

A Survey-Based Study of Motivation and Attitude to Learning a Second Language at Ufa State University of Economics and Service

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Abstract

This article presents a new attempt to research motivation to learning a second language (L2) and attitude to learning activity at a higher educational establishment. In this study motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language, and attitude to learning activity is understood as willingness to make personal effort with the purpose of mastering the language. The study also included an attempt to reveal the students' perception of L2 learning environment. A detailed motivational survey was conducted on a sample of Ufa State University of Economics and Service undergraduates. The data were analyzed by means of frequency, percentage, and arithmetic mean. The main findings show that the students have mildly positive attitudes to L2 learning with subjects' greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian and academic reasons, while regarding the integrative reasons, the results provided evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people have less impact on students' second language motivation. The subjects recognize the importance of the English language but interestingly do not reveal high level orientation towards making effort to learn the language. The study found that aspects of motivation most desired to be changed are those associated with the language learning environment. The analysis also revealed high levels of student anxiety during L2 classes, which may be due to a number of reasons that should be further investigated. The data obtained can be compared by researchers to reveal the changing patterns of L2 motivation both in the Russian and global context.

Keywords: L2 motivation; Integrative motivation; Instrumental motivation; Motivation of avoidance; Attitude to L2 learning activity; Learning environment; Survey; USUES

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Citation: Kazantseva EA, Valiakhmetova EK, Minisheva LV, et al. A Survey-Based Study of Motivation and Attitude to Learning a Second Language at Ufa State University of Economics and Service. Global Media Journal. 2016, S2: 8.

Received: February 29, 2016; **Accepted:** March 19, 2016; **Published:** March 25, 2016

Introduction

Introduce the problem

Modern psychology considers it axiomatic that man possesses an intrinsic inclination to cognition. A. Maslow, in his work "Motivation and personality" [1], considers cognitive needs as vital for man. Motivation to studies is also regarded by modern science as part of man's cognitive need, a desire to know and understand.

L2 motivation has rather long been in the focus of research. Nowadays it is distinctly understood that motivation to learning a language is the main prerequisite of positive results. Motivation,

according to Winne and Marx (Winne and Marx, 1989), is both a condition for and a result of effective instruction. The earliest research on motivation was focused on two main orientations of motivation of L2 learners, integrative and instrumental [2]. Besides Gardner's integrative and instrumental constructs, Cooper and Fishman mentioned a third type of motivation which they called "developmental". According to them, developmental motivation refers to motivation relating to "personal development or personal satisfaction" [3]. More recent studies have shown that there are other factors to be investigated in this area. Dörnyei [4] expanded Gardner's model by developing a three-level model of motivation structure. His model is composed of language level including integrative and instrumental subsystems,

learner level comprising learner's personal characteristics, and learning situation level that reflects various characteristics of the given course, the teacher, and the group of learners. *Gardner's conception was also further expanded by Richard Clément [5,6] who introduced the notion of linguistic self-confidence.* Marion Williams and Bob Burden (Williams and Burden, 1997) pioneered in introducing the notions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Russian scientists made a significant contribution to researching the issue as well. L.I. *Bozhovich distinguishes two main kinds of academic motivation: cognitive motivation, which is connected with the contents and the process of learning, and social motivation, related to various interactions of students and other people involved in the process of studies [7].* A.K. Markova and co-authors expanded this classification complementing it with broad cognitive motives, educational motives, broad social motives, motives of self-actualization [8]. With similar views, Rean AA and Yakunin VA [9,10] introduced motivation of avoidance (negative motivation) and motivation of prestige. *With a practical purpose to assess the structure and level of academic motivation, a number of Russian researchers developed different questionnaires based on their understanding of the issue [9-12].*

Why the problem is important

This study investigated the level of students' L2 motivation, attitude to learning activity, and learning environment at Ufa State University of Economics and Service. Language study is a requirement at USUES. The university offers a wide range of BSc and MSc programs including such programs as "Global Economy", "Tourism", "Hospitality", "Public Relations", "Information Technologies", "Chemical Technologies" and some others that are directly connected with international contacts. That is why the university has always been highly interested in training specialists able to use one or two foreign languages in their future jobs. Standards of higher education on their side also require graduates to be confident users of L2 in their professional sphere.

The system in USUES provides two to four years of instruction that qualifies the students to graduate with a BA/BS degree. A course of Foreign Language is a requirement and is taught for all the USUES students over four semesters in their first and second year. For a number of majors, this is followed by a two-semester course of Business Foreign Language in the third year and Professional Foreign Language in their fourth year. The urgency of boosting students' motivation to L2 learning has become evident due to the dramatic decrease in the level of school-based L2 proficiency revealed by freshmen enrolled at Ufa State University of Economics and Service (USUES). During the last five years freshmen have shown an increasing lack of interest in L2 studying, extremely low basic L2 skills (mostly elementary, sometimes even starters) and high rates of absenteeism. Students face a lot of difficulties in using the language, which is most probably due to the fact that they had a frustrating experience during the previous period of L2 learning. Identifying the structure and level of their motivation may contribute to formulating measures for the improvement of their learning motivation in L2. Their type of motivation could be identified at this first point to assist them through their successful path of learning English. All in all, better understanding of students' motivation and attitudes may assist

ESL/EFL curriculum and instruction designers to devise language teaching programs that generate the attitudes and motivation most conducive to the production of more successful ESL/EFL learners [13-15].

Besides the significant role of learners' motivation and attitudes in the learning process, the lack in the literature regarding studies on university students' motivation and learning behavior in the Russian Federation has been another motive to carry out the present research. The significance of this study should be that the responses lead to better understanding of their motivation. The findings could help the university work toward an improvement of their motivation and, alongside, enhancing their language learning achievement at the very earliest stage of their enrollment in the first year.

Objectives of the study

This study aims at investigating USUES students' motivation and attitudes towards L2 learning.

In this study, the major focus was on various socio-psychological variables rather than language proficiency levels which were not tested. Instead, the students were asked to evaluate their L2 skills themselves. In the very beginning we put forward the following research questions:

1. To study motivation levels and structure
2. To reveal the difference in motivation among students of different age, study program, gender, academic and social background, level of language skills
3. To reveal the students' learning behavior towards the subject
4. To reveal the students' perception of L2 learning environment at USUES
5. To find out how all these factors interact with each other
6. In the weeks following the start of the experiment, the enormity of the task became apparent. There were many items that were identified with many different measurement strategies, many different majors, many different ages, and so forth, and it was obvious that a multitude of decisions would have to be made. Surprisingly, there were more data than we had initially supposed. To simplify the task, it was decided to start with the general data analysis (research questions 1, 3, 4). In the end it seemed reasonable to limit one study to this set and plan a second stage of analysis to consider the other sets of data. Such an approach, we felt, would permit greater flexibility than trying to organize all studies into one format.

Method

Participant characteristics and scope of the study

The study was conducted by stratified random sampling from the total population of the university students on a sample of 200 first to fourth year undergraduate BSc students (both male and female) at Ufa State University of Economics and Service, in the second semester, academic year 2014-2015 to explore the dominant motivation in their L2 learning, their learning

behavior towards its acquisition, and the level of enjoyment of their studies. The data for this study were obtained through questionnaire administered to the total number of 200 students. The subjects' age was between 17 and 21.

Instruments

The method of inquiry used in this study was a questionnaire. It consisted of two sections. In Section A, 9 items were used to collect information regarding the students' background (major, year, gender, age, academic background, area of residence, number of foreign languages being studied, self-estimated L2 proficiency). Section B consisted of 12 groups of questions to identify students' motivation to L2 learning and their learning behavior, as well as the level of enjoyment of their studies. Some of the survey questions were adapted from the existing literature; the others were developed by the authors. These reasons represented the following motivational constructs namely, instrumental motivation (items 6.2; 6.3; 6.4; 6.5; 9.1; 9.2; 10.1; 10.2; 10.3), integrative motivation (items 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 6.1; 6.6; 6.7; 8.2; 8.3; 9.3; 9.4; 9.5; 9.6; 9.7; 9.8; 9.9), motivation of avoidance (items 4.1; 4.2; 4.4; 4.7); broad social motivation (items 4.3; 4.6; 4.12; 9.10), broad cognitive motivation (items 4.11; 4.13; 4.14; 5.3), motivation of prestige (items 4.5; 4.8; 4.9; 10.4); motivation of creative actualization (items 4.10; 10.5), attitude to the subject (group 3; items 1a; 1b; 8.1; 8.4; 8.5), learning behavior (group 2), the level of enjoyment of studies (items 5.1; 5.2; groups 7; 11).

In item 7.10 of Section B of the questionnaire the students were asked to answer the question on whether or not they are interested in attending more English language training courses to improve their proficiency in the English language. Answering such a question is of great importance to know about their desire for learning the language which is considered one of the main components of language learning motivation [16].

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in the mother tongue. The purpose and different terms of the questionnaire were explained before the distribution. The students were informed that the information they gave would be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only. The students were asked to finish the survey within 20 minutes during the normal teaching period of their classes.

The quantitative data of the questionnaires were analyzed in terms of frequency, percentages and means.

Results

General information

This part indicates the general demographic data of the respondents. The results are shown based on the questionnaire.

As we can see from Table 1, there were a total of 200 respondents. The majority of the respondents were female (79 %), and the minority of the respondents were male (21%).

The information on the area of residence of respondents is presented in Table 2. About two thirds of the university

Table 1 Gender of respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Male	42	21
Female	158	79
Total	200	100

Table 2 Area of residence of respondents.

Area of residence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Urban residents	136	68
Rural residents	64	32
Total	200	100

population is represented by students from different Russian cities and towns. Although, the proportion of rural residents is also considerable (32%). This fact may be of importance as on the whole the level of school L2 teaching in rural areas is believed to be significantly lower. The situation is aggravated by the fact that in many cases rural schools fail to fill L2 teacher vacancies.

The information about the academic background of the participants is in full compliance with the above mentioned hypothesis as nearly one fourth of the respondents mentioned that they had failed to get a full school course of L2 (**Table 3**).

Nearly half of the respondents are majoring in tourism and hospitality (**Table 4**). This is explained by the fact that unlike many others, they are taught L2 during the whole period of their educational program. Other majors are represented by lower numbers of participants. Some groups failed to take part in the survey as they were doing work experience at that time. The data on academic year the respondents are in is presented in **Table 5**.

The information on the level of L2 proficiency of the respondents is presented in **Table 6**. It was our intention to make up the self-rating system parameters as simple and understandable as it was possible. The students were offered to assess their L2 level making only one choice from the following options: *Author do not know anything, maybe just a few words* (starter); *my level is low, and the vocabulary is very limited* (elementary); *Author can do translations but have difficulties with listening and speaking* (low intermediate); *Author am able to express myself in ordinary situations and understand in general what author hear* (intermediate), *Author communicate quite confidently but feel that author make a lot of mistakes* (upper intermediate); *Author speak fluently and feel confident in any situations, can read without using a dictionary and enjoy understanding films and songs in L2* (advanced). Although self-estimation can hardly be considered an absolutely reliable source of information (and the criteria used were rough), it may at least show the general state of things. As a result, only 35.5% of USUES students evaluate their L2 level as intermediate and higher and consider themselves to be able to communicate in this language. The other 64,5% realize that they have not been successful at L2 learning so far **Table 6**.

One of the most important questions for the current research was whether the students' attitude to L2 as an academic subject underwent any changes during the transitional period between school and university. The data obtained reveal the general effectiveness and language related enjoyment of L2

Table 3 Academic Background of respondents.

Academic background	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Full school course of L2	154	77
Incomplete/deficient course of L	46	23
Total	200	100

Table 4 Major of respondents.

Major	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Tourism and hospitality	95	47.5
Economics	25	12.5
Chemistry	22	11
Engineering	20	10
Computer science	15	7.5
Public relations	13	6.5
Design	10	5
Total	200	100

Table 5 Academic year the respondents are in.

Course	Frequency	Per cent (%)
First year	80	40
Second year	50	25
Third year	36	18
Fourth year	34	17
Total	200	100

Table 6 L2 level (self-estimation data)

	Frequency	Per cent
Starter	2	1
Elementary	17	8.5
Low intermediate	81	40.5
Intermediate	59	29.5
Upper intermediate	29	14.5
Advanced	12	6

study programs used in USUES as compared to school L2 study programs **Table 7**. It should also be noted that 173 respondents out of the total 200 (86.5%) feel like they will be able to master the language whereas 24 of them (12%) express doubt and only 3 (1.5%) were pessimistic about their final results.

The last item in this section concerned the respondents' attitude to studies and learning behavior (**Table 8**). Interestingly enough, whereas the majority of respondents are generally positive to L2 studying (80%), less than a half of them are responsible towards doing home assignment and only 15% always try to meet the deadline getting their credits. This inconsistency significantly lowers the mean arithmetic showing only half of the respondents as fairly purposeful and industrious at L2 learning **Table 8**.

Motivation

Instrumental motivation

In an instrumental orientation, learners are studying a language in order to further a career or academic goal. The results on instrumental motivation are shown in **Table 9**. The intensity of motivation of USUES students to attain this goal was found to be high with the majority of the participants (75.5%). The

most attractive goals for USUES students are getting a job with an internationally-based company or abroad, the advantages L2 gives for using the Internet, and continuing education in an English-speaking country. In comparison to other questions, question 4 (willingness to move abroad) showed the lowest level of motivation (36% gave positive answers).

Integrative motivation

The results show moderate to high integrative motivation toward L2 learning (**Table 10**). It is noteworthy that the results might have been better if L2 proficiency of respondents were higher. This is supported by the fact that 67.5% of respondents enjoy English songs but as for reading and watching films, where a certain L2 level is needed, the figures are significantly lower (34%

Table 7: Statistical analysis of ALE changes and language skills development (frequency and percentage).

	ALE		Language skills development	
No changes	77	38.5%	58	29%
Negative changes	3	1.5%	10	5%
Positive changes	120	60%	132	66%

Table 8 Attitude to studies and learning behavior (frequency and percentage).

Questionnaire item	yes	no	not quite
Are generally positive towards L2 learning	160 (80%)	5 (2.5%)	35(17.5%)
Try to keep up academic attendance high	128 (64%)	22 (11%)	50 (25%)
Are responsible towards doing home assignment	90 (45%)	28 (14%)	82 (41%)
Always try to meet the deadlines	30 (15%)	40 (20%)	130 (65%)
Mean arithmetic	102 (51%)	23.8 (11.9%)	1.2 (37.1%)

Table 9 Structure of instrumental motivation.

Questionnaire item	Yes	No	Not sure
Willingness to use L2 in the future job	175 (87.6%)	7 (3.5%)	18 (35.5%)
Willingness to get a job abroad	132 (66%)	30 (15%)	38 (19%)
Willingness to get further education abroad	105 (52.5%)	42 (21%)	53 (26.5%)
Willingness to move abroad	73 (36%)	44 (22%)	83 (41.5%)
Agree that L2 may be needed in the future life	188 (94%)	3 (1.5%)	9 (4.5%)
Agree that L2 gives advantages when applying for a job	180 (90%)	5 (2.5%)	15 (7.5%)
Agree that L2 facilitates working in the Internet	181 (90.5%)	4 (2%)	15 (7.5%)
Agree that English should be used by any educated person	163 (81.5%)	16 (8%)	21 (10.5%)
Agree that English is the main means of communication	161 (80.5%)	7 (3.5%)	32 (16%)
Mean arithmetic	151 (75.5%)	17,5 (8.77%)	31, 5 (15.78%)

and 34.5%, respectively), which might be a reflection of low L2 proficiency. Meanwhile, the question on whether L2 is among the most important subjects in the respondents' study program got 88% positive answers, and 72% agree that the more they study L2, the more they like it. Another positive finding is that 68% of the respondents would like to learn another foreign language.

For their attitudes towards the Western culture, more than half of the participants showed their positive view and interest in the culture of the target language. However, only 13% of respondents can boast that they know a lot about the English-speaking countries **Table 10**.

Other types of motivation

One of the important research areas was to study the levels of negative motivation, or motivation of avoidance (**Table 11**). The study revealed that the share of negatively motivated students equals nearly one tenth of the whole sample. Although this type of motivation apparently has the least impact on USUES students, these results may reflect a certain level of frustration due to the general lack of school-based knowledge **Table 11**.

Tables 12 and 13 represent the data regarding broad social and cognitive motivation with USUES students. It can be seen from the tables that broad cognitive motivation (40.1%) dominates over their broad social motivation (27.1%). It should be noted that the absolute majority of respondents (85.5%) mentioned support on the side of family and friends as an important motive for their L2 learning (**Tables 12 and 13**). Motivation of prestige is also an important component with USUES students (**Table 14**). With its arithmetic mean of 37.5%, the most frequent motive is that speaking good L2 boosts authority that got 83.5% of positive responds **Table 14**.

As for motivation of creative actualization, the results showed that it has the highest levels of all. This fact gives an opportunity to improve student motivation and attitudes to L2 learning by designing L2 study programs supporting students' creativity **Table 15**.

Language training needs and level of enjoyment

Given the participants' reasons to learn L2, these subjects were further asked to specify their own opinions to the idea of

Table 10 Structure of integrative motivation (including attitudes to the Western culture).

Questionnaire item	Yes	No	Not quite
Enjoy listening to and singing English songs	135 (67.5%)	13 (6.5%)	52 (26%)
Enjoy watching films in English	67 (33.5%)	33 (16.5%)	100 (50%)
Enjoy reading books in English	68 (34%)	35 (17.5%)	97 (48.5%)
Enjoy communicating with native speakers	95 (47.5%)	16 (8%)	89 (44.5%)
Would like to know more about native speakers	105 (52.5%)	24 (12%)	71 (35.5%)
Would like to learn another foreign language	136 (68%)	44 (22%)	20 (10%)
Would like people around to speak English	99 (49.5%)	35 (17.5%)	66 (33%)
Are interested in L2 culture and native speakers	127 (63.5%)	8 (4%)	65 (32.5%)
Know a lot about the target countries	26 (13%)	38 (19%)	136 (68%)
Agree that Americans are sociable and hospitable	101 (50.5%)	21 (10.5%)	78 (39%)
Agree that Englishmen are kind and friendly	98 (49%)	22 (11%)	80 (40%)
Agree that Germans are industrious, responsible and punctual	134 (67%)	18 (9%)	48 (24%)
Agree that the more they learn about L2 culture and native speakers, the more they like them	153 (76.5%)	17 (8.5%)	30 (15%)
Agree that any foreign language is a complicated subject requiring a few years' work	146 (73%)	9 (4.5%)	45 (24%)
Agree that the more they study L2, the more they like it	145 (72%)	30 (15%)	25 (12.5%)
Agree that for them, L2 is among the most important subjects in their study program	176 (88%)	6 (3%)	18 (9%)
Mean arithmetic	113.2 (56.5%)	23 (11.5%)	63.8 (32%)

Table 11 Motivation of avoidance.

Motives	Frequency	Per cent
Fear of being expelled	11	5.5
The fact of L2 inclusion in the study program as a compulsory course	27	14
Demanding teacher	6	3
Fear of falling behind the group	33	16.5
Mean arithmetic	19.2	9.6

Table 12 Broad social motivation.

Motives	Frequency	Per cent
Parents insist on studying L2	9	4.5
Desire to make parents feel happy and proud	21	10.5
The teacher's personal interest in the student's progress	16	8
Support on the side of family and friends	171	85.5
Mean arithmetic	54.2	27.1

taking more L2 training courses that would help improve their proficiency. The results in **Table 16** show that 41% of them responded positively, which is apparently less than the desired level. On the other hand, the absolute majority of the subjects realize that L2 is an important part of their study program as only 3% of them expressed a desire to cancel this subject from their educational program. 13% positive responses to the question if they would like the teaching methods used to be changed, as well as 1% of subjects wishing to change their teacher confirm that both the teachers and the teaching methods used on the whole are perceived as appropriate and enjoyable. A certain contradiction is represented by the responses to the last two questions in this subsection. Although rather a big proportion of the students (36%) would like L2 requirements to be higher, only 6.5% of them agree to spend more time doing homework. This may be due to a number of reasons. On the one hand, a high percentage of students have to get a part-time job in order to pay the tuition, and it may be an obstacle to spending a lot of time on L2 home assignments. On the other hand, a significant proportion of respondents fail to have developed the needed skills of independent work (and perhaps general skills of studying) during their previous stage of education. At the same time, it should be

noted that the ratio between classroom hours and independent work within the Russian university BSc study programs has been repeatedly changed towards classroom hours' reduction in the last few years. All this is apparently aggravated by the freshmen's low L2 proficiency **Table 16**.

Many researchers [17,18] showed that there is a positive relationship between the learning environment and student motivation, stating that a good learning environment helps to improve the learning outcomes, and inspires and boosts the learning spirit. The analysis shows that the general level of students' enjoyment of their L2 classes is high enough (**Table 17**) with mean arithmetic of 69.75%. However, quantitative data revealed that the teaching methods used were considered by more than a half of students to be an obstacle to their learning. Apparently, this is one aspect that could be improved by the university program designers **Table 17**.

As for classroom environment (**Table 18**), the data show that the majority of USUES students listen to their L2 teachers with attention, get a good understanding of the new material and rarely get distracted during the class. Nonetheless, the survey revealed unexpectedly high levels of student anxiety during L2 classes (**Table 18**).

To sum it up, the findings indicated that although the students were exposed to English in a university environment more frequently than students of most other universities, they had only mildly positive attitudes to L2 learning. The subjects recognized the importance of the English language but interestingly did not reveal high level orientation towards making effort to learn the language. The highest levels were revealed for the motivation of self-actualization.

The fact that respondents are more instrumentally than integratively motivated may be explained by limited contact with English native speakers in Russia and their low levels of awareness of the English-speaking countries culture.

The study found that aspects of motivation most desired to be changed were those associated with the language learning environment. This was common across the subjects. Rather a high proportion of respondents are not quite satisfied with the teaching methods used. The analysis also revealed high levels of student anxiety during L2 classes, which may be due to a number of reasons that should be further investigated.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that need to be recognized. First of all, at this stage the research area was limited to a general data analysis without taking into consideration a

Table 13 Broad cognitive motivation.

Motives	Frequency	Per cent
Liking L2 in general	102	51
Desire to be successful in studies	73	36.5
Enjoying L2 classes	56	28
Enjoying doing homework	90	45
Mean arithmetic	80.2	40.1

Table 14 Motivation of prestige.

Motives	Frequency	Per cent
Desire to be praised by the teacher	5	2.5
Desire to make better progress than other students in the group	20	10
Having a good command of L2 is prestigious	108	54
Speaking good L2 boosts your authority	167	83.5
Mean arithmetic	75	37.5

Table 15 Motivation of creative actualization.

Motives	Frequency	Per cent
Studying L2 is connected with learning important things and self-actualizing	176	88
Studying L2 contributes to self-development	186	93
Mean arithmetic	181	90.5

Table 16 Results of the students regarding language training needs.

Questionnaire item	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Would like to attend more L2 training courses which will help you to improve your proficiency	82	41	118	59	200	100
Would like to cancel this subject from the educational program	7	3.5	193	96.5	200	100
Would like the teaching methods to be changed	26	13	174	87	200	100
Would like to change your teacher	2	1	198	99	200	100
Would like the requirements to be higher	72	36	128	64	200	100
Would like to get more home assignment	13	6.5	187	93.5	200	100

number of indices such as age, major, gender etc. As well, the research did not include a longitudinal analysis of motivation changes although it is motivation decreases that are most concerning and most pertinent to examine. Another limitation is the fact of using a survey itself because direct questionnaires allow the participants to “disguise their ‘real’ attitudes” [19]. However, it is also claimed that survey studies eliminate the chances of manipulation of the situation by the researcher [20] which means that the researcher did not do anything to influence the participants while they had the freedom to give their own perspectives. One more limitation consists in the fact that lagging students are characterized by lower academic attendance, so they constitute a greater proportion of students who missed the survey. Given the disquieting tendencies revealed by the data obtained the real situation may apparently be more aggravated.

Discussion

There is a lot of research that has been carried out worldwide to investigate learners’ motivation and attitudes towards learning foreign languages, which supports the importance of these issues. Some studies have been carried out to investigate second/foreign language learners’ motivation, others focused on learners’ attitudes. These studies help the researchers to build their idea on how to identify university students’ motivation and attitudes towards the English language. The results of our research show that on the whole, USUES students apparently see L2 as playing an important role in their lives, either currently or in the future. Instrumental motivation dominates over integrative motivation. This is confirmed by the opinion of some researchers who believe that in a foreign language situation students are instrumentally

oriented [21,22]. With reference to previous research, it should be noted that while the present findings were consistent with a number of studies, they are at variance with the others [23].

Another finding was that L2 learning environment in USUES being in general positively perceived by students needs some changes, especially in the area of teaching methods. Literature shows that successful communication using L2 should result in students feeling some sense of accomplishment as L2 achievement strongly influences learner motivation [24].

Apparently, with some students L2 motivation decreases due to certain situational factors of the learning environment. Other researchers underline that the situational factors of the learning environment, such as the course, the teacher, and the groups, all influence students' learning motivation and attitude towards the activity [25]. Renninger [26] explains that it is possible for learners to develop and deepen interest in a topic over time, and that a person’s environment (teachers, peers, texts, activities, etc.) contributes to this interest development. Some studies also examined the relationship between the learning context and student motivation. Quantitative data revealed that the EFL environment can be considered by students to be an obstacle to their learning, and that student motivation positively correlated with the learning environment [27]. Relevant language improvement programs and activities are also discussed in accordance with the students’ language difficulties to increase their motivation in English language learning.

One more finding was the low level of L2 proficiency of respondents. The diminishing number of students in L2 learning at more advanced level of study is regarded as a general problem widely recognized by both teachers and researchers in second language acquisition [24]. This indicates that a number of students who start learning a second language terminate the study before they acquire a high proficiency [25]. The data obtained suggest that despite students' general wish to become proficient in L2, their effort to engage with language learning is considerably lower than the desired level. This phenomenon is discussed in the literature against the backdrop of students' transition experience from school to university [28]. Given that persistence in language study should be one of the most important factors for acquiring a higher proficiency, which is regarded as successful second language acquisition [29], this finding needs further research to reveal the causes of the phenomenon. The issues of learners’ motivation and attitudes have not been sufficiently discussed with regard to the Russian university students. In other words, little study has been conducted to explore the types of motivation and attitudes that students in the Russian Federation might have toward learning the English language. Therefore, this study would help understand these important issues with regard to the Russian university students. With regard to Russian EFL learners, the studies that have been undertaken mostly investigate learners’ motivation and attitudes towards the English language [30-33]. The literature corroborates our findings that in the Russian context the leading position is held by instrumental motivation to ESL learning, which is most notably connected with getting a job or further education abroad [34,35]. Russian researchers underline that in the last decade the problem of low

Table 17 Level of enjoyment (general data).

Questionnaire item	Yes	No	Not quite
Are satisfied with their tutorial	153 (76.5%)	7 (3.5%)	40 (20%)
Enjoy L2 classes	142 (71%)	2 (1%)	56 (28%)
Are satisfied with their teacher	168 (84%)	2 (1%)	30 (15%)
Are satisfied with the teaching methods used	95 (47.5%)	26 (13%)	79 (39.5%)
Mean arithmetic	135.5 (69.75%)	3.2 (1.6%)	52 (26%)

Table 18 Level of enjoyment (classroom environment).

Feelings and behavior during L2 classes	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Feel confident and comfortable	35 (17.5%)	79 (39.5%)	71 (35.5%)	15 (7.5%)
Are afraid or nervous	19 (9.5%)	50 (25%)	98 (49%)	33 (16.5%)
Get a good understanding of the language material	45 (22.5%)	90 (45%)	56 (28%)	9 (4.5%)
Listen to the teacher with attention	91 (45.5%)	83 (41.5%)	26 (13%)	0 (0%)
Enjoy the process	42 (21%)	62 (31%)	41 (20.5%)	3 (1.5%)
Feel bored and distracted	4 (2%)	45 (22.5%)	132 (66%)	19 (9.5%)
Prefer to read for other academic subjects	8 (4%)	43 (21.5%)	106 (53%)	43 (21.5%)

L2 motivation has become acute due to the growing importance of the English language on the one hand, and decreasing levels of students' proficiency on the other. A number of investigations undertaken had considerably discrepant results as researchers studied motivation on the basis of different educational institutions. However, on the whole these attempts show that in the Russian context the problem of L2 motivation is more aggravated than in most other countries. A recent survey held at Vitebsk Technical University revealed that about a half of first and second year students had low L2 motivation, 20% of them even expressed a wish to cancel L2 from their study program [34,35]. It might be beneficial to include in the future research more institutions and universities, both international and Russian as L2 learning motivation is one of the most important learning factors contributing to language-learning effectiveness and proficiency [36,37].

Conclusion and Implications to Further Research

This study was conducted to probe L2 motivational orientations of Russian university students. The findings present a picture which establishes that the students have mildly positive attitudes to L2 learning with the dominance of instrumental orientation over integrative motivation. However, their orientation towards making effort to learn the language is not high enough to produce the desired level of the language proficiency as a result of their language acquisition at university. Besides, the study revealed

high levels of anxiety during L2 classes. These factors are important and certainly need attention.

Although this paper represents an initial effort to examine motivation and attitudes to L2 learning at a separate Russian university it has also fostered questions regarding classroom environment, independent study time, and levels of student anxiety during L2 classes.

Thus the research questions guiding this further study may be formulated as:

1. What factors influence motivation to learn L2?
2. How does motivation change over time and which factors are associated with this change?
3. How do these factors interact with each other over time and in relation to developing L2 proficiency?
4. What causes student anxiety during L2 classes?
5. What ways are available to improve classroom environment and the level of L2 classroom enjoyment?
6. What teaching methods can be used and what extra-curricular events can be developed to boost up motivation to learn L2?

Further research attempting to answer these questions will contribute to our understanding of mechanisms influencing student motivation to learn L2 in the Russian context.

The information gathered can be compared by future researchers to reveal the changing patterns of L2 motivation both in the Russian and global context.

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