



**Research article**

# **The relationships between attitude, self-confidence, compensation strategies, teacher evaluation and class evaluation in Iranian university students**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationships between attitudes towards language learning, self-confidence, compensation strategies, teacher evaluation and class evaluation of EFL students in Iran. The study also discusses the variables which affect attitude toward learning English and compensation strategies most. The instrument used in the study was the English version of the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (Espinosa, 2007) and the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning developed by Oxford (1990). Only compensation strategies were chosen for the study from SILL. The questionnaire consisting of 40 Likert items was administered on 50 EFL students in approximately 30 minutes. The results of the Likert scale items were coded into values from 1 to 5. Responses were analyzed by using inferential statistical techniques including Pearson *r* and Multiple Regression. Teacher evaluation and self-confidence were the best predictors of attitude toward learning English and compensation strategies respectively.

## **Keywords**

attitude; self-confidence; compensation strategies; teacher evaluation; class evaluation

## **For citation**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gardner who is one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition focused on learning motivations. He (1985) specified four aspects of motivation: (1) a goal, (2) effortful behavior to reach the goal, (3) a desire to attain the goal, and (4) positive attitudes toward the goal. However, according to Gardner, a goal was not necessarily a measurable component of motivations; instead, a goal was a stimulus that gave rise to motivation. Therefore, Gardner identified two primary orientations: (1) integrative, which is a favorable attitude toward the target language community, and (2) instrumental, which explains the reasons for learning the target language (Gardner 1985).

Clement (1980) considered self-confidence as part of the integrative motivation factor. Self-confidence is a combination of high perceived proficiency and low level of anxiety. Self-confidence develops from experience with the second language. Low self-confidence is related to both high second language anxiety and second language writing anxiety. Language learning strategies are behaviors used by learners to enhance their own language learning, such as solving problems, accomplishing tasks, meeting objectives, and achieving goals (Oxford 1990, 1992).

Oxford (1990) created a taxonomy of different strategies divided into two main categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies. The direct strategies deal with (1) memory strategies—entering and retrieving of information; (2) cognition strategies—manipulation of language for reception and production; and (3) compensation strategies—overcoming of limitations in existing knowledge. The indirect strategies deal with (1) metacognition strategies—organizing and evaluating learning; (2) affective strategies—managing and controlling emotions and attitudes; and (3) social strategies—learning a language with the help of others.

There has been no study that considers the relationship among compensation strategies, attitude, self-confidence and class and teacher evaluation.

In this article, compensation strategies used by English students and their relationship with attitude, self-confidence and class and teacher evaluation were studied.

### *Research Questions*

1. To what extent will attitude toward learning English, self-confidence, compensation strategies, teacher evaluation and class evaluation correlate with each other?
2. Which of these variables affects attitude toward learning English most and to what extent?
3. Which of these variables affects compensation strategies most and to what extent?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### *2.1. Participants*

In this study 50 participants were selected. All of them were sophomore English students studying at Kashan University, Iran. Their age ranged from 19 to 22. From among the subjects, 28 were female and 22 were male.



## 2.2. Data collection

Data collection was conducted by classroom teachers in the students' classrooms. The data were collected in one session from two English classes whose students majored in English.

## 2.3. Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) which was developed to measure a set of variables believed to have an influence on SLA. Furthermore, AMTB has been changed several times to make it workable for the populations of specific studies. The instrument used by Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret (1997) also included measures of self-confidence and measures of interest. The items were originally designed for English-speaking Canadian university-level students toward the French language. The scales attitude toward learning French (10 items) was adopted to refer to the English language.

Gardner and his associates added four items to the self-confidence developed by Clément and Kruidenier (1985) to measure self-confidence. The scales used in this study include the self-confidence given ability, self-confidence ability controlled and the items added to the self-confidence scale by Clément and Kruidenier (1985), for a total of 15 items measuring self-confidence.

The Strategy Inventory of Language Learning was developed by Oxford (1990). The final version of SILL composes of memory strategies (9 items), cognitive strategies (13 items), compensation strategies (6 items), metacognitive strategies (9 items), affective strategies (5 items) and social strategies (6 items). It should be pointed out that only compensation strategies were chosen for the present study.

In addition, two Likert scales designed by Espinosa (2007), evaluation of the teacher and evaluation of the class, were used. Five Likert items were written for each variable. The scales used to measure each variable were presented to the participants in the form of a questionnaire.

## 2.4. Procedure

The scales in Attitude and Motivation Test Battery and the Strategies inventory for language learning were included in one instrument (see Appendix A). The directions and the items of the instrument were in English. The instrument was administered in one session.

A pilot test was administered on 10 subjects. The subjects were given a questionnaire consisting 45 items. 5 items were deleted because of lack of reliability. Then the questionnaire which consisted of 40 items was administered in approximately 30 minutes. After reading the directions, teachers asked students to choose from among the five response options on the Likert scale.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The results of the Likert scale items were coded into values from 1 to 5. A score for scale consisted of the sum of the scores in that scale. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS 14.0.

After the scoring procedure, the correlations between attitude toward learning English, self-confidence, compensation strategies, teacher and class evaluation were computed. Bivariate Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. To address the second and third research questions, Multiple Regressions concerning the variables involved were calculated.

### 3. RESULTS

At first, an analysis of reliability was conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha. The alpha was 0.755 for the five variables which showed a high reliability. It indicated the fact that the inter-consistency between the items in the scales was high.

In addressing the first research question, the correlation between all of the variables was computed (Table 1). The two-tailed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used for this purpose.

**Table 1.**

Class evaluation	Teacher Evaluation	Compensation Strategies	Self-confidence	Attitudes toward learning English	
<b>.442(**)</b>	<b>.554(**)</b>	<b>.408(**)</b>	<b>.280(*)</b>	1	Attitudes toward learning English
.001	.000	.003	.049		
50	50	50	50	50	
<b>.491(**)</b>	<b>.677(**)</b>	<b>.708(**)</b>	1	<b>.280(*)</b>	Self-confidence
.000	.000	.000		.049	
50	50	50	50	50	
<b>.431(**)</b>	<b>.602(**)</b>	1	<b>.708(**)</b>	<b>.408(**)</b>	Compensation Strategies
.002	.000		.000	.003	
50	50	50	50	50	
<b>.774(**)</b>	1	<b>.602(**)</b>	<b>.677(**)</b>	<b>.554(**)</b>	Teacher Evaluation
.000		.000	.000	.000	
50	50	50	50	50	
1	<b>.774(**)</b>	<b>.431(**)</b>	<b>.491(**)</b>	<b>.442(**)</b>	Class evaluation
	.000	.002	.000	.001	
50	50	50	50	50	Total

Notes: \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between attitude toward learning English and self-confidence was 0.280 (r=0.280, p<0.05). Correlations between other variables were as follows:

Attitude toward learning English and compensation strategy (r=0.408, p<.001), attitude toward learning English and teacher evaluation (r=0.554, p<0.001), attitude toward learning English and class evaluation (r =0. 442, p<0.001), self-confidence and compensation strategies (r=0.708, p<0.001), self-confidence and teacher evaluation (r=0.677, p<0.001), self-confidence and class evaluation (r=0.491, p<0.001), compensation strategies and teacher evaluation

( $r=0.602$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), compensation strategies and class evaluation ( $r=0.431$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and teacher evaluation and class evaluation ( $r=0.774$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

To address the second research question, the correlation between attitude and other variables was calculated. The highest correlation coefficient was related to attitude and teacher evaluation ( $r=0.554$ ). Then a Multiple Regression between independent variables and dependent variable (attitude toward learning English) was computed so as to figure out the level of relationship between the variables, and to find out which variable could be a good predictor of attitude toward learning English (Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2.** Model Summary

Std. Error of the Estimate	Adjusted R Square	R Square	R	Model
6.151	0.302	0.359	0.599(a)	1

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Class evaluation, Compensation Strategies, Self-confidence, Teacher Evaluation

**Table 3.** Coefficients(a)

Sig.	T	Standardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Model
		Beta	Std. Error	B		
.001	3.568	-	5.559	19.836		(Constant)
.093	-1.716	-.324	.123	-.211		Self-confidence
.125	1.561	.272	.291	.454		Compensation Strategies
<b>.013</b>	2.572	<b>.587</b>	.447	1.149		<b>Teacher Evaluation</b>
.873	.160	.030	.392	.063		Class evaluation

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Attitudes toward learning English

In Table 2, we have ( $R=0.599$ ), and in Table 3 we have coefficients. It shows that only teacher evaluation has a significant correlation ( $p=0.013$ ) and has the highest Beta value ( $B=0.587$ ).

In addressing the third research question, the correlation between compensation strategies and other variables was calculated. The highest correlation coefficient was related to compensation strategies and self-confidence ( $r=0.708$ ). Then the Multiple Regression between independent variables and dependent variable was computed to figure out the level of relationship between the variables, and to find out which variable could be a good predictor of compensation strategies (Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 4.** Model Summary

Std. Error of the Estimate	Adjusted R Square	R Square	R	Model
3.069	0.514	0.553	0.744(a)	1

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Class evaluation, Attitudes toward learning English, Self-confidence, Teacher Evaluation

**Table 5.** Coefficients(a)

Sig.	T	Standardized Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Model
		Beta	Std. Error	B	
.196	1.312	-	3.083	4.045	(Constant)
.125	1.561	.189	.072	.113	Attitudes toward learning English
<b>.000</b>	4.256	<b>.585</b>	.053	.228	<b>Self-confidence</b>
.506	.671	.136	.238	.159	Teacher Evaluation
.776	-.286	-.045	.195	-.056	Class evaluation

Note: a Dependent Variable: Compensation Strategies

In Table 4 we notice that the regression run on the data, that is (R=0.708). Table 5 we depicted the coefficients involved. It shows that only self-confidence has a significant correlation ( $p=0.00$ ) and has the highest Beta value (B=0.585).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to gain some insight into learners' attitude and motivation.

Let us consider research question 1:

To what extent will attitude toward learning English, self-confidence, compensation strategies, evaluation of the teacher and evaluation of class correlate each other?

Regarding the correlations, we see that all the variables enjoyed high relationship. The highest correlations proved to be related to teacher evaluation and class evaluation ( $r=0.774$ ), and self-confidence and compensation strategies ( $r=0.708$ ). This shows that the students who evaluated their teachers favorably also evaluated their classes positively and conversely those who had a negative attitude towards their teachers manifested the same view about their classroom environment. In addition, students who tended to utilize the compensation strategies more prevalently turned out to enjoy higher levels of self-confidence.

Moreover, self-confidence and teacher evaluation manifested high correlations ( $r=0.677$ ). It shows students with high self-confident evaluated their English teachers positively and they believed that their English teachers' role in their self-confidence was effective and crucial. Also, self-confidence and class evaluation had a relatively high correlation ( $r=0.491$ ), but this correlation was lower than the correlation between self confidence and teacher evaluation. Comparatively, teachers' role is higher than classes' role in learning English in regard with self-confidence.



The relationship between attitude toward learning English, and teacher evaluation and class evaluation was relatively high. It means that attitude can considerably affect students' evaluation of teacher and class.

The lowest correlation was related to attitude and self-confidence ( $r=0.280$ ). It means that there is not a strong relationship between these two variables.

Let us consider research question 2:

Which of these variables affects attitude toward learning English most and to what extent?

In addressing the second research question, Multiple Regression between attitude and other variables was calculated. It indicated that the teacher evaluation had the highest Beta value ( $B=0.587$ ) as the independent variable and could be a good predictor of attitude toward language learning. It means that those students who had more faith in their English teachers' abilities proved to have a more positive attitude toward language learning as well.

Let us consider research question 3:

Which of these variables affects compensation strategies most and to what extent?

In addressing the third research question, Multiple Regression between compensation strategies and other variables was calculated. The given results showed that self-confidence as the independent variable had the highest Beta value ( $B=0.585$ ) and could be a good predictor of compensation strategies. It could be interpreted that those students who had higher self-confidence tended to use compensation strategies more.

For further research, researchers can consider the relations of other factors such as self-esteem and self-efficacy with language learning strategies, and learners' motivation and attitude.

## Appendix

### Adopted AMTB and SILL questionnaire

Age: .....

Gender: Male  Female

I'm studying in: year 1  2  3   
4  postgraduate

		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Undecided	Some-what disagree	Strongly dis-agree
1	English is really great.					
2	I really enjoy learning English.					
3	I love learning English.					
4	I plan to learn as much English as possible.					
5	Bilingual teachers should teach more English.					
6	English is one of my favorite subjects.					
7	I find the study of English fun.					
8	Learning English is a good use of my time.					



9	When I finish this course I will try to learn English more because I am very interested in it.					
10	Learning English is good for any person.					
11	I feel more confident when I need to use my English than others who know as much English as I do.					
12	I'm as sure of myself using my English as anybody else who knows as much English as I do.					
13	I am as confident using English as other students who know as much English as I do.					
14	I have as much confidence in my English skills as others who know as much English as I do.					
15	I can communicate in English as well as others who know as much English as I do.					
16	I'm sure I could speak English well in almost any situation.					
17	When the English is spoken to me, I feel I can understand most of it.					
18	I feel comfortable practicing my English almost any time and place.					
19	I believe that I can read and understand most books and stories written in English.					
20	Despite the fact that I may not speak English like a native, I feel confident using my English.					
21	Even when I make mistakes speaking English, I still feel I can communicate in English.					
22	I will be confident if I have conversations with Englishmen, despite the errors I will make.					
23	It doesn't matter how much English I know, I feel confident using it.					



24	I feel confident using English, even though I may not speak English well.					
25	To understand unfamiliar English words, I sometimes guess their meanings.					
26	When I can't think of a word in English, I use gestures.					
27	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.					
28	I read English without looking up very new word.					
29	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.					
30	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.					
31	My English teachers help me to learn English.					
32	I learn a lot of English from my English teachers.					
33	What I learn from my English teachers help me to improve my English.					
34	My English teachers help me to understand more English.					
35	My English teachers know how to teach English.					
36	I know more English now because of what I'm learning in my English classes.					
37	I have improved how I read in English in my English classes.					
38	I have improved my writing in English classes.					
39	I can practice my English in my English classes.					
40	My English classes are good places to learn English.					



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