

Attitude and Motivation towards a Working Language: Case of East Timorese Students in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the attitude and motivation of ten East Timorese students in the Philippines towards English, one of East Timor's two working languages. Five themes corresponding to the research questions emerged from the semi-structured interviews conducted in this qualitative study: (1) English as a favored language, (2) English as an indicator of competence, (3) English as a vehicle for communication, (4) English as an edge in the workplace, and (5) English as a global/international status marker. Results point to the participants' favorable attitude toward English because of its value as a linguistic tool, an instrument in the achievement of personal and career goals, and a utilitarian language. Based on a proposed four-fold typology, the researcher found that the participants are driven because of their favorable attitude and instrumental motivation toward English. The results challenge EFL teachers to consider the difference between English taught as a foreign language and English learned as a foreign language, as the former is conservative and to a certain extent prescriptivist, whereas the latter takes into account the attitudinal and motivational aspects of language learning which are a necessary component of any successful learning of a language.

Keywords: English in East Timor; language attitudes; language motivation; typology; working language

INTRODUCTION

Among the Southeast Asian countries in the Expanding Circle, East Timor would be one of the, if not the most, research impoverished countries in English language studies, the primary reason being that it is relatively a new nation. In fact, it achieved its independence from Indonesia only in 2002 after almost 500 years of colonial rule that started with the Portuguese who began trading in the early 16th century and colonised it in midcentury (East Timor 2012); thus, the dearth of research and information is true not only in the study of East Timorese languages but also in other social and cultural dimensions of the nation.

East Timor is a diversely multilingual nation. Lewis (2009) puts the number of languages in East Timor at 20. Of the 20, 19 are living languages and one has no known speakers. This number does not yet include two more languages considered as 'working languages', English and Bahasa Indonesia. Because of this multilingual setup in which people grow up with access to three or even more languages, people tend to show different attitudes and motivations toward different languages. Baker (1992, p. 10) defines attitude as "a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour" For Appel and Muysken (1987, p. 16), an attitude is "an intervening variable between a stimulus affecting a person and that person's response' whereas Baker (1992) cited Allport (1935) as saying that attitude is "a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." Attitudes, according to Crystal (1997), are the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others. Simply, language attitude is a construct that explains the behaviour of people towards a language.

Central to the study of language attitudes is the motivation of a learner in learning a language. Dörnyei (1998) posits that motivation is the primary impetus to initiate (second)

language learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Further, motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of second or foreign language learning.

The present study zeroed in on the attitudes and motivations that East Timorese government scholars studying in the Philippines hold toward English. The study has empirical significance as it addresses the need for East Timor language studies. Specifically, language attitude studies find relevance in early language studies on East Timor for it is the attitude toward language that appears to be important in the restoration, preservation, decay or death in the life of a language (Baker 1992).

The present paper is essentially a study on attitudes towards a foreign language since, as earlier mentioned, English in East Timor holds the status of a working language as mandated by Section 159 of the Constitution of East Timor, which specifically states that “Indonesian and English shall be working languages within civil service side by side with official languages as long as deemed necessary.” The primary reason for English becoming a ‘working language’, according to Hull (2008), is that the language has no authentic role in the national culture of East Timor. Moreover, Taylor-Leech (2008) found that English in East Timor is considered as a simple working language, useful but not part of their identity, and useful for international communication alone (p. 173).

In 2009, a group of 109 East Timorese students were sent to The Philippines to pursue college education and training. All of them were given scholarships in various higher education institutions in the country in accordance with the memorandum of agreement between the two nations signed in 2008 by then Commission of Higher Education chairperson Nona Ricafort for the Philippines and Ambassador Francisco Cepeda for East Timor. Out of the 109 students who came to the country, the biggest group of 23 chose the institution where the study took place to pursue degrees that would primarily hone their ‘expertise they need to explore their rich natural resources –most especially petroleum and natural gas’ (The New Builder 2009).

The researcher considers this group of East Timorese students as interesting subjects for the present study since most of them are multilinguals speaking primarily Tetun and Portuguese, the official languages of East Timor, another local language, usually the language spoken in their district, and, upon their arrival in the Philippines, were forced to learn or speak English. Thus, under these circumstances, their attitudes and motivation toward learning English might have been underscored.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Findings of various studies on attitudes toward languages found that attitudes vary from favorable to unfavorable. Moreover, the relationship between attitudes toward languages and motivation for learning languages has been tackled by previous studies so that a review of the extant literature points to motivation as either integrative or instrumental. Kachru (1992) explains that these two categories of motivation are essentially based on “what function the L2 learner envisions for the acquired language” (p. 54).

INTEGRATIVE VALUE OF LANGUAGE

If the learner’s motivation is integrative, according to Prator (1968 as cited in Kachru 1992), the desire is to identify with the members of the other linguistic cultural group and be willing to take on very subtle aspects of the language or even their style of speech as exemplified in the following studies. Benson (1991) surveyed 300 freshmen in a Japanese university to

assess their attitudes toward English. The results showed students hold integrative and personal reasons for learning English. In Brazil, El Dash and Burnardo (2001) found similar results. In their study of the attitudes of Brazilian adolescents toward English and Portuguese, they found that the participants favored English primarily because of the general perception of English as a prestigious international language and a symbol they share when they use with their adolescent peer group.

Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene (2004) found that Lithuanian parents perceive integrative learning as having instrumental value and favor their Lithuanian children's accommodation to the majority of society as an essential process towards success. In another study, Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene (2005) found that the state's inclusive language and citizenship policies in Lithuania led to positive attitudes among the minority communities to learn the state language and thereby integrate themselves in the larger community. Similarly, Tuwakham (2005) found integrative motivation as the reason behind the favorable attitude of the Yong community members in Thailand towards the Yong language.

INSTRUMENTAL VALUE OF LANGUAGE

Instrumental motivation is the other major orientation, which according to Kachru (1992), is essentially 'utilitarian' in nature; a language is acquired as a linguistic tool and not as an instrument for cultural integration. In such an orientation, acquiring a 'second culture' is not the motivation for learning the language. In this sense, L2 learning is geared toward achieving practical goals such as attaining an academic goal or job advancement. This instrumental motivation toward learning a language is also represented in the studies below.

Al-Haq (2000) investigated changes in the attitudes of Jordanian university students to the Hebrew language and found that their favorable attitudes toward Hebrew is due to their instrumental motivation, i.e. they find religious and national significance in learning it. In Hong Kong, Lai (2005) found that the participants find most integrative value towards Cantonese and most instrumental value towards English because of its social status. In another study, Lai (2009) also found that from an instrumental point of view, English was ranked first by the participants because it is a symbol of power, gatekeeper for higher education, job opportunities and upward and outward social mobility.

In India, Hohenthal (2003) reported that English is seen to be of instrumental value; English is perceived as a useful language to know mostly because of job opportunities and for education. Majumder (2005) revealed that Oriya migrants in India favor English because of its instrumental value: language for better education, job opportunity as well as a marker of global status.

In Iran, Shirbagi (2010) found utilitarian reasons, thus instrumental motivation, to be the main influence among 400 undergraduate students in learning a foreign language. The students acknowledged the social dimension of English as a language that can offer the opportunity of cross cultural exchanges. However, in another study, Chalak and Kassaian (2010) found that a group of 108 Iranian students studying English as their major held positive attitudes towards English because of both instrumental and integrative motivations. Similarly, Ofori and Albakry (2012) interviewed participants from ten Catholic churches in Accra, Ghana and found that most of them cited the numerous benefits that English, as a language of wider communication, brings to the individual speaker and the country. Also, Al Mamum et al. (2012), in their study of 79 university students in Bangladesh, found that the participants were positive toward English and this could be attributed to their instrumental motivation toward English.

In Malaysia, Thang Ting and Nurjanah Mohd Jaafar (2011) investigated the attitudes and motivations of secondary students towards learning English as a second language. Based

on the results of a quantitative study of 143 students, the authors found that the students were more extrinsically motivated than they are intrinsically motivated. It appears that the motivation of these students was more instrumental than integrative in nature, since the results specifically indicated that the students were motivated to learn English to achieve personal career goals.

These previous studies on attitudes and motivations toward language provide a background in which the present study is forwarded. Given the extensively studied yet seemingly complex concepts of attitude and motivation toward language, the present study investigated the same linguistic phenomenon from a fresh vantage point, one that has not been previously investigated. This research intends to fill this research gap, identified after the literature review that suggests that a study on the attitudes and motivations of East Timorese towards English is yet to be conducted.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study investigated the attitude and motivation that East Timorese scholars studying in the Philippines hold toward English, one of East Timor's two working languages. To achieve this, the present study specifically sought answers to two research questions:

1. What attitudes do the participants hold toward English?
2. What are the motivations of the participants toward learning English?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the study of language attitudes, two contrasting theoretical approaches are used, behaviorist and mentalist views (Fasod 1984). On one hand, the behaviorist view holds that attitudes must be studied by observing the users' responses to languages during actual interactions. On the other hand, the mentalist view holds that attitudes are mental states which are not directly observable but are instead inferred from users' behavior or self-report.

The present study draws its theoretical underpinnings from Fasod's (1984) mentalist point of view, which corresponds with Smith's (1998) position that language attitudes are indeed not immediately observable; rather, 'they are accessible through introspection on the part of the subject' (p. 12). As a focus of this research then, the researcher posits that the attitudes of the participants are not directly observable and in this case will have to be inferred from responses to semi-structured questions in focused interviews, which are a form of self-report and introspection.

With regard to motivation, the present study is guided by Kachru's (1992) model on motivation toward language acquisition, which matches the same categories of motivation used in most studies in the literature, instrumental and integrative. One limitation of the instrumental versus integrative dichotomy in investigating the motivation of students in learning English is that it is relatively dated. The extant literature on language learning motivation includes studies which take relatively new perspectives in investigating motivation. For one, Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, which builds on the earlier work of Markus and Nurius (1986) on the notion of 'possible selves' is a more recent framework used in the study of language learning motivation.

However, because the context in which this present investigation takes place has not yet been explored, it may be important to begin investigating the participants' motivation towards English using the integrative-instrumental dichotomy in order to situate findings in

what researchers and teachers presently understand in the area of language learning motivation, which is largely informed by this framework.

Following the two categories each for attitudes and motivations presented in the theoretical framework, the researcher proposes a four-fold typology in the study of language attitudes and motivations for the conceptual framework of the present study. The four-fold typology is shown in Figure 1.

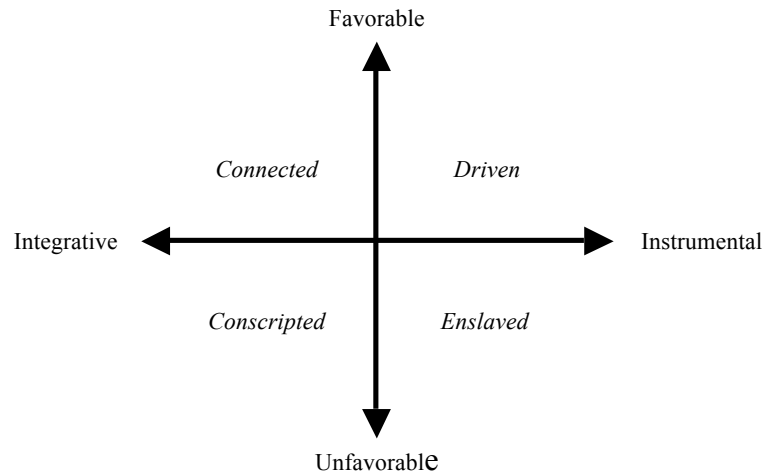


Figure 1. The proposed four-fold typology of attitudes and motivations toward language

Figure 1 identifies four types of language users based on the attitude and motivation they hold toward a language. The present study sought to identify the participants with one of the four types –driven, connected, conscripted, and enslaved.

A language user is ‘driven’ when the attitude is favorable and the motivation is instrumental as with people whose recognition of a language is chiefly influenced by the usefulness of a language in achieving a goal. If the language users hold favorable attitudes toward a language and their motivation is integrative, they are considered ‘connected’ as with people who learn a language because they want to be part of or associated with the culture of the native speakers of a language. If the attitude is unfavorable but the users are motivated to learning or using it because of integrative motivation, they are considered ‘conscripted’ in that they may be compelled by members of a linguistic group to use their language, which the language users would adhere to so as to avoid harm or loss in any form. Finally, if the attitude of a language user is unfavorable but the motivation to learn is because of the instrumental value of the language carries, the language is ‘enslaved.’ This is seen in language users who hold negative attitudes towards a colonisers’ language, and yet still choose to learn it because they realise its importance in education and workplace among other areas; as such, they may still choose to learn or use the language to avoid being marginalised or losing opportunities for growth and success.

Given this proposed typology, one of the cursory aims of the study is to identify the participants with one of the four types of language users according to their attitude and motivation toward English.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is qualitative in approach and follows a descriptive-exploratory design; thus, the aim of the study is to understand the experiences of the participants at the time of data gathering. Since this study on attitudes of East Timorese towards English is highly

exploratory, it needs further investigation of the wide sociolinguistic phenomenon in specific contexts in order to extend the findings in this paper and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The present findings are not meant to be generalizable since the researcher aimed for depth and not breadth in understanding the attitude and motivation of the participants towards a working language.

SETTING

The present study was set at a higher education institution located in Intramuros, Manila and Makati. The Institution is an 89-year old engineering school that prides itself in its tradition of excellence and engineering for the environment. The Institution houses around 7,000 students pursuing programs such as Civil Engineering, Environmental and Sanitary Engineering, Geological Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Biological Engineering, Interior Design, Industrial Design Computer Science, Information Technology and Architecture among other predominantly technical programs.

Moreover, the Institute is the only school in the Philippines that adopts a Quarter System - a school year of four quarters of eleven weeks each - which attracts many local and international students to enroll because of the faster pace that would allow students to finish programs fast. When they came in the Philippines, the participants of the study had to learn English for them to communicate with their classmates, professors and other school employees. This circumstance might have stressed their attitude and motivation towards English. Thus, from this setting and population, the participants of the study were selected.

PARTICIPANTS

TABLE 1. Demographic profile of the East Timor government scholars

Respondent	Age	Gender	Course	Campus	Year Level
Linda	21	Female	Environmental and Sanitary Engineering	Manila	3 rd
Nadia	22	Female	Environmental and Sanitary Engineering	Manila	3 rd
Jay	24	Male	Environmental and Sanitary Engineering	Manila	4 th
Maria	23	Female	Environmental and Sanitary Engineering	Manila	4 th
Vincent	21	Male	Geological Science and Engineering	Manila	3 rd
Bill	24	Male	Geological Science and Engineering	Manila	4 th
Diana	21	Female	Geological Science and Engineering	Manila	3 rd
Eli	25	Male	Mechanical Engineering	Manila	4 th
Joana	23	Female	Chemical Engineering	Manila	4 th
Antonio	24	Male	Information Technology	Makati	4 th

Ten (5 males & 5 females) East Timorese students enrolled during the third quarter (January to March) of academic year 2012-2013 participated in the present study. The ten participants of the study were chosen from among the 16 East Timorese scholars who were still enrolled in the Institute at the time of data collection. Out of the 16, one from the Makati Campus and five from the Manila campus communicated that they cannot make it for the interviews since their on-the-job-training schedule coincided with the interview schedule; thus, six students were not included in the final group of participants. The researcher came up

with the final number of 10 East Timorese students from Manila (9 scholars) and Makati (1 scholar) campuses of the Institution from whom data were gathered. Their age ranged from 21 to 25 years. They have been in the Philippines for three years and six months and 4 are on their third year while 6 were in the fourth year of the degrees they are pursuing (4 from Environmental and Sanitary Engineering; 3 from Geological Science and Engineering; 1 each from Mechanical Engineering; Chemical Engineering; Information Technology) at the time of data collection. For ethical reasons the participants listed in Table 1 are given pseudonyms.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In line with the mentalist point of view that serves as the theoretical framework of the study, the researcher utilised focused interviews using semi-structured questions as the data collection tool. This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that allows a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The objective is to understand the respondents' point of view rather than make generalisations about behaviour.

The interviews lasted for one week in March 2013 in order for the researcher to accommodate all the interviewees during their most convenient time since they had different schedules. They were held at the Old Psychology Room, which served as the interview venue for the English Language Center of the Institute. Each interview lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded and audio files were saved for the broad interview transcription that followed. After generating the interview transcripts, the researcher proceeded with the analysis of data. The researcher used thematic analysis as the method for analysing data in the present study. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) explain that “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” The researcher coded, identified, named and reviewed consistent patterns or themes, which emerged from the interview transcripts. These themes served as the backbone in discussing findings and results.

FINDINGS

The present study delved into the attitudes and motivations of East Timorese government scholars toward English and five themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews:

- (1) English as a favored language
- (2) English as an indicator of competence
- (3) English as a vehicle for communication
- (4) English as an edge in the workplace
- (5) English as a global/international status marker

These central themes that emerged from the analysis will be presented along with original extracts from the ten semi-structured interviews.

ATTITUDE OF EAST TIMORESE GOVERNMENT SCHOLARS TOWARD ENGLISH

In relation to the first research question, the theme that emerged is *English as a favored language*. A number of the participants expressed that they feel ‘good’, ‘comfortable’, ‘happy’, and ‘proud’ when they talk to or when people speak with them in English:

I feel comfortable and am happy to see people conversing with me in English. Although I'm not a native English speaker, but I would be glad if they try to speak English with me since through this I would improve my English better. (Eli, 25)

I feel good when people speak to me in English. (Maria, 23)

Another participant said that what he feels 'depends on the situation' but also added:

Mostly, I feel proud especially when they are my fellow Timorese speaking with me in English. (Antonio, 24)

Moreover, the participants pointed out that learning English 'is exciting', and 'makes them happy.'

Whenever I am in class learning English, it makes me feel excited because I know that I will be improving my English which is so important to me. Actually, my English classes are some of the most exciting and I always looked forward to when I was first year. (Vincent, 21)

English is not a new and strange language anymore. I used to speak English with some native speakers in the past. So I feel excited and happy once I engage in the aforementioned class. (Eli, 25)

A supplementary finding is what the participants would feel if they speak with a fellow East Timorese back in their home country and find that they speak better in English. When probed on this matter, the participants still expressed positive attitude toward being able to speak English:

I feel proud of myself, but through this also, maybe I can help my fellow East Timorese back in our country to also speak good English. (Maria, 23)

In this case, I feel more complete than my fellow Timorese who has little or no ability to speak English. (Eli, 25)

The excerpts from the respondents send a straightforward message: they favor English as a language. Thus, it can be said that the East Timor government scholars hold a positive attitude towards the language.

MOTIVATION OF EAST TIMORESE GOVERNMENT SCHOLARS TOWARD ENGLISH

In relation to the second research question, the four themes that emerged are (i) English as an indicator of competence, (ii) English as a vehicle for communication; (iii) English as an edge in the workplace, and (iv) English as a global/international status marker.

ENGLISH AS AN INDICATOR OF COMPETENCE

One of the themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews is that English is an indicator of competence. A number of respondents expressed that their favorable attitude toward English is influenced by their belief that English is an indicator of competence as can be gleaned from the following extracts:

Nowadays, if you do not speak English that means you are not trained enough, but when you speak English well that means you are competitive. (Linda, 21)

Being able to speak English means that a speaker had good education and training in college, so I should work hard to improve my English even more. (Vincent, 21)

Being able to speak English will keep me updated with technology. Moreover, I will be in the frontline back home one day as I have equipped myself with the ability to speak English. (Jay, 24)

ENGLISH AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATION

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews also suggests that the participants recognise the value of English as a vehicle for communication, thus another theme. The following extracts suggest that the participants view English as necessary in communicating with other people:

Learning English is valuable because I can communicate with other people especially the foreign people. (Linda, 21)

It will surely help in my communication ability. Being able to address myself properly to people who do not speak Tetun or Portuguese is very important for me. (Jay, 24)

Speaking in English is important in almost all situations but it is most important for me when I am speaking with people capable of speaking English only or the English speakers. (Maria, 23)

ENGLISH AS AN EDGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Another theme that emerged from the data is that English serves as an edge in their future jobs and workplaces:

English is widely used. It is effectively used by people who are engaged in business, travelling, etc. In the future, I won't have difficulties particularly if I want to travel around the world and do business with other people with different cultures and languages. (Eli, 25)

In the workplace, I must be able to speak English in order for me to do well over others. (Nadia, 22)

I think the most important value of English is it will open opportunities for me in the workplace. If I want to work in other countries, I will not be able to do that if I don't know how to speak English so I need to learn it in order for me to get the job that I want. (Vincent, 21)

ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL/INTERNATIONAL STATUS MARKER

Finally, the last theme that emerged from the interviews is that the participants view the language as an important marker of their status as global or international citizens. This theme is supported by the following extracts:

English is very valuable because with it I get to expose myself globally. Learning English connects me with the rest of the world. (Jay, 24)

Since English is an international language, you can speak with different people without any difficulty if they speak English well too. You open yourself to the international community and you make the world even smaller. (Eli, 25)

Because English is the international language, when we go to another country we don't have to learn their language. Instead, we use English to be understood because it is the language of the world. (Joana, 23)

Based on the themes relating to the second research question, it can be surmised that the East Timor government scholars studying in the Philippines are instrumentally motivated towards English. Their view of English as an indicator of competence, a vehicle for communication, an edge in the workplace, and a global/international status marker suggests that they consider English as a linguistic tool, an instrument in the achievement of goals, a

utilitarian language. They are motivated to learn, speak and improve their English language skills because they recognise the advantage, leverage and edge that they can gain out of it.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the attitude and motivation of East Timor government scholars towards English. Consistent with previous studies on language attitude and motivation, the present study found that the participants hold favorable attitude towards English because they are instrumentally motivated (Al-Haq 2000, Lai 2005, 2009 Hohenthal 2003, Majumder 2005, Shirbagi 2010, Ofori & Albakry 2012). Five themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews. The first theme, *English as a favoured language* elucidates the attitude that the participants hold toward language. They consider English as favorable. Further, they said that learning and using the language gives them positive feelings such as being ‘happy,’ ‘excited,’ ‘comfortable,’ ‘proud.’

With regard to motivation, four themes emerged from the data. These themes seem to corroborate what previous studies found as regards instrumental motivation in language learning. The participants consider English as an indicator of competence (Lai 2009), a vehicle for communication (Ofori & Albakry 2012), an edge in the workplace (Hohenthal 2003, Majumder 2005, Lai 2009) and a global/international status marker (Majumder 2005, Shirbagi 2010). These themes are consistent with Kachru’s (1992) definition of instrumental motivation, which is essentially ‘utilitarian’ in nature and in which a language is seen as a linguistic tool and not an instrument for cultural integration. The findings also support Hull (2008) and Taylor-Leech (2008) who said that English does not have any integrative value in the culture and identity of East Timor.

Finally, going back to the four-fold typology, it can then be said that the participants in this study, the East Timorese scholars studying in the Philippines, are ‘driven’ because they hold favorable attitude and instrumental motivation towards English. As explained earlier in this paper, the ‘driven’ attitude–motivation type is found in people whose recognition of a language is primarily influenced by the usefulness of a language in achieving a goal. In this study, the participants’ recognition of the value of English as a useful language for competence, communication, job opportunities, and status marker ‘drives’ them to learn and use the language.

CONCLUSION

The present study adds to the present understanding of a well-researched phenomenon in sociolinguistics, attitudes and motivations towards languages. The empirical significance of this study then could be attributed primarily to the fact that it took a fresh point of view, one that has not yet been studied before, that of East Timorese students learning English outside their home country.

The results of the study provide a window through which English language teaching and learning can be gleaned. Given that attitudes and motivations toward a language vary from one group of language learners to another, it is essential for language teachers and practitioners to have a good grasp of their students’ attitudes and motivations toward the language that is taught. Further, the results challenge language teachers and practitioners to respond to specific needs of students and. As the findings suggest, teachers working with foreign language learners should have an understanding of the difference between English taught as a foreign/second language (ETFL) and English learned as a foreign/second

language (ELFL). It is the position of the author that the latter is more pedagogically sound since it takes into account what students believe and feel towards language learning and what motivates them to learn a language. In that way, language teaching and learning becomes much more authentic as it departs from EFL conventions, which miss out on real-life needs and experiences of EFL students. In the case of this paper, teachers of the East Timorese students who participated in the study might find discussions and activities related to English for the workplace relevant.

Future research should also look into the attitudes and motivations of East Timorese who are studying in their home country. It could be that in a context where students are using English less frequently and where Tetun and Portuguese have overwhelming integrative values, different attitudes and motivations towards English pervade. In such circumstances, investigating if differences in attitudes and motivations towards English exist finds empirical relevance and significance.

Further, the researcher earlier conceded that the framework of integrative versus instrumental motivation towards language learning is relatively dated and hence posed some challenges in interpreting the data and that more recent developments in the field of language learning motivation must be used in future studies along this line of inquiry. As mentioned earlier, the relatively less explored notion of “possible selves,” which first appeared in Markus and Nurius (1986) and is discussed in detail in Dörnyei (2009), may be a more suitable framework in analysing motivation among EFL learners such as the participants of this study.

Over and above the analytical framework to be used in the study of language attitudes and motivations, studies on the attitude and motivation of East Timorese toward English, a language considered a ‘working language’ in the young nation, must be replicated. Results point to the need to look into the value of English in East Timor. As this study suggests, English in East Timor goes beyond the limited ‘civil service’ functions of a working language. As is the problem in other places and contexts, the results point to the rethinking of policy and planning versus language realities in the context of the young and multilingual nation of East Timor.

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