

Intercultural Education for Enhancing Law Students' Motivation

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Received: 02 /01 / 2021 ; Accepted: 16 /11 / 2021

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Abstract: In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the cultural dimension of foreign language education. Today, teachers are expected to enhance intercultural competence in their teaching. Hence, this article focuses on the importance of cultural perceptions regarding students' motivation in learning a foreign language.

In order to investigate this issue, a questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's (1985) model which emphasizes two factors: the cultural context and the educational setting. The results showed that Master of Law students at the University of Oran 2 have positive perceptions towards L2 culture which has a great impact on their motivation.

At the same time, qualitative research was conducted to explore the views of English language teachers on the essential role of intercultural education in increasing student motivation. The results were consistent with previous research studies confirming the importance of intercultural approach in EFL.

The results obtained from this study also provide information on the degree and type of motivation for law students which can be taken into consideration to demonstrate the significance of motivational attributes and other affective factors that either positively or negatively impact student's language performance and achievements.

The cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice. Therefore, we consider this paper as a starting point to provide us with interesting information about the type of students' motivation that can be taken into account when introducing improvements in ESP teaching methodologies.

Keywords: Foreign Language Education; Culture; Intercultural Communicative Competence; Learning Motivation; Attitude.

الملخص: التعليم بين الثقافات لتحفيز طلاب الحقوق عند دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية

في السنوات الأخيرة، كان هناك اهتمام متزايد بالبعد الثقافي لتعليم اللغات الأجنبية. اليوم، من المتوقع أن يعزز المعلمون الكفاءة بين الثقافات في التدريس. لهذا تركز هذه المقالة على أهمية التصورات الثقافية فيما يتعلق بدافع الطلاب في تعلم لغة أجنبية. من أجل التحقيق في هذه المشكلة، تم استخدام نموذج Gardner (1985) الذي يركز على عاملين: السياق الثقافي والإطار التعليمي. أظهرت النتائج أن طلبة ماستر القانون في جامعة وهران 2 لديهم تصورات إيجابية تجاه ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية والتي لها تأثير كبير على دوافعهم. في الوقت نفسه، تم إجراء بحث نوعي لاستكشاف وجهات نظر معلمي لغة الإنجليزية حول الدور الأساسي للتعليم بين الثقافات في زيادة تحفيز الطلاب. تتوافق النتائج مع الدراسات البحثية السابقة التي تؤكد أهمية النهج متعدد الثقافات في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

توفر النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من هذه الدراسة أيضاً معلومات حول درجة ونوع الدافع لطلاب القانون والتي يمكن أخذها في الاعتبار لإثبات أهمية السمات التحفيزية والعوامل العاطفية الأخرى التي تؤثر إما بشكل إيجابي أو سلبي على أداء الطالب وإنجازاته اللغوية.

ظل المكون الثقافي صعب الاستيعاب في الممارسة. لذلك ، نعتبر هذه الورقة بمثابة نقطة بداية لتزويدنا بمعلومات مثيرة للاهتمام حول نوع تحفيز الطلاب التي يمكن أن تؤخذ في الاعتبار عند إدخال تحسينات في منهجيات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم لغة أجنبية؛ ثقافة؛ كفاءة بين الثقافات؛ تحفيز التعلم؛ سلوك.

Introduction

Globalization has changed the world in such a way that intercultural exchanges and the reasons for learning foreign languages have increased exponentially. Teachers are called to perform a variety of educational and psychosocial roles by taking into account the interests and learning styles of the student. Language teachers are also seen as cultural mediators enabling learners to “understand the world around them, to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and to play an active role at many levels in the world” (Kelly et al, 2002, p.3).

Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), there has been a recent growth in interest regarding the cultural perceptions of the target language that affect the learning process. In fact, second or foreign language learning

is affected by factors such as language attitudes, cultural stereotypes, and even geopolitical consideration (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). In other words, the language cannot be separated from its historical and cultural context. Furthermore, during the process of learning foreign languages, motivation has become a vital element for its correct development. It is necessary to reflect on the methods, attitudes and behaviors within the classroom that can impact students in a good or bad way.

Despite its dominance as the current global language of science and global communication, English is still facing challenges during its learning process in Algeria. This includes many external obstacles from instructional practices to study tools, and internal ones as many students are unaware of their limiting beliefs and habits.

In this article, we will discuss the relationships between the intercultural approach, foreign language learning, and students' motivation. We begin by defining this task briefly in a historical context. Then we will explore theories on learning motivation as there is an extensive literature on the underlying psychological and communication processes that are responsible for increasing learning motivation. Next, we will discuss our experiences that exemplify this approach and we will end with some data that illustrate the benefits of this approach.

To achieve a more concrete analysis, a questionnaire was conducted to Master students of Law Degree and an interview with English teachers at University of Oran 2, with the aim of knowing what their perspectives are about the influence of culture on learning motivation.

We start from the hypothesis that currently there are changes in the motivation of students and that talking only

about two types of motivation (integrative and instrumental) is not enough to explain the multiple reasons that students in a globalised world have for learning English as lingua franca. In addition, teachers are intercultural communicators who can bring about negative or positive emotions and even make students question their own culture or to reject those of others. Dörnyei (2001, p.116) notes, "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness", therefore, the question has turned from whether motivation is a key factor for learning a foreign language to how can language teachers actively promote their students' motivation in their classrooms.

1. Theories on Language learning Motivation

In a broad sense, "motivation" is a complex phenomenon that affects people behavior in all areas of life. Its study has given rise to multiple theories to explain its enormous importance for individuals when it comes to achieving their goals. Among the abundant bibliography on the subject, we find a very clear definition of motivation in the work of Gregory and Kaufelt (2015): "motivation is the force or energy that results in engagement" (p.9). They also mention: "motivation, enthusiasm, perseverance, drive, grit, and tenacity are currently hot topics in education... to get students to pay attention and engage in rigorous tasks is something every teacher desires" (p.1). In this same reflection made by Gregory & Kaufelt, various contributions and investigations that enrich knowledge on relationship of learning with affective factors such as motivation were introduced. Among some of these contributions we find:

Goleman's emotional intelligence which is related to motivation to achieve a long-term goal, in the sense emotions establish the limits of our innate mental capacities and determine what we can achieve in our life (Goleman, 1996).

Goleman's model (1998) includes five basic components and 25 emotional and social abilities:

Self-awareness: the individual's ability of identifying inner psychic state and values.

Self-regulation: the individual's ability of managing emotions and thinking clearly under pressure.

Self-motivation: the individual's positive emotions that leads towards the achievement of goals.

Empathy: the individual's ability to be aware of others' feelings and accepting their perspectives.

Social skills: the individual's ability of collaborating and promoting a friendly, cooperative climate.

When speaking of relationship between motivation and foreign language acquisition, it is inevitable to cite the research work of the Canadian psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1959; 1972). They introduced the idea that languages are mediating factors between different ethno-linguistic communities, and therefore, regarded motivation to learn another community's language as largely responsible for improving or preventing intercultural communication and affiliation (quoted in Dörnyei, 2005, p.67).

Gardner also developed the Socio-educational Model (1985) for second language learning, in which motivation is defined as the combination of the desire to learn second language, effort, and attitude towards learning (Gardner, 1985, p.10). Moreover, he distinguished three key components of motivation in second language learning: (a) motivational intensity or effort, (b) desire to learn the language, and (c) attitudes towards learning the language. Alongside integrative motivation that is the desire to learn a

language due to a positive feeling about a linguistic community, Gardner develops the concept of instrumental motivation, which has to do with the desire to learn a language for professional reasons. According to the author, the integrative one would further guarantee the success of the learning process in the long term as it is more stable. He even goes further and says that the learner creates a new identity when they join a new language community (Gardner, 1991).

In a large-scale motivational study conducted by Dörnyei et al. (2006) among Hungarian students of various languages from 1993 to 2004, the researchers used seven main motivational components to explain the L2 Motivational Self and that is linked to the social context of learning. The seven components found by Dörnyei et al. (2006) include: (1) Integrativeness (the learner's desire to integrate into the target language culture); (2) Instrumentality (the learner's belief in the usefulness of learning L2); (3) Attitudes towards the contact with L2 speakers; (4) Milieu (the influence of the environment on the importance of learning another language as: family and friends); (5) Linguistic self-confidence; (6) Interest in the L2 culture; (7) Ethno-linguistic vitality of the L2 community.

Along the same lines of social integration and motivation, recent developments in social psychology and sociolinguistics, among others, have placed the social dimension at the centre by emphasizing its influence on a learner's motivation to learn a foreign language (Dörnyei, 1994; Norton & Toohey, 2001). In this vein, Norton offered new concept on language learning and teaching, and introduced Norton's construct of investment to complement constructs of motivation in SLA (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000). She argued that language learners have multiple and contradictory identities which are constructed on

the basis of the socially given to impose their rights to be heard. Thus, investment seeks to make meaningful connections between a learner's desire to learn a language and the language practices of the classroom or community. Indeed, she claims learners negotiate their self-identity through language in order to construct their identity in social contexts (Norton, 1995).

Yashima (2002) explained that Japanese students' motivation is based on their international posture, that is for many Japanese learners, it includes their "interest in international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners and a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (p.57). Consequently, for many Japanese students, English connects them to foreign countries and foreigners (ibid, p. 57). The influence of international posture as a prominent variable is confirmed directly by the "tendency to relate oneself to the international community rather than any specific L2 group, as a construct more pertinent to EFL contexts" (Yashima 2009, p.145). Yashima's findings affirm that English is perceived by Japanese students as a tool for international communication.

2. Intercultural education

Today's coexistence between different cultures and exchange with people of different languages has been reflected in the new methodologies and approaches of teaching and learning a foreign language. These new approaches assume that in order to achieve authentic communicative competence, students have to learn about the socio-cultural reality of the target culture to prevent stereotyping and xenophobic behaviours since language expresses culture and through language we acquire culture (Brown, 2000). However, a person's motivation to interact with people from other cultures must be considered. In other

words, motivation serves as a factor influencing L2 acquisition, in addition to the social and cultural environment, individual student differences, the context in which learning takes place, and linguistic outcomes (Gardner, 1985).

Just like culture, researchers and practitioners have been working on understanding intercultural competence, which involves anthropology, psychology, sociology, communication, political science, history, economics, religion, law, literature, and philosophy. Language is the key to culture as “learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers” Alptekin (2002, p.58). Moreover, Byram et al. define intercultural competence as “the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and the ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality” (Byram et al. 2002, p.10). A true communication in a foreign language requires both linguistic competence and cultural competence. Therefore, the socio-cultural dimension must constitute an integral part of the curriculum.

Hymes stated that language is meaningful in real life situations which imply not only linguistic competence, but what he called “communicative competence” (1979). In other words, the learning of an L2 cannot be conceived without taking into account the context in which it is spoken.

Taking into account the aforementioned, rather than familiarising students with just traditional native-speaking countries, teachers can promote a general cross-cultural awareness and understanding through the comparative-contrastive approach (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994) which is discussed as a possible method of discussing culture in

foreign language classes, including the following: comparing native culture patterns to those of the target language culture, and learning to interpret the behaviours, actions, and communication patterns of individuals in terms of culturally appropriate social behavior.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the present study is exploring the relationships between the intercultural education, foreign language learning, and students' motivation. The questionnaire was conducted to Master students of Law Degree and an interview with English teachers at University of Oran 2 in order to know their opinions about the influence of culture on learning motivation. In this perspective, the socio-cultural element within the learning of foreign languages implies the development of intercultural skills to increase our students' self-esteem and to create higher expectations in their learning process.

3.1 Participants

3.1.1 Students

The 51 students in this study were enrolled at the University of Oran 2 in their Law Master years at the time of data collection. In fact their level of proficiency in English is hard to determine due to the absence of a test. The average age of the group is 23 years. The participants are both female (55%) and male (45%). Regarding knowledge of other foreign languages, in addition to Arabic, majority of the informants affirm that they know at least 2 foreign languages, but at different levels.

3.1.2 Teachers

The teachers, who took part in this study, were teaching English at University of Oran 2. Their experience in teaching English at university level was more than seven years.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Questionnaire with Students

For this investigation, the survey questionnaire was adapted from Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) in Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of SLA. The AMTB has been used in a large number of quantitative studies which focused on examining different affective factors influencing second/foreign language. The AMTB aimed at ensuring validity and reliability when identifying the role of motivation and attitudes of learning English as a foreign language at Faculty of Law, particularly the importance of cultural perceptions on learning motivation.

3.2.2 Interview with Teachers

The interview aimed to investigate teacher's views on the role of culture in language teaching and whether the current teaching practices could be described as being directed towards the implementation of intercultural competence. It also offers valuable insights on how teachers motivate their students through interculturality. We focused on teacher perceptions because teachers' views of their students probably affect their decision-making process.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Questionnaire with Students

All the sections in the questionnaire based on the Likert scale consist of four or five possible answers so that the students do not choose the neutral zone.

3.3.2 Interviews with Teachers

The interview consisted of a brief section determining the years of professional experience, what and where they teach. This was followed by six open-ended questions.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Questionnaire data

This questionnaire first presents a section in which the student must enter personal data, such as their sex, age, and level of English. Once they have filled in that, the second block of the questionnaire is divided into five main parts: (Type of dominant motivation/ Degree of motivation/ Attitude towards the course/ Attitude towards foreign languages/ Attitude towards the target culture).

4.1.1 Students' English Level

The first part of the questionnaire demonstrated how students assess their level of English and the majority of students (67%) have low level of English proficiency.

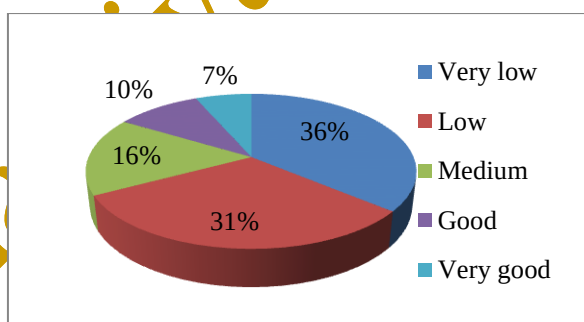


Figure 1: Students' English Level

4.1.2 Dominant motivation type

The results show that participants had high degree of integrative motivation.

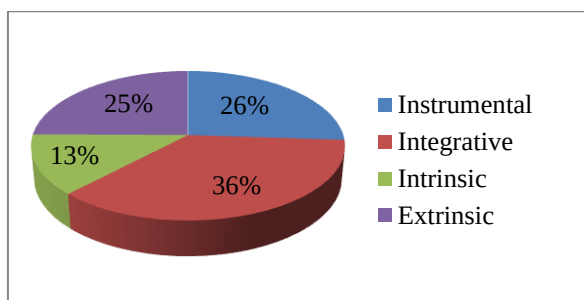
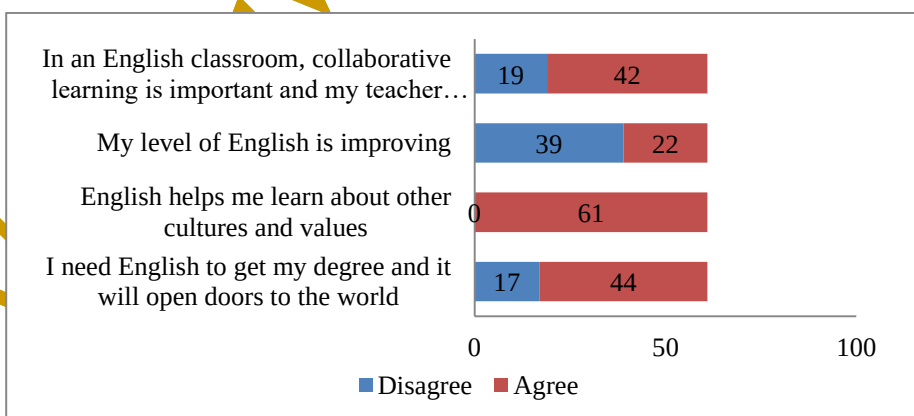


Figure 2: Type of dominant motivation

4.1.3 Degree of motivation

Each statement was presented with a five points likert scale and participants were asked to circle one of the five given points (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). However, the number of variables was reduced from five to two values that contain: (Agree and Disagree) so that the students do not choose the neutral zone.



Stacked bar chart 1: Degree of motivation

All the participants consider English to be helpful for their travels overseas. 44 students considered that studying English is important for their studies and their carriers. Furthermore, 42 students are studying English for extrinsic factors as the majority of students prefer collaborative work with their peers and the teacher. Finally, intrinsic factors appear as minor reasons for learning English and we hypothesize that students are facing problems that affect their speaking skill and the lack of self-confidence is one of them.

4.1.4 Students' Perceptions of the current ESP course

In another part of the questionnaire, a question allowed us to identify that 39% of the students considered the course content to be interesting, 31% valued it as useful, 16% as relatively difficult and 14% thought the content was boring.

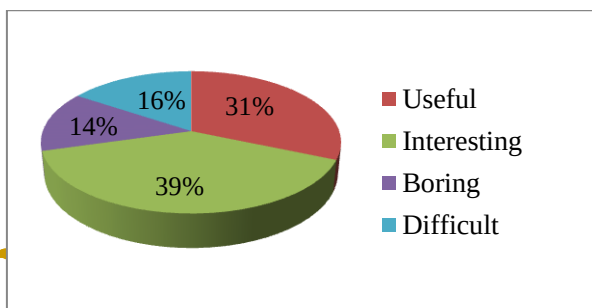


Figure 3: Students' evaluation of the current ESP course

4.1.5 Students' Attitude towards Learning Foreign Languages

In this part of the questionnaire, the aim was to analyze the attitude towards foreign languages. The data we have

obtained has allowed us to notice that all the respondents are interested in learning a foreign language.

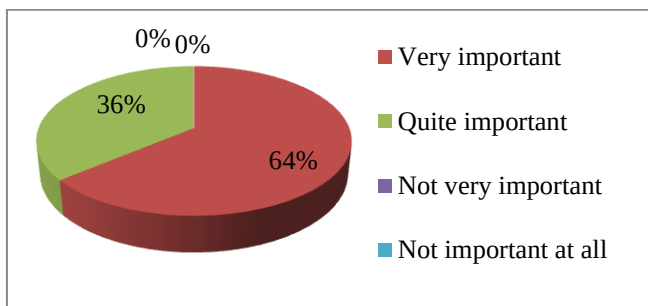


Figure 4: Students' Attitude towards Learning Foreign Languages

4.1.6 Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture

Most of the students have a positive attitude towards L2 culture as they recognized the importance of English in order to learn about the culture of other countries. However, the results also revealed difficulty in understanding cultural differences.

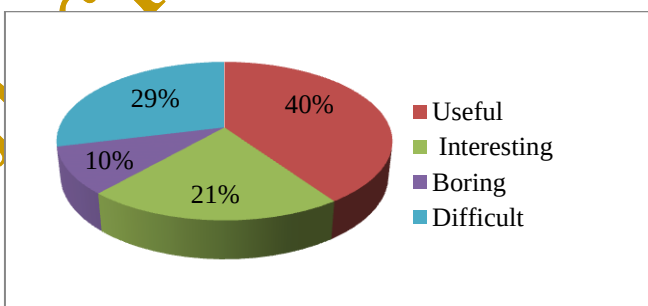


Figure 5: Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture

It is worth noting that the question made it possible to identify the need to design activities that include aspects of culture in ESP classrooms.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Teachers' Interview

4.2.1 Was intercultural communication training included in your own teacher education?

None of the respondents had intercultural communication training, apart from the module of American or British civilization. Yet, some of them mentioned the value of exchange programs abroad, and being taught by foreign teachers.

4.2.2 How do you create opportunities for students to understand and experience other cultures?

Most respondents try to create as many opportunities as possible for their students to understand and experience other cultures in order to develop cultural awareness. In doing so, the majority of the respondents choose culture-related topics; these include videotapes, TV programs, articles from newspapers and films. They also try to include their own personal experiences in the discussion.

4.2.3 Do you think intercultural competence should be given more/less emphasis in foreign language teaching?

Teachers all seem to agree on that topics carry cultural messages, and teachers should not ignore them, and there should be more emphasis on IC in foreign language teaching. The potential benefits mentioned by respondents were:

- To be open and respectful to others as well as to challenge their stereotyped views.

- Motivating students by providing real-life situations.
- Facilitating international mobility (academic, professional, personal)
- Increasing employability.

One teacher further added that the priority should be given to notions such as tolerance and peace. While others believe that they do not systematically teach it in the same way they teach grammar, vocabulary and the four skills because it is not included in the syllabus.

4.2.4 What is the level of motivation/participation of your learners, in your view? Why do you think this is the case?

Teachers agreed on that learners' motivation is low, and they claimed that it is affected by the educational setting, the course content, and lack of teacher training.

4.2.5 Can teaching about foreign cultures help motivate EFL students?

All teachers supported the idea of using culture as a tool to raise enthusiasm and active participation in language learning. Students could discuss proverbs, sayings in different languages. Some of them mentioned that knowledge of the socio-political context on the international level of the language is necessary.

Some mentioned that if the teacher teaches the culture of the foreign language, he/she is putting the students in real life situations, and they are going to be engaged more. However, one teacher said that it depends on which groups will be chosen as representative of the target culture and it can stimulate some students and not others.

4.2.6 English is spoken in many countries, so which of groups will you choose as your representative of the target culture?

All the teachers agree on the fact that there should not be one particular target culture in teaching English, as English is considered as a lingua franca and they prefer to teach the world culture or try at least to mix between the cultures of the English speaking countries.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we can affirm that the questionnaire used here meets the specific purposes for which it has been created. We can say that the cultural aspect of the English language is highly valued despite the fact that too much importance is given to grammatical aspects of the language and it led to a lower degree of motivation. Students have, in two years of post grad Masters, to become experts in the socio-political context of legal English, as well as the tools of communication between various cultures. It is therefore important to return to the hypotheses upon which this study was based that what most motivates our students is the idea of succeeding professionally, travelling and being able to function in international environments.

English is a highly valued language and students have a positive attitude towards the target culture despite the few contacts with the native speakers. Students are mainly motivated by the positive perceptions about its speakers and culture. In addition, it is vital not to forget linguistic context of our students, where Arabic is the only language of instruction in addition to French that most of them have taken since primary school. This means that it is not mandatory for professional success in Algeria.

The interview has allowed us to advance in the investigation regarding our second hypothesis about the role of cultural perceptions in motivation and, therefore, in the learning process. It is essential that teachers emphasize not only cultural but also communicative differences. It can be concluded that the teachers seemed to express themselves positively about intercultural education because it changes the way learners view themselves and others, and it helps them become more tolerant and motivated. However, despite this strong endorsement, the cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice. Therefore, we consider the results obtained in the study as a starting point to provide us with interesting information about the degree and type of motivation of the students that can be taken into account when introducing improvements in ESP teaching methodologies.

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Appendix

Dear Student, This questionnaire is used to collect data regarding Intercultural education in enhancing student's motivation. Put (×) or fill in what is appropriate.

Students' questionnaire:

1. Sex:

Female ☐

Male ☐

2. Age:

3. Your current level in English?

Very low ☐

Low ☐

Medium ☐

good

☐

very good ☐

4. Why do you study English?

Motivation Factors	Disagree	Agree
I need English to get my degree and it will open doors to the world		
English helps me learn about other cultures and values		
My level of English is improving		
In an English classroom, collaborative learning is important and my teacher explains well		

5. English course is:

Useful ____ Interesting ____ Boring ____ Difficult ____

Please indicate another possible opinion:

**6. Learning several foreign languages at faculty of
law is:**

Very important ____ Quite important ____ Not very important ____
Not important at all ____

Please indicate another possible opinion:

7. English Culture seems to me:

Useful ____ Interesting ____ Boring ____ Difficult ____

Please indicate another possible opinion:

Thank you for your cooperation