaking countries, with an average score of 48.54, placing it in the "Low proficiency" group. This ranking is among the lowest in Asia, positioning Thailand at a similar level to Myanmar and Cambodia (Naruephonjirakul and Saenboonwet, 2019). In the 21st century, English serves as a global language for international communication. Therefore, English is a crucial communication tool that enables people who speak different languages to interact, exchanging information and knowledge across various dimensions such as economics, society, culture, technology, and education. Consequently, English is a significant language skill that can enhance opportunities for academic and professional competition





Phromdam *et al.*, 2020: 65). English is a foreign language that many countries prioritize and have incorporated into their education systems. Thailand has been teaching English as a foreign language as a core subject, aiming to develop all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to ensure learners acquire effective English language proficiency. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to develop learners' English language skills to be on par with international standards Plabpla *et al.*, 2017: 230-231).

However, the current issue of Thai people's English language proficiency is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed. It has been observed that the English language ability of Thai people has remained at a considerably low level for a long time without significant improvement or resolution Niratsai, 2018: 140), and current trends indicate a decline. This downward trend in Thai students' English proficiency may negatively impact their higher education and, more importantly, hinder the country's future development. This is because Thai people may not be able to use English effectively for communication or as a tool to acquire knowledge at the same pace as other nations. This is supported by the findings of a survey on English language skills of students in 44 countries worldwide by the Education First institute, which revealed that Thai students ranked 42nd, placing them in a group with significantly below-standard English skills. Their scores were lower than many other ASEAN countries, including Cambodia (41st), Vietnam (39th), Malaysia (9th), as well as South Korea (13th), Taiwan (25th), China (29th), India (30th), and Indonesia (34th) Nanthasutsaweang, 2020). Furthermore, the survey results from the English language institute EF revealed that Thailand's English proficiency (EF Proficiency Index) in the year 2023 ranked 101st out of 113 countries worldwide and 21st out of 23 countries in Asia, indicating a very low level of English proficiency (Education First, 2023). These results reflect a failure in the management of English language teaching and learning in Thailand. Consequently, the Thai government has set a goal to develop the English language potential of Thai students, aiming for them to become proficient in English within the next 20 years. This is to prepare Thai workers to compete in the labor market with neighboring countries, especially as Thailand has become part of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). In 2015, it became crucial for Thai students and all Thai people to learn English as a tool for communication with people from various countries, particularly the member states of ASEAN. This includes interactions in areas such as education, economics, trade, society, politics, and tourism, as well as building relationships and fostering mutual understanding among people within the ASEAN community who have different nationalities and cultures, all through the medium of English. Given this necessity, the Thai government has accelerated the development of approaches to stimulate, promote, and enhance the declining English language proficiency of Thai students. The management of English language teaching in Thailand must cover four key pillars: language for communication, language and culture, language about other learning areas, and language about global citizenship and communities (Nanthasutsaweang, 2020).

Gardner (1985) stated that learners' attitudes significantly impact their success in second or foreign language learning. This aligns with the views of Ellis (1994) and Oller *et al.* (1977), who posited that language learning success stems from learners' attitudes towards the language, its native speakers, and the social values associated with that language. It can be concluded that the aforementioned research consistently agrees that attitudinal factors exert a substantial influence on learners' achievement in second or foreign language learning. In addition to learners' attitudes, motivation also significantly influences second or foreign language learning. This aligns with the research of Reimann (2001), who concluded that motivation is a key factor in achieving success in language learning, as it inspires individuals to reach their goals. Similarly, Sprat *et al.* (2005) stated that motivation is the most crucial factor influencing success or failure in language learning, a view consistent with the research of Broussard and Garrison (2004). Moreover, Nuchnoi (2006) concluded that learners with a high level of motivation in learning English also tend to have high academic achievement. Motivation can be divided into two types: intrinsic motivation (stemming from an individual's internal drive, possibly arising from beliefs or interest in something) and extrinsic motivation (stimulation originating from the external environment, such as grades, rewards, or diplomas) (Petrides, 2006). According to Yue (2012) and Marina and Lurdes (2013), both types of



motivation influence learners' academic achievement. However, the degree of difference and the direction of influence that these two factors exert on academic achievement remain unclear.

Learners' behavioral factors are also considered influential on their academic achievement. Oxford (1990) and O'Malley (1987) examined the role of language learning behaviors in second or foreign language acquisition and yielded consistent conclusions: appropriate language learning behaviors are crucial for achieving learning goals. Furthermore, learners who do not succeed in their studies often fail to adapt their learning behaviors and choose learning strategies that are unsuitable for them. Meanwhile, according to Wu's study (2008), students with high language proficiency exhibit better learning behaviors than those with low language proficiency. This is because they employ learning strategies such as planning their studies, engaging in conversations with native speakers, and regularly reviewing lessons.

According to the aforementioned problems, the researcher is interested in investigating the relationship between attitude and motivation in the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students. The aims are to promote guidelines for enhancing English language teaching and learning for students and to develop their English proficiency more effectively, enabling them to confidently and efficiently engage with the global community.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the attitudes of North Bangkok University students towards learning English,
2. To examine the motivation of North Bangkok University students towards learning English,
3. To study the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students, and
4. To examine the relationship between attitudes and motivation in the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students.

Literature Review

Definition of Motivation

Brown (1980: 112–113) defines motivation as a force or energy that drives, stimulates, or arouses a person's feelings to develop interest and willingness to engage in activities. Motivation serves as a guiding direction of behavior and leads to actions aimed at achieving the goals anticipated by the individual.

Herzberg (1959) emphasized that motivation is crucial in management because managers must achieve success through other people, who are living beings with emotions and minds. Therefore, motivation is inherently related to individuals' feelings and emotions, which in turn affect learning effectiveness. Thus, motivation is always considered essential for managers.

Maslow (1954) stated that motivation is a crucial component of human behavior, arising from a hierarchy of basic needs that are continuous and systematic. These needs include physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Unfulfilled needs serve as motivating forces that drive behavior, while those that have already been satisfied lose their role as motivators. It can be said that needs, beliefs, and goals are key elements in the process of motivation.

Saepun et al. (2017) stated that motivation refers to anything that drives or initiates behavior or action. The key characteristics of motivation are that it has an energizing force and a persistent nature in eliciting behavior.

Nokmuang et al. (2020) stated that motivation is related to various factors, particularly the fulfillment of learners' needs and their resulting satisfaction in learning. When learners are satisfied, they tend to engage fully in their studies. On the contrary, if these factors fail to meet their needs, learners may develop negative attitudes, leading to dissatisfaction in their learning experience.

Kongton (2018) also stated that motivation refers to the creation of desire in individuals to do something to fulfill their personal needs. Individuals whose needs have not yet been met experience stress, and this stress serves as a driving force, pushing them to work hard to satisfy their needs or achieve their goals.

Wu (2021) stated that learning motivation is the driving force that stimulates learners' desire and behavior adjustment to achieve academic goals. In the context of Chinese language learning in particular, teachers can apply motivational principles, such as creating a friendly and safe classroom environment, to promote learners' happiness, satisfaction, and positive attitudes. These factors help enhance learners' enthusiasm and willingness to engage more actively in learning.

In conclusion, motivation refers to an internal force arising from needs or desires that drives individuals to perform behaviors aimed at achieving goals. It is stimulated by both internal and external factors. Motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process, as it enhances learners' determination and effort, which in turn contributes to academic success.

Meaning of Attitude

Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defines *attitude* as a feeling or opinion about something, someone, or a particular behavior.

Montano & Kasprzyk (2008) stated that *attitude* refers to the learners' belief systems, as each individual determines their own beliefs and displays behaviors influenced by those beliefs. If learners hold a positive belief toward something, their behavior will align with that belief. Conversely, if learners hold a negative belief, their behavior will reflect that negative belief as well.

Phumarin et al (2020) stated that *attitude* refers to an individual's thoughts or beliefs that use their feelings to assess objects or people in their surroundings. These thoughts or beliefs arise from their learning experiences, which influence the creation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their environment or with those people. This concept is closely linked to actions and interpretations of various situations, both positive and negative.

Meaning of Learning Behavior

Robbins and Judge (2003) stated that behavior refers to an individual's expression of feelings and experiences when evaluating situations, environments, people, or objects in one way or another. For example, individuals may assess satisfaction, preferences, or dissatisfaction and dislike.

Phumarin et al. (2020) stated that learning behavior refers to the characteristics or actions of learners that are expressed and performed during the learning process, both in and out of the classroom. It is closely related to the learner's understanding once they comprehend their learning behavior.

In summary, learning behavior refers to the characteristics and expressions of learners that are related to the learning process, both in and out of the classroom. It reflects the learners' attitudes and perspectives toward learning, as they respond to their learning and the surrounding environment. Learning behavior can also reflect both self-directed learning and learning through instruction.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

1. Attitude
2. Motivation of North Bangkok University Students

Dependent Variable

English Language Learning Behavior of North Bangkok University Students

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of North Bangkok University Students enrolled in the ENG101 course, a total of 947 students. The sample used in this study comprised 282 students enrolled in the ENG102 course. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973), yielding a sample size of 282 participants. Stratified random sampling (gender, major, and GPAX) was employed, followed by Simple Random Sampling using a lottery method. The sampling in this group can be considered

indicative of a broader student population at the university because they came from various majors and varied GPAX scores.

Instrument Development and Quality

1. Relevant documents, concepts, theories, and research were reviewed. 2. Based on the knowledge gained from point 1, a questionnaire was developed to cover the content. The framework and characteristics of the questionnaire were structured into two sections as follows: Section 1: Questionnaire on the attitudes and motivation of North Bangkok University students (10 items using a Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”). Section 2: Questionnaire on the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students (15 items using a Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”). The questionnaire employed a rating scale format. 3. The questionnaire was submitted to 5 experts to determine content validity. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated, yielding IOC values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00. 4. The questionnaire from step 3 was revised and then tested for reliability. It was piloted (try-out) with 30 students who did not take part in the sample group. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the questionnaire (α - Coefficient), resulting in a value of $\alpha = 0.888$. 5. The questionnaire obtained from step 4 was further revised, and the final version of the questionnaire was used for data collection.

Data Collection

Data were collected from a sample of 282 North Bangkok University students by administering questionnaires during class time via an online application. The procedure adhered to ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from all participants. The completed questionnaires were subsequently gathered for data analysis.

Statistics Used for Data Analysis

The statistics employed in this research included mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Research Findings

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the aspects of North Bangkok University students' attitudes and motivation. The details were as follows:

Attitude and Motivation of North Bangkok University Students	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
1. Attitude	4.33	.439	High
2. Motivation	4.39	.439	High
Total	4.37	.403	High

Table 1 found positive attitudes and strong motivation ($\bar{X} = 4.37$, S.D. = .403). When considering each aspect, the aspect with the highest mean was motivation, which was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, S.D. = .439). This was followed by attitude, which was also at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.33$, S.D. = .439).

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the overall and individual aspects of North Bangkok University students' opinions regarding their attitudes. The details were as follows:

Attitude of North Bangkok University Students	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Agreement
1. English is a global language used worldwide.	4.33	.687	High
2. Learning English helps in understanding the cultures of native speakers.	4.29	.682	High
3. I am interested in learning English.	4.23	.722	High
4. Knowing English makes me more confident when communicating with foreigners.	4.31	.697	High



Attitude of North Bangkok University Students	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Agreement
5. English will help me have more opportunities for career advancement.	4.29	.710	High
6. Knowing English broadens my perspectives.	4.32	.703	High
7. Learning English helps me develop myself in a global society.	4.34	.678	High
8. English will help me have more opportunities in education.	4.21	.778	High
9. I can access news from around the world in English.	4.46	.620	High
10. English helps me find information from various sources, such as the internet and English journals.	4.54	.691	Highest
Total	4.33	.439	High

Table 2 showed generally positive attitudes ($\bar{X}=4.33$, S.D. = .439). When considering each aspect, the aspect with the highest mean was "English helps me find information from various sources such as the internet and English journals," which was at the highest level ($\bar{X}=4.54$, S.D. = .691). This was followed by "I can access news from around the world through English," which was at a high level ($\bar{X}=4.46$, S.D. = .620). The aspect with the lowest mean was "English will help me have more opportunities in education," which was at a high level ($\bar{X}=4.21$, S.D. = .778), respectively.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the overall and individual aspects of North Bangkok University students' opinions regarding their motivation. The details were as follows:

Motivation of North Bangkok University Students	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
1. Intrinsic Motivation	4.48	.615	High
2. Extrinsic Motivation	4.30	.485	High
Total	4.39	.439	High

Table 3 presents the strong motivation ($\bar{X}=4.39$, S.D. = .439). When considering each aspect, the aspect with the highest mean was intrinsic motivation, which was at a high level ($\bar{X}=4.48$, S.D. = .615). This was followed by extrinsic motivation, which was also at a high level ($\bar{X}=4.30$, S.D. = .485), respectively.

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of the overall level of opinion regarding the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students, as follows:

English Language Learning Behavior	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
1. I prepare for English class before attending, such as reviewing vocabulary and reading lessons in advance.	4.54	.680	Highest
2. I am enthusiastic when it is time for English class.	4.42	.806	High
3. I pay attention and concentrate in English class while the instructor is teaching.	4.50	.727	Highest
4. I attend every English class.	4.36	.846	High
5. I take notes on the points the instructor teaches.	4.46	.731	High
6. I ask the instructor immediately during class when I don't understand the English lesson.	4.43	.767	High
7. I review English lessons after class.	4.42	.766	High
8. I do English homework or assignments by myself.	4.34	.807	High
9. I always submit English homework or reports on time.	4.34	.790	High

English Language Learning Behavior	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
10. I summarize the English points taught by the instructor in my own words.	4.35	.893	High
11. I form study groups with friends to review English lessons when exams are approaching.	4.34	.843	High
12. I study or research additional information about English beyond what the instructor teaches.	4.41	.778	High
13. I practice all four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) on my own.	4.35	.787	High
14. I find foreign friends online to practice my English language skills.	4.40	.749	High
15. I apply the English knowledge I gain from learning in my daily life.	4.42	.671	High
Total	4.41	.594	High

Table 4 showed the positive opinion ($\bar{X} = 4.41$, S.D. .594). When considering each item, the item with the highest mean was "I prepare for English class before attending, such as reviewing vocabulary and reading lessons in advance," which was at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.54$, S.D. = .680). This was followed by "I pay attention and concentrate in English class while the instructor is teaching," which was also at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.50$, S.D. = 0.727). The item with the lowest mean was "I form study groups with friends to review English lessons when exams are approaching," which was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.34$, S.D. = 0.843), respectively.

Table 5 presents the correlation coefficients between attitude and motivation with the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students, as follows:

	X_1	X_2	X_{total}	Y
X_1	1.000			
X_2	.654**	1.000		
X_{total}	.848**	.956**	1.000	
Y	.400**	.853**	.753**	1.000

** Statistically significant at the .01 level.

Table 5 presented a strong positive correlation ($r = .753$, $p < .01$). It was found between attitude, motivation, and language learning behavior. These results highlight the importance of promoting positive attitudes and intrinsic motivation to enhance English proficiency among university students.

Ranked from highest to lowest correlation:

1. The correlation between motivation (X_2) and English language learning behavior was strong and positive ($r_{XY} = .853$), $p < .01$.
2. The correlation between attitude (X_1) and English language learning behavior was moderate and positive ($r_{XY} = .400$), $p < .01$.

Discussions

1. The overall attitude of North Bangkok University students was at a high level. This aligns with the research of Niratsai (2018), which studied the attitudes, motivation, and English language learning behavior of Phuket Rajabhat University students. The findings of that study also indicated a high level of attitude among the sample group. This is consistent with the research of Hayeema (2024), which investigated the factors affecting attitudes towards English language learning among second-year vocational certificate



students at Narathiwat Technical College. The research findings revealed that students had a positive attitude towards learning English when they had a positive learning approach, enabling them to learn those subjects effectively. The factors influencing learning included: 1) the learner aspect, which involved attitudes towards English in the current global context, and was overall at a high level. This indicates an awareness of the global use of English and a strong recognition of its importance; 2) the future career aspect, which involved attitudes towards how students could apply their English knowledge and benefits to further their careers. Opinions on this aspect were at a high level for all items, particularly regarding the benefit that English would provide more opportunities for career advancement. This is because future employment may involve the use of English in the workplace and require communication for work purposes, suggesting that proficiency in English could lead to greater consideration for employment.

2. The overall motivation of North Bangkok University students was at a high level. This aligns with the research of Wantha *et al.* (2025), which studied self-motivation in learning English of first-year students in the Faculty of Humanities, English Program, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Lanna Campus. The research findings revealed that 1) factors influencing motivation in learning English for first-year students included intrinsic motivation, such as interest, enjoyment in learning, and personal goals, and extrinsic motivation, such as family expectations and the necessity for finding employment. Intrinsic motivation had a greater impact, with students exhibiting a high level of intrinsic motivation. This is also consistent with the research of Niratsai (2018), which studied the attitudes, motivation, and English language learning behavior of Phuket Rajabhat University students. The findings of that study indicated a high level of attitude among the sample group and a moderate level of learning behavior. This aligns with the research of Phosa and Wandee (2024), which investigated the study of non-English major undergraduate students' motivation and English learning behavior: a case study of physical education undergraduate students at Buriram Rajabhat University. The research findings revealed that 1. The overall motivation for learning English among undergraduate non-English major students showed that intrinsic motivation had a higher mean than extrinsic motivation. Specifically, the motivation with the highest mean was intrinsic motivation, namely the interest in traveling abroad, which was at a high level. The motivation with the lowest mean was extrinsic, specifically choosing to study English because friends were doing so, which was at a low level.

3. The overall English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students was at a high level. This aligns with the research of Niratsai (2018), which studied the attitudes, motivation, and English language learning behavior of Phuket Rajabhat University students. The findings of that study indicated a moderate level of learning behavior. It also aligns with the research of Phosa and Wandee (2024), which investigated the study of non-English major undergraduate students' motivation and English learning behavior: a case study of physical education undergraduate students at Buriram Rajabhat University. The research findings revealed that the overall appropriate English language learning behavior of undergraduate non-English major students was at the level of "sometimes practiced" ($X=3.10+0.98$). The English language learning behavior with the highest mean was "attending every English class" ($X=3.78+1.05$), which was at the level of "sometimes practiced." The English language learning behavior with the lowest mean was "reviewing English lessons after class" ($X=2.63\pm0.99$).

4. There was a high correlation between attitude and motivation with the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students. This aligns with the research of Niratsai (2018), which studied the attitudes, motivation, and English language learning behavior of Rajabhat University students. The findings from the correlation analysis of the three factors concluded that 3 pairs of factors had a high level of correlation, while the other 3 pairs had a moderate level of correlation. This is also consistent with the concept proposed by Reid (2003), who stated that attitude is a necessary factor for learners that influences their language expression. Fakeye (2010) agreed that learners' attitudes are the most important factor affecting language learning. Furthermore, it aligns with the ideas of Montano & Kasprzyk (2008) and Wenden (1991), who stated that attitude is a belief or feeling that an individual has towards something. If a person has positive beliefs and feelings towards something, it will result in positive behavior towards that thing. Conversely, if a person has negative beliefs and feelings, it will lead to negative behavior accordingly. This is consistent with the concept proposed by Pedtrides (2006), who stated that motivation in learning can arise from various factors, which can be divided into two types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation stems from internal stimulation within the individual, possibly arising from attitudes, beliefs, interests, or the desire to know something. Therefore, attitude has a stimulating effect that leads to intrinsic motivation, and the statistical results of this research also show that



attitude and intrinsic motivation have a high correlation with each other. Thus, attitude has a significant influence on creating intrinsic motivation for learners.

Recommendations

Recommendations Based on the Research Findings

1. The findings of this research indicate that attitude is a significant factor influencing students' English language learning, which in turn affects their learning and comprehension of English. A positive attitude towards learning encourages students to recognize the importance and benefits of learning. Therefore, instructors should cultivate a positive attitude towards learning English among students, which will help them achieve better learning outcomes.

2. The research findings show that instructors play a role in students' motivation to learn English. To further enhance the level of motivation in English language learning, instructors should adapt their teaching methods by emphasizing activities and the use of language for communication. This will foster integrative motivation, which is a crucial factor in achieving success in English language learning.

Suggestions for Future Study

1. Future research should investigate the specific aspects of attitudes and motivation that influence the English language learning behavior of North Bangkok University students.

2. Further studies should examine the influence of attitudes, motivation, and learning behavior on the English language learning achievement of North Bangkok University students.

3. A practical recommendation is to develop workshops specifically aimed at cultivating intrinsic motivation through the integration of real-world English applications.

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