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Assessing English Learning Motivation among Thai University Students: A Cross-Faculty Perspective

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Abstract

This study delves into Thai university students' motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The research involved 33 participants from a Thai research university, with 15 students from the Faculty of Engineering (EG) and 18 from the Faculty of Liberal Arts (LA). The main objectives were to (1) identify the primary motivation underlying students' willingness to learn English, (2) identify the differences in motivation between EG and LA students, and (3) verify that students' milieu has a role in their motivation. The study employed a questionnaire on attitudinal constructs—integrative and instrumental motivation. Additionally, three open-ended questions were used. Results revealed that (1) both student groups displayed higher scores in integrative motivation, (2) while no significant differences were observed in motivation underlying students' willingness to learn English, LA students exhibited higher scores in both motivations compared to EG students, and (3) milieu played a pivotal role in shaping students' motivation to learn English. Furthermore, this study has significant implications for educators, emphasizing the necessity of acknowledging and addressing students' unique motivations and goals across various majors. While both groups exhibit integrative motivation, instrumental motivation provides additional support.

Keywords: *engineering, liberal arts, milieu, motivation, Thai EFL university students*

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation is recognized as one of the most influential predictors in facilitating productive and successful teaching and learning experiences. Studies by Huitt (2011) and Kleinginna & Kleinginna (1981) argue that motivation energizes and guides specific behaviors in L2 acquisition. Over time and engagement in activities, motivation can also predict students' ability to learn independently(Aripova, 2021). Regarding this, Umida et al. 2020) argued that learner motivation plays a vital role in helping students navigate challenges and develop strategies for overcoming complex language situations, fostering resilience in the learning process. Furthermore, motivation explains why individuals engage in certain activities, the duration of their commitment, and the effort exerted to achieve their goals. Gardner (1985) underscores the pivotal role of motivation in the success of language learning. Echoing , Dörnyei (2001); Gardner (1985) emphasizes that motivation plays a decisive role in language learning outcomes, manifested through learners' enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence in the language learning process. The relationship between the language learning process and motivation is integral; they influence each other, where motivation can enhance learning, and learning, in turn, can bolster motivation(Ausubel et al., 1968). Numerous studies have demonstrated the inseparability of these two entities, with Long et al. (2013); Wang (1993); Zhao (2012) employing motivation, types of motivation, and factors influencing motivation as variables. Recognizing learners' motivation allows language instructors to tailor specific treatments to enhance or sustain learners' motivation, thereby facilitating active language learning.

English has become a widely learned language globally (Crystal, 2003), creating an optimal environment for studies in L2 learning, and Thailand is no exception. As a rapidly developing country in ASEAN and Asia in recent decades, Thailand has experienced robust economic growth and optimism, leading to diversification in various sectors (Lawler & Atmiyanandana, 2003). Concurrently, Thais are compelled to learn English due to the increasing demand for English proficiency in various job sectors. Like other non-English-speaking countries, English has been part of the curriculum for Thai students since elementary school. Despite years of exposure to English, the learning outcomes often need improvement. Thus, understanding students' motivation to learn English can improve those learning outcomes (Riadil, 2020; Taukebayeva, 2021). Educators can gain valuable insights using Gardner (1985) framework, which identifies integrative and instrumental motivations. By unraveling these motivations, instructors can tailor strategies to individual and group needs, creating a more effective learning environment in Thailand's diverse linguistic and cultural landscape.

Gardner (1985) propose that integrative and instrumental motivations are not disparate entities but have distinct goals and characteristics. Students with integrative motivation show a positive attitude towards the target language's culture, embracing other ethnic groups, and actively participating in the language community. This positive attitude contributes to a high level of motivation, as supported by various studies (for example, Brown (2021); Masgoret & Gardner (2003); Saville-Troike (2005) saying that learners with integrative motivation are those who desire to integrate into the target language community, culture and become part of that society, and further wish to socialize or participate themselves in the target language group. Furthermore, they are also more open to other language communities and have a low level of ethnocentrism. Moreover, students with integrative motivation tend to be more persistent in their teaching-learning process, particularly when they face complicated tasks due to the internalized self-value system. This action implies their more remarkable achievement, compared to instrumentally motivated learners, since they put more effort into their teaching-learning process Wang (2008) as shown by Wang (1993) and Kitjaroonchai (2013).

On the other hand, instrumental motivation is seen as a motivation that promotes more success than learners who have integrative motivation. The reason behind this view is that learners are acquiring the target language for practical reasons instead of social implications, such as reading technical material, getting a high GPA, passing an exam, reaching a particular score or level in a language proficiency test, getting into a university, getting a promotion, or hired for a high paying job. In addition, instrumentally motivated learners mainly set their goals to attain external rewards, such as appraisal, personal fulfillment, the status of power, and increasing social status (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017).

Since motivation is closely related to attitude, Dörnyei (2001) proposes that motivation is related to a person's decision-making, the duration to accomplish, and the amount of effort utilized to do the task. Therefore, each person's motivation depends on the goal set (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). A similar proposal was previously shown by Oller et al. (1977) Although integrative motivation is seen as having a more significant result than instrumental motivation, Dörnyei (2001) argues that the two motivations are not the opposite. More likely, they are the two sides of a coin. Both of the motivations are positively related and contribute to the L2 acquisition. Interestingly, this argument was demonstrated in a study conducted by Man et al. (2018), showing that L2 learners perceive dual motivation.

Furthermore, another learning factor considered in this study is the environment, particularly the milieu. The social and physical environment in which language learners meet their interlocutors plays a critical role. Gardner & Lambert (1972) argue that learners' motivation is described through "attitude toward the other group in particular and toward foreign people in general and by his orientation toward the learning task itself" (p.3). Hence, the milieu could influence learners' motivation orientation and level. In a broader context, this milieu applies to their peers, teachers, and people who influence students' motivation; it could be anyone deemed essential or valuable for their education endeavors. However, Kormos et al. (2011) argued that the immediate social environment around students, including peer and parental support, significantly impacts what they want to achieve in their education and how they feel about themselves. Although, it does not necessarily directly motivate them to study harder. Such motivation must come from the students themselves (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In support of peers' roles, Wu et al. (2012) found that peer interactions positively impact students' confidence, satisfaction, and performance in an EFL setting. Similarly, Baranovskaya et al. (2021)emphasized the significant role of peer assessment in enhancing students' writing skills in the context of distance English education.

Regarding this milieu, Clément & Kruidenier (1983) proposed three contexts that mainly affect learners' motivation orientation and level: the ethnicity of the learner, the availability of other ethnic groups in the community, and the specific target language. In short, it can be said that "who learns what in what milieu" (p. 288). Parents, teachers, and peers are seen as the closest milieu learners have to influence their motivation. However, it is not necessarily only the relationship between them. However, relative status, exposure to the milieu, and familiarity in the learning environment are also essential to consider as the emergence of learners' motivation. Studies in diverse contexts have shown this relationship. In the Thai context, an empirical study by Phothongsunan (2019) asserted that milieus inside and outside the classroom, such as classroom atmosphere, lecturer, peer, peers' first language, and university facilities, are among the factors perceived as support in student participants' English learning. Similarly, in the Iranian context, (Rezaei et al. (2018) explained that a minimum amount of peer and familial support as part of students' milieu could help students learn English and potentially provide resources and opportunities for language learning.

Furthermore, this study addresses gaps identified from previous research within the field of motivation. Previous studies primarily focused on identifying students' motivation within the same group, potentially overlooking variations in motivation within different student populations, i.e., different programs, majors, or faculty. Moreover, there needs to be more literature regarding the limited exploration of the role of the milieu, which includes both societal and environmental factors influencing students' motivation. This gap creates a lack of understanding regarding the extent to which the milieu plays a role in influencing and shaping students' motivation to learn English. To fill this gap, the current study takes a comparative approach, examining motivation in two distinct groups of students from different faculties. Additionally, the study includes an analysis of the role of the milieu in influencing students' motivation, providing a comprehensive understanding of the entities or factors that impact their motivation and to what extent they impact students' motivation. Through this approach, the study attempted to contribute new insights to the motivation field, offering educators information for designing personalized curricula and teaching materials that consider the diverse motivational factors and entities within specific student populations.

In short, this study aims to uncover university students' motivation, categorizing it based on Gardner (1985) attitudinal construct in language acquisition motivation. Additionally, Clément & Kruidenier (1983) concept of students' milieu will be employed to provide further insights into the collected data. The study's objective is framed in these three research questions: (1) what is the primary motivation underlying students' willingness to learn English? (2) what are the differences in motivation between EG and LA students? (3) does the students' milieu affect their motivation?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-method approach. It combines qualitative and quantitative techniques suitable to explore and explain the complex aspects of topics in applied linguistics(Alhamami, 2019). In this case, language learners' motivation and milieu. According to Dörnyei (2007), this method helps overcome the weaknesses of each method. By combining these methods, the research aims to enhance the depth of quantitative results, providing a more prosperous and better understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This mixing is comparable to "putting flesh on the bones" (p.45).

Instrument

A questionnaire, comprised of Likert-scale items and three open-ended questions, is the sole data collection instrument in this study. Before filling out the questionnaire, the participants were informed that it would ask about their motivation to learn English and would not affect their academic scores. Then, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items by marking one of the six responses ranging from strongly agree to disagree on a six-point Likert scale strongly. Furthermore, the three open-ended questions in the questionnaire were presented to obtain a deeper understanding of student's motivation and the influence of their milieu on their language learning motivation.

The research instrument was designed with Google Forms and consists of two parts. The first part comprises three sections: participants' background information, such as age, gender, years of learning English, faculty of origin, and English proficiency. The second section of statement-questions is mainly based on Taguchi et al. (2009) and the last section is based on Clément and Kruidenier (1983). The second part is composed of three interview questions derived from Öztürk & Gürbüz (2013), asking students' beliefs regarding their language aptitude, self-assurance, and learning milieu. The questionnaire was written in English and Thai. The Thai translation is provided to prevent misunderstanding and misconception towards the statement-questions that might occur between participants. The

researcher asked his peer, to review the Thai translation. The items in the questionnaire are randomized based on the Google form's algorithm. Therefore, each participant might find the items in a different position than other participants. The randomization was aimed at enhancing the reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and accuracy of respondent-provided descriptions (Schriesheim et al., 1989). The questionnaire items utilized in this study are provided in the appendix at the end of this manuscript. Following the items, the three open-ended questions in the questionnaire are as follows: (1) Why do you want to learn English? (2) Are you considered highly or not motivated to learn English? Could you write down your reason for feeling so? and (3) What makes you think your friends, parents, or teacher supports you in learning English? The translations into Thai are also provided to the participants as follows: (1) เพราะอะไรคุณถึงต้องการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ (2) คุณคิดว่าการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษทำให้เกิดแรงจูงใจหรือไม่? ถ้าใช่หรือไม่โปรดระบุเหตุผลว่าเพราะอะไร. and (3) อะไรที่ทำให้คุณถึงคิดว่าเพื่อน, ผู้ปกครองหรือครูของคุณสนับสนุนคุณในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ?

Participants

Thirty-three students from two faculties participated in this study. The participants are recruited using the Snowball technique to get the specific group of students—first-year students learning English in the Faculty of Engineering (EG) and the Faculty of Liberal Arts (LA) at a research university in Thailand. This sampling technique was also selected for convenient distribution and to accommodate time limitations. The researcher contacted one student from each faculty and requested them to share the questionnaire link with their classmates. Students from LA, particularly those majoring in English, are invited because it is hypothesized that they possess a strong motivation and a supportive milieu for learning English due to their chosen primary and career path in the English field.

Furthermore, students from EG are invited to offer diverse perspectives, given the hypothesis that they are less likely to use English prominently in their future careers. In instances where these EG students aspire to use English in their future careers, it is intriguing to examine whether they exhibit similar motivation and support from their milieu compared to their LA counterparts. This comparative analysis delves into students' nuanced motivations and supporting environments across disciplines, offering valuable insights into the factors that drive language learning in both groups. Moreover, this diversity in career aspirations contributes to a comprehensive understanding of motivational factors and environments across different academic disciplines.

The LA students comprised 18 students, while the EG students were 15. Among them, 21 are female and 12 are male. Their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years old. The students were all native Thai. In this study, their names were not inquired and, thus, written in pseudonyms. Two participants claimed to have been learning English for 3-5 years, six students for 5-8 years, and 25 students for more than seven years. When asked to identify their proficiency level, 17 students identified themselves as intermediate-level learner, seven at an advanced level, four at a professional level, and five at a native level. Most of the participants mentioned various English proficiency test results with relatively high scores, such as CU-TEP 50+, GAT Eng 132.5/150, IELTS 5.0 to 8.5, Speexx B1.2, TOEFL 527, TOEFL iBT 99, and TOEIC 600-680.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected over one-time period, and one participant could only complete the questionnaire once. The participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire anytime and anywhere at their convenience within a week after the link was distributed. If the participants wrote their responses to the open-ended questions in Thai, the researcher requested his peer to help write the translation. Consequently, two analyses were conducted to understand the data better and explain the phenomenon through the research questions.

The quantitative data obtained were first organized and screened to find incomplete data. Then, data coding was applied to ease the organization using Microsoft Excel. The codes used were ITG for Integrative, ITM for Instrumental, and MIL for Milieu. Descriptive statistics and independent *t-test*s were employed to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and significant differences between the two groups using PASW Statistics 18. The level of significance was set at .05 for all statistical tests. Furthermore, an idea from Quinn & Corry (2002) was applied to interpret the calculation. The calculation was interpreted as if the means between 0.01 and 1.99 were read as strongly disagreeing, between 2.00 and 2.99 were read as disagreeing, between 3.00 and 3.99 were read as an ambivalent gesture, between 4.00 and 4.99 were read as agreeing, and between 5.00 and 6.00 were read as strongly agreeing.

Furthermore, this study utilized open and axial coding, as explained by Dörnyei (2007) to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions. This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore and interpret the data from the open-ended questions on students' motivation and the role of the milieu in learning English. Open coding involved the initial identification and labeling of concepts emerging from the data, allowing for the exploration of diverse themes. Axial coding focused on establishing connections between these codes, facilitating the emergence of patterns and relationships within the dataset. Through this coding process, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights into students' motivation and their milieu, providing a comprehensive understanding of the intricate factors influencing students' motivation in English language learning from both groups.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides findings from the questionnaire, aimed at a comprehensive exploration of students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The discussions address the three research questions: (1) what is the primary motivation underlying students' willingness to learn English? (2) what are the differences in motivation between EG and LA students? Moreover, (3) does the students' milieu affect their motivation? Examining the quantitative data aims to provide insights into the identification of the diverse factors influencing students' motivation within the Thai EFL context. Furthermore, the inclusion of responses from the open-ended questions intended to offer a nuanced perspective on participants' motivations and the factors influencing their language learning. To strengthen the arguments, relevant quotes from the open-ended questions are presented.

What is the primary motivation underlying students' willingness to learn English?

A comparative analysis utilizing the computed overall mean is provided in Table 1 below to answer the first research question. LA students score higher in all categories (integrative, instrumental, and milieu). Furthermore, it shows that both groups tend to have a higher score in integrative motivation, but LA students showed a slightly higher score (M= 4.42, SD= 1.12) than EG students (M= 4.07, SD= 1.14). Therefore, there is no difference in motivation orientation between groups. Furthermore, both groups agree that their milieu plays a role in their English learning. Although LA students indicate high scores of >4.99, thus showing strong agreement in the milieu (M= 5.12, SD= 1.10) compared to EG students (M= 4.24, SD= 1.13). Further discussion will be provided in the section answering the third research question.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of EG and LA students' motivation questionnaire

Calculation	EG			LA		
	ITG	ITM	MIL	ITG	ITM	MIL
$\bar{x}$	4.07	3.78	4.24	4.42	4.06	5.12
σ	1.14	1.23	1.13	1.12	1.36	1.10

To compare the significance of motivation among students in both faculties, in Table 2, an independent *t-test* was conducted to compare integrative motivation between EG and LA students. The calculations showed no significant difference found in the integrative motivation between groups of students. However, LA students showed slightly higher scores (M 4.42, *SD*= 1.12) than EG students (*M* 4.07, *SD*= 1.14); $t\ (31) = -1.80$, $p < .05$, $d = -1.80$.

Table 2. Independent *t-test* of integrative motivation between EG and LA motivation questionnaire

Group Statistics

	FACULTY		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
$\bar{x}$	dimension1	EG	15	4.06	.62	.16
		LA	18	4.42	.50	.12

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	Df
$\bar{x}$	Equal variances assumed	.34	.56	-1.8	31.00
	Equal variances not assumed.			-1.7	27.05

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
$\bar{x}$	Equal variances assumed	.08	-.35	.19
	Equal variances not assumed	.08	-.35	.20

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
$\bar{x}$	Equal variances assumed	-.75	.04
	Equal variances not assumed	-.76	.05

Similarly, as shown in Table 3, an independent *t-test* was conducted to compare instrumental motivation between EG and LA students. The result showed no significant difference in instrumental motivation between groups of students. However, it should be noted that, again, LA students showed slightly higher scores (M 4.06, *SD*= 1.36) compared to EG students (*M* 3.78, *SD*= 1.23); $t\ (31) = -1.39$, $p < .05$, d=-1.39.

Table 3. Independent *t-test* of instrumental motivation between EG and LA motivation questionnaire

			Group Statistics			
	FACULTY		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
$\bar{x}$	dimension1	EG	15	3.77	.63	.16
		LA	18	4.06	.53	.12

		Independent Samples Test			
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	Df
$\bar{x}$	Equal variances assumed	.40	.52	-1.38	31.00
	Equal variances not assumed.			-1.36	27.52

		Independent Samples Test		
		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
$\bar{x}$	Equal variances assumed	.17	-.28	.20
	Equal variances not assumed	.18	-.28	.20

The findings of this study indicate that both groups predominantly exhibit integrative motivation. This suggests that most students aspire to immerse themselves in English-speaking society and be integral to it. This inclination may stem from their exposure to a monoculture society or a desire to apply their language skills beyond the classroom, foreseeing benefits for their future higher language proficiency. The recognition of students' integrative motivation not only aids in instructional design but also provides valuable insights into potential predictors. Bonney et al. (2008) contend that integrative motivation is a robust predictor for compensatory and collaborative strategies, suggesting a positive correlation with active language use. This finding implies that by understanding students' integrative motivations, language instructors gain a predictive tool to anticipate and support the development of these strategies.

Additionally, Yu & Downing (2012) study asserts that integrative motivation is pivotal in influencing students' socio-cultural adaptation, a phenomenon notably observed among higher achievers. Those studies suggest that students driven by integrative motivation may exhibit enhanced socio-cultural adaptability, which could contribute to their overall academic success. Thus, by delving into students' motivations, educators gain valuable insights that extend beyond the classroom, offering a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing language learning outcomes.

Furthermore, recognizing integrative motivation among students holds significant implications for language instructors. It allows instructors to foster a classroom environment

that resonates with students' aspirations, making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Moreover, it is crucial to understand why students choose to learn English and how they plan to use their acquired skills. By recognizing these motivations, instructors can further tailor their teaching strategies to align with the course goals and curriculum, creating a more engaging learning experience for students. In line with this, He (2016) demonstrated that establishing a classroom environment corresponding to students' learning goals can enhance their motivation, help them set achievable language learning goals, and facilitate accurate attribution, increasing their interest in the subject matter.

In addition, the recognition enables instructors to incorporate authentic materials that align with students' envisioned specific course goals, mainly if it is an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. By recognizing students' motivations, instructors can strategically select authentic materials that resonate with their learning aspirations, enriching the learning experience Hapsari & Ratri (2014). This tailored approach enhances students' exposure to real-life language usage and contributes to a better understanding of the language in practical contexts. Moreover, such targeted instruction can alleviate students' anxiety by fostering a learning environment that directly connects with their motivations and aspirations (Svitlana, 2017). In conclusion, understanding students' integrative motivation becomes a guiding factor for instructors in creating a more effective and meaningful language learning experience for students.

What are the differences in motivation between EG and LA students?

To answer this question, the researcher highlighted three items that scored the highest and lowest between the two motivations (integrative and instrumental). The findings align with the first research question's first motivation, i.e., integrative motivation. The two student groups share similar views. As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, they incline integrative motivation, mainly to travel orientation and instrumentality (promotion); however, in different positions. Both groups strongly agree to item coded ITG 13, ITG 16, and ITG 17. The items mention that learning English is essential to help them travel abroad, beneficial for them to pursue further education and that a high-salary job requires a good command of English. Interestingly, in addition to the same items as LA students, EG students admitted that they also strongly agree with item coded ITG 15 and ITG 18, which falls into the instrumentality (promotion) factor. The two items highlight their desire to learn English for an appropriate occupation and promotion.

The open-ended questions also support the result from the quantitative data. When students are asked why they want to learn English, *Elena* and *Ella* emphasize that it is for their future. *James*, *John,* and *Simon* confirm that it is helpful for them to have a decent job in the future. *Emily* even envisions her career in the future by using English and talking to foreigners in daily settings. In a longer statement, *Jessica* affirms that it is essential to learn English "for the stability of our future careers and ourselves because if speaking, writing, can read English we think that we will not be unemployed."

Similarly, *Mia* also shares her view on how convenient it would be for her career when she can perform in English. She said, "I would like to learn English to use it in my career path and connect with people from other parts of the world. Additionally, it would also be convenient for me when traveling abroad." *Mia*'s statement also emphasizes their strong agreement toward learning English for Travel Orientation, mirrored in item coded ITG 13. *Sophia* believes that learning English is the first step for her to be able "to meet new things, want to travel, work, learn to stay abroad."

Both groups share identical three lowest-scoring items. Interestingly, items coded ITG 2, ITG 8, and ITG 7 have the same ranking in both groups. These items are included in Criterion Measures and English Anxiety factors. However, LA students exhibit identical

scores for items ITG 2 and ITG 8. One item also falls into this category, i.e., ITG 6.

Sequentially, the four items indicate that they feel they study harder than their classmates, they feel anxious when a native English speaker talks to them, they are afraid that they would look stupid due to their imperfect English, and they feel nervous and losing words when a non-Thai speak to them.

Regarding ITG 2, both groups are showing ambivalent gestures. They are still determining whether they put more effort into studying English than their peers. Furthermore, related to the English Anxiety factor in items ITG 8, ITG 7, and ITG 6, it is possible that students' exposure to native-speaker instructors at their university and experience in exchanging conversations with foreigners have contributed to their reduced anxiety. In response to the open-ended question, *Ava* mentions her lifelong interest in learning and conversing with foreigners in English, likely contributing to her reduced anxiety. This further conceivably eases her anxiety. Following that, she explains that this habit has made her "very attached to English, resulting in wanting to apply knowledge of English to future professions."

In conclusion, regarding integrative motivation, both groups share similar views regarding their motivation for learning English. Although categorized as integrative motivation, their primary motivation is promoted by the instrumentality of English proficiency, including future career prospects, personal fulfillment, and reduced anxiety. These findings are similar to those observed by Hengsadeekul et al. (2014), who find that integrative motivation has a significant role in pursuing further education. However, an instrumentality of English proficiency is at the top of their academic achievement. In a recent study, Zhang et al. (2020) emphasizes that the two motivations favor improving English proficiency among senior English-major students. They further highlight that the favor is "mediated by FLE" (Foreign Language Enjoyment) (p.9), which *Ava, Emma, Ella, Olivia, Mary,* and *Isabella also exhibit.*

Table 4. The three highest and lowest integrative motivation items from EG students

Rank	Factors	Item Code	Item	Score	
				$\bar{x}$	σ
1	Travel Orientation	ITG 13	Studying English is important to me because it will help me when I travel abroad.	5.47	0.64
2	Instrumentality (Promotion)	ITG 18	I could be promoted easily if I have a good command in English.	5.20	0.86
		ITG 15	By studying English, it will help me getting a good job.	5.13	1.06
3	Instrumentality (Promotion)	ITG 16	I need to study English because it could help me for my further studies.	5.13	0.92
		ITG 17	I think a high-salary job requires a good communication skill in English.	5.13	1.06
16	Criterion Measures	ITG 2	Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.	3.07	1.33
17	English Anxiety	ITG 8	I feel uneasy or anxious when a native speaker talk to me in English.	3.00	1.41
18	English Anxiety	ITG 7	I am afraid that I will look stupid because I speak imperfect English.	2.93	1.39

Table 5. Three highest and lowest integrative motivation items from LA students

Rank	Factors	Item Code	Item	Score	
				$\bar{x}$	σ
1	Travel Orientation	ITG 17	I think a high-salary job requires a good communication skill in English.	5.72	0.46
2	Instrumentality (Promotion)	ITG 13	Studying English is important to me because it will help me when I travel abroad.	5.56	0.78
3	Travel Orientation	ITG 16	I need to study English because it could help me for my further studies.	5.50	0.86
16	Criterion Measures	ITG 2	Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.	3.00	1.37
	English Anxiety	ITG 8	I feel uneasy or anxious when a native speaker talk to me in English.	3.00	1.41
17	English Anxiety	ITG 7	I am afraid that I will look stupid because I speak imperfect English.	2.67	1.61
18	English Anxiety	ITG 6	I feel nervous and I lost my words when non-Thai asked something to me in English.	2.50	1.38

Furthermore, in instrumental motivation, both groups exhibit similar inclinations to integrative motivation. Specifically, as shown in Table 6 and Table 7, two out of the six unique items, ITM 19 and ITM 22, scored identically. Among the three highest-scored items, EG students prefer ITM 19, ITM 22, and ITM 20, all of which are classified under the Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture factor. These items indicate their interest in watching English-speaking movies, enjoying English-speaking music, and watching English-speaking TV programs. Concurrently, LA students prefer five items to be in the three highest-scored items, in which the top position is occupied by three items, i.e., ITM 5, ITM 21, and ITM 22, followed by ITM 22 and ITM 19 on the second and third place respectively. These items are associated with the Family Influence and Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture factors. The five items reflect their belief that their parents wanted them to learn English for their future, their desire to interact with people from English-speaking countries, their enjoyment of English-speaking music and movies, and their curiosity about the culture of English-speaking countries.

Interestingly, LA students strongly agree with ITM 5 as the top instrumental motivation, while EG students express a slight difference in agreement with this item (*M*= 4.73, *SD*= 1.28). *Ella* and *Harper*'s explanation could help shed light on this matter. *Ella* mentions, "Because they said that using English is very important for my job in the future. So, they always support me in learning English or other languages." *Harper*'s parents share a similar perspective, as she stated, "I think it is because they always tell me that English is so important nowadays." They believe their parents' role is vital in their education and career. Therefore, they consider their family influence, specifically their parents, a crucial motivating factor in learning English. This milieu factor will be further discussed in the next section, answering the third research question. Concerning students' Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture, it is intriguing to observe how exposure to English-speaking culture through various entertainment forms such as movies, TV programs, and music could influence students' motivation to learn English. Research concerning audiovisual media language learning has established a ground for incorporating this teaching method in

language instruction (Ashcroft et al., 2018; Montero Perez et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2016).

Both groups display similar integrative and instrumental motivation in light of the above. This claim is attested by the numerous identical items found in the quantitative results from both groups. However, a slight difference is that LA students show more items to strongly agree with than EG students. This gesture implies that LA students place a slightly higher emphasis on certain motivational aspects, particularly those related to family influence and cultural exposure. Furthermore, it is also possible to consider that they have a deeper appreciation for the support and encouragement from their families in pursuing English language skills and a heightened interest in immersing themselves in English-speaking culture through various media. Otero et al. 2020) identify similar findings, indicating that parental support and control directly impact students' academic performance in Math and Language. These effects are also apparent indirectly through various factors, including the environment, satisfaction, study habits, and self-efficacy.

Moreover, combining their motivations Zhang et al. (2020) sheds light on the factors augmenting their commitment to learning English. Again, the influence of English-speaking culture through multimedia entertainment exhibited the multifaceted nature of motivation in this EFL context. This combination of integrative and instrumental motivations, family influence, and cultural exposure highlights the complex dynamics that contribute to students' dedication to English language acquisition (Ishag, 2021). Thus, understanding those complex matters can inform more personalized and effective methods of English language instruction in the Thai EFL context, further resulting in a positive increase in students' language learning experiences and outcomes.

Table 6. The three highest and lowest instrumental motivation items from EG students

Rank	Factors	Item Code	Item	Score	
				$\bar{x}$	σ
1	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 19	I like watching English-speaking movies.	5.13	0.92
2	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 22	I like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music, rap, R&B, etc.).	4.93	0.88
3	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 20	I like watching English-speaking TV programs.	4.80	0.94
32	Instrumentality (Prevention)	ITM 29	I have to study English because I don't want to get scolded by my teacher.	2.80	1.32
33	Ought-to L2 Self	ITM 14	I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	2.67	1.29
34	Fear of Assimilation	ITM 8	I think the culture of western countries who are using English could endanger Thai culture.	2.53	1.13

Table 7. Three highest and lowest instrumental motivation items from LA students

Rank	Factors	Item Code	Item	Score $\bar{x}$	Score σ
1	Family influence	ITM 5	I think that my parents wanted me to learn English for my future.	5.44	0.92
	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 21	I like meeting people from English-speaking countries.	5.44	0.92
	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 22	I like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music, rap, R&B, etc.).	5.44	0.92
2	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 19	I like watching English-speaking movies.	5.39	0.32
3	Attitudes to L2 Community and Culture	ITM 25	I would like to know more about people from English-speaking countries and their cultures.	5.28	0.75
32	Ethnocentrism	ITM 3	I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Thai culture.	2.39	1.24
	Fear of Assimilation	ITM 8	I think the culture of western countries who are using English could endanger Thai culture.	2.39	1.24
	Fear of Assimilation	ITM 9	Because of the influence of the English-speaking countries, I think the morals of Thai people are becoming worse.	2.39	1.42
33	Instrumentality (Prevention)	ITM 29	I have to study English because I don't want to get scolded by my teacher.	2.17	1.72
34	Ought-to L2 Self	ITM 14	I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	2.00	1.46

Does the students' milieu play a role in students' motivation?

Quantitative data and responses to open-ended questions were examined to determine whether students' milieu has a role in their English learning motivation. The researcher decided to include six factors for this examination: Social Expectation, Family Influence, Ought-to L2 Self, Instrumentality (prevention), Milieu, and Attitudes to Learning English. As shown in Table 8, the selected items represent students' milieu as explained in the introduction section of this study, such as those from people who put expectations on them, parents and family, people they respect, friends, peers' L1, and teachers. Furthermore, students' physical environment, such as the classroom, learning atmosphere, and subject matter, is included in the consideration.

Analysis of the twenty-four items in Table 8 reveals the following results. For EG students, 8% of the items were disagreed with, 50% received an ambivalent response, 42% agreed upon, and none received a firm agreement. In contrast, LA students disagreed with 13% of the items, expressed ambivalence towards 21%, agreed with 38%, and strongly agreed with 29%. The percentages indicate varying opinions between the two groups regarding their milieu.

Starting from the contrasting data set, LA students strongly agree on specific items, including ITM 5 in Family Influence, MIL 2 and MIL 3 in Milieu, and MIL 5, MIL 6, MIL 8, and MIL 9 in Attitudes to Learning English. These items encompass aspects related to parents, peers' native language, and subject matter. Consequently, the social and physical environments, particularly these three elements, significantly motivate LA students to learn English. This conclusion is further supported by insights from the open-ended question responses provided later in this section.

Furthermore, while EG students display an ambivalent stance, where they occasionally agree and sometimes disagree on half of the items, it is significant to emphasize the items they agree with in this study. Interestingly, some of the items are identical to those voted strongly agree by LA students. EG students voted agree on these items: ITM 5 in Family Influence, ITM 17 in Ought-to L2 Self, MIL 2 and MIL 3 in Milieu, and MIL 4, MIL 5, MIL 6, MIL 7, MIL 8, and MIL 9 in Attitudes to Learning English. These items are related to parents, societal and economic factors, the classroom, the learning atmosphere, and the subject matter. Thus, EG students are influenced by multiple factors motivating their English learning. Their responses to the open-ended question further support this conclusion.

Analysis of the open-ended questions reveals that *Emma,* an LA student, notes that those in her surroundings offer reminders, corrections, and continuous support. *Ava* also highlights specific expectations from those around her, especially since she is in an English major program. She affirms that

> Everyone around us sees that we have English language skills, including ourselves, who see that we are more proficient in language than other sciences and that all adults around us think and always tell us that if we have enough language ability, We may go to study, work, or live abroad.

Not only are expectations, but students also receive support. *Christopher* and *Mia* mention that they receive assistance and financial support from their peers and parents. He explains, "When having problems learning English, friends, and parents are always there to give advice." Similarly, *Mia* mentions, "My friends are always ready to help me practice speaking English, especially in class, and my parents are willing to fund me on courses related to English." In a similar tone, *Grace* recounts how her mother plays a pivotal role in teaching her English, fostering her autonomous learning skills. She adds, "My mother was the one who taught me English when I was younger and encouraged me to teach myself." As the stories went on, *Odette* receives significant support from her peers in pursuing education abroad. She confirms, "They help and support me when I take a scholarship to study abroad. They want me to learn English with native speakers, including learning the culture of foreign countries." More LA students share positive stories about familial support, particularly from their parents, which serve as a crucial source of motivation. *Maria* reveals that her parents consistently supports her in every endeavor she pursued. She remarks, "They always support me to do whatever I want." *Isabella*'s parents backed her because of her proficiency in English. She adds, "Because I'm better at English than any other subject. So, they support me to go further in this field." *Benjamin* notes that his parents' gesture of not interrupting him when he is learning is part of support. He elaborates, "They encourage me when I am learning English by not interrupting me." It is shown that peer and parental supports play a pivotal role in students' motivation. Similar to what was recounted by *Christopher* and *Mia,* Clausen & Andersson, (2020) assert that their student-participants' motivation are increasing during their peer learning activities. Correspondingly, Chandio et al. (2018) explain that there is a positive and significant correlation between parental encouragement and attitudes toward learning English among Pakistani students.

One EG student, *Sarah,* credits her parents for supporting her English-speaking skills since childhood. She notes, "Parents always supported me in having speaking tutor classes with native speakers since I was young. I feel more comfortable speaking than writing." *Elena*'s parents expect their daughter to expand her prospects of landing a decent job with her English skills. She elaborates, "Because they want me to improve and have more chances of finding jobs." In a Turkish setting, Ekiz & Kulmetov (2016) explain that parental expectations and a positive parental view on the subject matter and its learning method create a positive learning environment for students. In Vietnam,Dung (2020) illustrates that expectations and support from parents play a significant role in influencing students' motivation to learn English. As demonstrated in various settings, positive parental involvement in students' language learning consistently enhances student motivation. Conversely, it is possible that negative parental roles could potentially result in demotivation of students.

More EG students prefer to explain their motivation in learning English for job security. *Adam, Alice, David,* and *Jessica* are in the same boat. *Adam* and *Alice* succinctly explain their English proficiency mainly for work purposes. *Adam* expresses, "Future work, communication with people." Similarly, *Alice* highlights, "I can use it in my future work." *David* credits his father's background as the inspiration for him to excel in English. He wrote,

> It is because of my parents (mainly my dad's) experiences in the workplace where there is an abundance of foreigners - it is of utmost importance to be able to communicate and destroy and prevent that language barrier.

Lastly, *Jessica* emphasizes her motivation for job security, stating

"เพราะการเก่งภาษาอังกฤษซึ่งถือเป็นภาษาสากลที่ทั่วโลกยอมรับทำให้เราไม่ตกงาน" which can be translated to "being proficient in the English language, which is globally recognized, ensures that we will not lose our job." Studies like (Nguyen & Habók, (2021) assert that their Vietnamese non-English major university student participants are highly motivated to learn English because they desire to secure a good job. Furthermore, a study by Al-Malki (2018) finds that their freshmen participants regard securing a better job as one of the motivating factors in learning English other than understanding their learning material better and interacting with foreigners. This study's participants, consistent with previous studies' findings, conclude that developing English skills is crucial for securing a good job in the future, and their reasoning is well-founded. For those findings, Grishnova & Panaseiko (2021) argue that acquiring English skills enhances qualities sought after by employers, thereby boosting competitiveness and potentially leading to higher employee income.

In conclusion, the role of students' milieu in their motivation to learn English in higher education, both in EG and LA students, is obvious. For EG students, the influence of the milieu, particularly from factors like parents, societal and economic circumstances, classroom environment, learning atmosphere, and subject matter, plays a significant role in shaping their motivation to learn English. In a like manner, LA students majoring in English are also influenced by their milieu, with parents, peers' native language, and subject matter contributing to their motivation. The role of the milieu in students' motivation has been extensively explored. Ordem (2017) highlights that their student participants are "adversely affected by the social environment" (p.338). The lack of support and belief impact the participants negatively. Hence, this study implies the significant role that students' milieu can play in shaping students' motivation, whether positively or negatively. To support this notion, a study by Martin et al. (2017) explain that the positive influence from the milieu, including parents, teachers, and peers, contributes to students' higher expectations for themselves and more excellent value on their academic goals or tasks.

Similarly, interviews with students from Pakistan by (Rasool & Winke (2019) reveal that parents' expectations for students to excel in English, emphasizing its importance for future

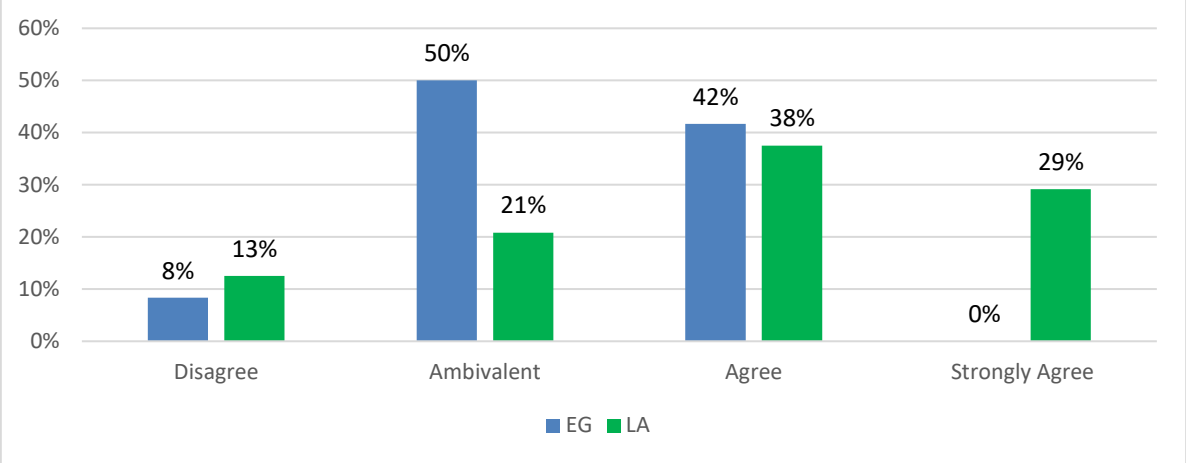
academic and career opportunities, as a customary practice in society. Thus, it has become among the most influential motivation factors for students to learn English. Hence, the collective evidence suggests that the milieu, encompassing various social influences, plays a crucial role in determining students' motivation to learn English.

This study carries practical implications for educators, suggesting that recognizing and addressing students' unique motivations is crucial for fostering effective language learning in higher education. The findings emphasize the need for personalized learning approaches, considering the unique motivational factors of students in different faculties. This study shows that although students from both faculties tend to have integrative motivation, they are driven by different factors. Therefore, by tailoring methods and materials to align with each group's specific goals and motivations, educators can enhance students' overall learning experiences and outcomes in the context of higher education, contributing to a more effective and targeted language learning environment.

Table 8. Milieu Calculation Result for EG and LA students

No	Factor	Item Code	Item	Calculation			
				EG		LA	
				$\bar{x}$	σ	$\bar{x}$	σ
1.	Social Expectation	ITG 9	I think that educated people could be determined from their ability in speaking English.	3.40	1.12	4.22	1.26
2.		ITG 10	I think people would respect me more if I could speak English well.	3.60	1.45	4.17	1.47
3.		ITG 11	I think people who are able to speak English fluently have a higher social respect.	3.47	1.46	4.17	1.25
4.	Family Influence	ITM 4	My parents do not care if I could communicate in English or not.	3.27	1.39	3.00	1.94
5.		ITM 5	I think that my parents wanted me to learn English for my future.	4.73	1.28	5.44	0.92
6.		ITM 6	My parents ask me to learn English harder than I am willing to do.	3.00	1.77	2.44	1.50
7.		ITM 12	I think to learn English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.	3.20	1.42	3.39	1.54
8.	Ought-to L2 Self	ITM 13	Studying English is important to me in order to bring honors to my family.	3.87	1.30	4.44	1.46
9.		ITM 14	I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	2.67	1.29	2.00	1.46
10.		ITM 15	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	3.73	1.28	3.89	1.60
11.		ITM 16	I learn English so I would not get a bad GPA.	3.60	0.74	3.78	1.77
12.		ITM 17	I learn English so I would not become jobless after I graduate.	4.40	0.83	4.61	1.69
13.		ITM 18	Being successful in English is important to me so that I can please my parents/relatives.	3.60	1.40	4.28	1.41
14.	Instrumen-tality (Prevention)	ITM 28	Studying English is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.	3.93	1.39	4.06	1.73
15.		ITM 29	I have to study English because I don't want to get scolded by my teacher.	2.80	1.32	2.17	1.72
16.	Milieu	MIL 1	My friends help me learning English better.	3.80	1.57	3.50	1.79
17.		MIL 2	I learn English in an environment in which all of the students are Thai.	4.80	1.08	5.56	0.92
18.		MIL 3	I want to learn other languages besides English.	4.53	1.30	5.67	0.97
19.		MIL 4	The classroom is convenient to learn English.	4.00	0.93	4.67	1.37
20.	Attitudes to Learning English	MIL 5	It's fun to learn English.	4.33	0.90	5.50	0.79
21.		MIL 6	I like to learn English very much.	4.07	1.10	5.28	1.02
22.		MIL 7	My English teacher is an enjoyable person. I like his/her way of teaching.	4.13	1.25	4.67	1.53
23.		MIL 8	If I could learn English more than I do now, I would join it.	4.13	1.19	5.67	0.69
24.		MIL 9	I always look forward to English classes.	4.33	0.90	5.56	0.86
Average				3.81	1.13	4.25	1.10

Graph 1. Students' Agreement toward Milieu Items



CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the role of integrative and instrumental motivation and milieu in understanding students' motivation to learn English. The findings indicate that both groups of students share a similar integrative motivation to learn the language. However, Liberal Arts (LA) students dominate in all categories in this study. The mean score shows that LA students have a higher score in both integrative and instrumental motivation, as in the milieu, compared to Engineering (EG) students. While this dominance does not necessarily imply better English proficiency, it reflects their higher perceived motivation and a more supportive milieu.

Furthermore, this study sheds light on motivation among students from different faculties and verifies that the milieu has a vital role in language learners. It is noted that LA students exhibit influence from parents, peers' native language, and subject matter. In contrast, EG students come from parents, societal and economic factors, the classroom, the learning atmosphere, and the subject matter. Hence, instructors must be mindful of the content they deliver to students and consider students' motivation and environment to optimize language learning outcomes while aligning with the course's objectives. Furthermore, parental influence, particularly among LA students, highlights the importance of parental support and encouragement. Finally, this study suggests that acknowledging and addressing students' unique motivations is crucial for effective language learning in higher education. It underscores the need for personalized approaches based on diverse motivational factors among students in different faculties, enhancing students' overall learning experiences and outcomes. Additionally, educators and institutions should encourage parental involvement and provide resources to help parents better understand their role in fostering English language acquisition through their children's motivation.

This study has limitations stemming from the time constraints during data collection, which coincided with students' final exams. Due to these time limitations, the researcher faced challenges contacting students from other faculties for participation. Thus, the sample only partially represented the diversity across various academic disciplines. To improve the generalizability of the findings, increasing the number of participants and including students from diverse faculties is recommended. Additionally, incorporating interviews in the data collection process would provide a more in-depth understanding of students' motivations in each faculty and the ability to compare them. Furthermore, future research could consider analyzing students' socio-economic backgrounds as a factor in the analysis and findings to enrich the study.

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