

## Language Learning Motivation: A Comparative Study between English and Mandarin Language Learners

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### Abstract

The current study was conducted with the objectives of investigating the level of language learning motivation among Malaysian university students in comparison between two preferred languages, which are English as a second language (ESL) and Mandarin as a foreign language (MFL) and at the same time, identifying the motivational orientations among the participants of this study. This study adapted quantitative methodology to measure the level of language learning motivation as well as the motivational orientation among respondents. The participants consisted of 330 students from three higher learning institutions where English and Mandarin are offered as language subjects. In general, students who participated in this study displayed a high level of language learning motivation for both languages. However, the findings showed that the students were highly motivated toward learning English as compared to Mandarin. In the perspective of motivational orientation, students are more extrinsically inclined to learn English and Mandarin. Students are more extrinsically motivated to learn English because they think both English and Mandarin will someday be useful in getting a job. The study supports the claim that different languages learned might trigger different emotional responses from learners. Hence, the results from this study also assisted in the discussion of the commandments on how language educators can motivate their learners.

**Keywords:** *language learning motivation, English as Second Language (ESL), Mandarin as Foreign Language (MFL)*

### Introduction

Generally, motivation refers to the various physiological and psychological factors that cause someone to act in a specific way at a particular time (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2008). On a contrary, motivation in language learning, either in second or foreign language, is the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced from language activity (Gardner, 1985). The study on motivation is still relevant up to this point of time as many researchers have proven its importance in learning any target language. Motivation can overcome any deficient conditions in the context of language learning such as insufficient language input in learning environment, scarce opportunities for interaction with native speakers, minimal role models to promote language learning and lack of widespread acceptance of the idea to become proficient in target language (Rost, 2006).

## **Literature Review**

### **Definitions of Language Learning Motivation**

From the paradigm of second language learning, Cook (2000; as cited in Mahadi & Jafari, 2012) claims that motivation plays a significant role in second language acquisition if compared with another two influencing factors of second language acquisition, namely age and personality. Thus, Gardner (1985) defines motivation in second language (L2) learning as the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced from language activity. Gardner (1985) stated the three components involved in L2 motivation including (1) motivational intensity, (2) desire to learn the language and (3) an attitude towards the act of learning the language. Consequently, motivation in L2 learning is presumed as the injection of energy to language learners' central mental aspects that subsumes effort, cognition (want or will) and affective (task enjoyment).

The study on motivation is still relevant up to this date as many researchers have proven its importance in learning any target language. Motivation can overcome any deficient conditions in the context of language learning such as insufficient language input in learning environment, scarce opportunities for interaction with native speakers, minimal role models to promote language learning and lack of widespread acceptance of the idea to become proficient in target language (Rost, 2006). Motivation is also an effective and helpful factor in the process of language learning for both educators and learners (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). Educators need to be aware on the existing role of motivation in language learning classroom as it can either activate or deactivate learners to respond to language lesson in their classroom. As for learners, motivation is an instrument for them in utilising language according to their needs. In addition, motivation in language learning would also influence learners' attitude towards the language. In countries where target language learning is impeded by the presence of the mother tongue, learners can easily lose their interest on learning either second language like English or foreign language such as Mandarin as they perceived that learning these languages are not significant in their community (Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013). Shortly, it can be said that motivation acts like a reason to convince learners on the purposes of learning the target language apart from their mother tongue.

### **Types of Motivation or Motivational Orientation**

This study will solely be using the Self-Determination Theory as introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985; as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000) which is Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation to analyse the outcome of which types of motivation that the learners would implement in either second or foreign language learning. In fact, motivation is an important factor in learning a foreign language regardless of how complex the target language is. Therefore, it is important to know and realize the reasons for some choices made by learners as reasons for them to learn any language, regardless if it is a second or a foreign language. Understanding the real motivation behind studying the target language helps to increase learners' performance by influencing the learners' decisions based on their knowledge on motivation of achievement (Meyad, Roslan, Chong & Haji, 2014). In Mandarin language learning specifically, Haw, Awang and Ahmad (2016) stated that primary

school learners in Malaysia adapting different types of motivation whereby the types of motivation adopted by the learners fall under the notion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic type of motivation deals with behaviour performed for its own sake, in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity. Under intrinsic motivation, Vallerand (1997) posited the existence of three subtypes of intrinsic motivation: (1) to learn (engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of understanding something new, satisfying one's curiosity and exploring the world); (2) towards achievement (engaging in an activity for the satisfaction of surpassing oneself, coping with challenges and accomplishing or creating something); and (3) to experience stimulation (engaging in an activity to experience pleasant sensations).

In previous study conducted by Tan, Ooi and Ismail (2012), their study showed that the learners have a strong inclination towards intrinsic orientation. The learners learned the language for their own interest, enjoyment and satisfaction. One possible explanation is that the learners in their study were allowed to learn any foreign language they like. Thus, the learners chose Mandarin due to the inherent pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction in learning it.

According to Zubairi and Sarudin (2009), they mentioned that is also encouraging to know that Malaysian learners were equally motivated to learn a foreign language for intrinsic reasons. The results from their survey revealed that learners from both universities (UKM and UiTM) learn a foreign language because they wanted to meet people of different cultures and languages, participated in their activities and enjoyed the foreign language learning experience. In the same study, it was found that learners from UiTM were motivated to learn a foreign language for intrinsic reasons significantly higher than UKM learners. The intrinsic reasons given are as follows: (1) I would really like to learn many foreign languages, (2) Learning a foreign language is an enjoyable experience, (3) I want to read the literature of another culture in the original language, (4) It is important for everyone to learn a foreign language, and (5) If I were visiting a foreign country, I would like to be able to speak the language of the people.

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

On the other hand, extrinsic type of motivation involves performing behaviour as a mean to an end, that is, to receive some extrinsic reward (e.g. good grades) or to avoid punishment. It can be further divided into four types along a continuum between self-determined and controlled forms of motivation (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). External regulation refers to the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, coming entirely from external sources such as rewards or threats (e.g. educator's praise or parental confrontation). Introjected regulation involves externally imposed rules that the learner accepts as norms he or she should follow in order not to feel guilty. Identified regulation occurs when the person engages in an activity

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because he or she highly values and identifies with the behaviour and sees its usefulness. The most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation, which involves choiceful behaviour that is fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs and identity (e.g. people deciding to learn a language which is necessary for them to be able to pursue their hobbies or interests).

Younger language learners such as primary school learners are extrinsically motivated when it comes to their language learning. This has been proven by the respondents who come from rural area of FELDA from the previous study conducted by Che Mat and Md Yunos (2014). This common phenomenon among language learners asserts that language learners take language learning for granted and not putting much responsibility for their own learning. Not only that, learners are more focused on getting good grades and approval from other which implicate on their high level of extrinsic motivation but slightly lower in intrinsic motivation (Lau & Elias, 2011).

To illustrate this, the popularity of Mandarin as a foreign language among university learners is triggered by employment purpose as learners from Malay background believes that being proficient in Mandarin is an added value when dealing with Mandarin speaking businessmen in Malaysia (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009). In the same study, UKM learners exhibit higher extrinsic reason when learning a foreign language due to: (1) Other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language, (2) My friend(s) encouraged me to learn a foreign language, (3) My educator(s) encouraged me to learn a foreign language, and (4) I need to complete a foreign language requirement to graduate.

## **Problem Statement**

This comparative study concerns on two pertinent aspects of motivation namely level of motivations (i.e. in general and the comparison between English as a Second Language, ESL and Mandarin as a Foreign Language, MFL) and types of motivation (i.e. extrinsic and intrinsic) among Malaysian university students while learning English and Mandarin. In addition, there is also a gap in literature where it has been identified that the comparative study involving two languages between English and Mandarin in the population of East Asian community is lacking. According to Che Musa, Koo and Azman (2012), the scenario of limited English proficiency among Malaysian learners is caused by learners who display unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language. This current study would also like to introspect the same situation by not only looking language learning motivation among Malaysian university learners in English language, but for Mandarin as well.

## **Research Objectives**

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the level of language learning motivation among Malaysian university students.
2. To compare the level of motivation among Malaysian university students learning ESL and MFL
3. To determine dominant types of motivation that encourages university students in ESL and MFL learning.

## **Research Questions**

Based on the objectives outlined above, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of ESL and MFL motivation among Malaysian university students?
2. Which language (either ESL or MFL) has the higher level of motivation in language learning among Malaysian university students?
3. Which dominant types of motivation that encourage university students in ESL and MFL learning?

## **Methodology**

The present study was conducted by utilizing quantitative approach, in pursuance for the findings of the study to be generalized to the whole population of Malaysian university students. The aspects that will be discussed in this section are how the respondents are being selected, how data is collected, the instrument employed in the study, and how the data will be analysed.

## **Selection of Respondents**

This study was conducted on Diploma and Degree students who enroll in English Language Course and Basic Mandarin language class. The respondents are aged within the range of 18 to 26 years old. 245 female students and 85 male students participated in this study. In terms of race, 97 participants are Malay, 130 participants are Iban, 34 participants are Bidayuh, 27 participants are Melanau, 9 participants are Kayan, 4 participants are Dusun, 1 Chinese participant and 28 participants come from ethnics such as Berawan, Bisaya, Bugis, Jawa, Kadazan, Kedayan, Kelabit, Kenyah, Lun Bawang, Murut, Orang Asli Semenanjung, Sebu and Sungai. By employing cluster sampling method, the sample of this study consists of Diploma and Degree students from three higher learning institutions: 308 from UiTM, 14 from Kolej Profesional MARA and 8 from UNIMAS. These groups of respondents are chosen because both languages are offered for students. The questionnaires were distributed to the students through a link of Google Form. Clear instructions were given to fill up the questionnaire. The responses from the questionnaires were collected and can be viewed directly upon completion.

English language course is compulsory for Malaysian university students. However, third language course such as Mandarin Language course is optional based on students' preferences. Thus, the selection of respondents were made based on cluster sampling for students who took Mandarin Language and English lan-

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guage courses simultaneously at the same time. The sampling was conducted based on the group of students who registered for Mandarin courses as English language course which has been made compulsory for all students.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection procedures were conducted in four stages during September 2019 until January 2020 semester. The first stage was conducted in UiTM Mukah for one faculty, which is Faculty of Business and Management. The second stage was conducted in UiTM Samarahan 2 which involved Faculty of Business and Management; Hotel and Tourism Management; Administrative Science and Policy Studies; and Applied Sciences. Stage 3 was conducted in UiTM Samarahan 1 which will involve Faculty of Accountancy, Architecture, Planning and Surveying; Plantation and Agrotechnology; Business and Management; Administrative Science and Policy Studies; and Sports Science & Recreation. The final stage was conducted by distributing the online link to the questionnaire to other institutions such as Kolej Profesional MARA in Seri Iskandar and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The distribution of questionnaires was conducted virtually where the researchers provided clear instructions and guidance to the respondents within the Google Form to avoid errors in the collected data. The online questionnaire was employed in order to collect sufficient data and easier distribution to respondents from various institutions.

## **Instrumentation**

This study was utilizing the quantitative research methodology where the instrument that was used to collect the data is in an online questionnaire form. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies conducted by Zubairi and Sarudin (2009). In order to answer RQ1 until RQ3 which tap into language learning motivation and motivational orientation, the questionnaire is a five Likert scale which was adapted from 16-item questionnaire developed by Zubairi and Sarudin (2009). Their Rasch model analysis indicated that the reliability of their questionnaire was 0.98.

## **Data Analysis**

The data obtained were presented in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. To address the first research question concerning the level of motivation for both ESL and MFL, the descriptive analysis will be employed to analyze the data. Thus, the second research question was probed by conducting paired-sample t-test in finding the significant difference between the two mean scores of ESL and MFL respectively. Similar to the first research question, the third research question will also utilize the analysis of descriptive and inferential to discover which dominant type of motivation that influence the learners in learning ESL and MFL.

## **Findings**

**RQ1: What is the level of ESL and MFL motivation among Malaysian university students?**

Firstly, this study investigated the level of language learning motivation among Malaysian university students by comparing the motivation between two languages, English and Mandarin. The mean scores obtained from the survey were classified in different categories. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the level of language learning motivation among respondents for this study was employing the description provided from the previous study by Al-Khasawneh and Al-Omari (2015; as cited in Khong, Hassan & Ramli, 2017).

**Table 1: The classification of language learning motivation level**

Mean Score	Description
1.0 – 2.49	Inadequately motivated (Low motivation)
2.5 – 3.49	Moderately motivated (Average motivation)
3.5 – 5.0	Highly motivated (High motivation)

As can be seen in Table 2, the finding shows the level of motivation among the respondents between learning English and Mandarin language. The overall mean score of 4.61 for English and 4.24 for Mandarin was within the range 3.5 – 5.0 and this indicated that the students were highly motivated towards learning the two target languages.

**Table 2: Comparison of language learning motivation between English and Mandarin**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English	331	1.60	5.00	4.6147	.44717
Mandarin	331	1.13	5.00	4.2445	.53186
Valid N (listwise)	331				

**RQ2: Which language (ESL/MFL) has the higher level of motivation in language learning among Malaysian university students?**

Secondly, this study examined which language that the students are motivated to learn. By referring to Table 3, it shows a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of motivation between English and Mandarin language. There was a significant difference in the level of motivation for English (M = 4.6147, SD = .44717) and Mandarin (M=4.2445, SD = .53186) with conditions;  $t(330) = -15.868, p = 0.000$ . These results suggest that the difference in level of motivation between learning English and Mandarin is significant ( $> 0.05$ ). Therefore, due to its significance difference, it is safe to say that ESL has the higher level of motivation as compared to MFL among Malaysian university students.

Table 3: Paired sample t-test between Mandarin Language and English Language

		Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	Mandarin	4.2445	331	.53186	.02923	
	English	4.6147	331	.44717	.02458	

  

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower		Upper			
Pair 1	Mandarin - English	-.37019	.42444	.02333	-.41608	-.32430	-15.868	330	.000

### RQ3: Which dominant types of motivation that encourage Malaysian university students in ESL and MFL learning?

Thirdly, the study also investigated the dominant motivational orientations among Malaysian university students by comparing and contrasting the mean score and standard deviation of questionnaire items. The data presented in Table 4 indicate the motivation of Malaysian students when learning either English or Mandarin language. Item 1 to 7 indicate the motivation to learn English or Mandarin for extrinsic reasons, while the motivation to learn the two languages for intrinsic reasons are indicated by items 8 to 15.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for ESL and MFL

Items	Extrinsic	Mean	Mandarin Std. Deviation	Mean	English Std. Deviation
1	I will need this language for my future career.	4.37	.698	4.76	.472
2	I think learning this language will make me a more knowledgeable person.	4.35	.677	4.71	.517
3	I think this language will someday be useful in getting a job.	4.62	.582	4.80	.441
4	Other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of this language.	3.98	.809	4.52	.680
5	My lecturer(s) encouraged me to learn this language.	4.24	.797	4.59	.697
6	My friend(s) encouraged me to learn this language.	3.97	.856	4.42	.760
7	People will think highly of me if I learn this language.	3.84	.892	4.24	.890
		4.2538	.54081	4.6339	.47017
Items	Intrinsic	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
8	It will allow me to meet and converse with a variety of people.	4.46	.670	4.69	.534



9	It will help me to participate in the activities of cultural groups related to this language.	4.32	.721	4.63	.612
10	I enjoy meeting and listening to people who speak this language.	4.27	.769	4.60	.601
11	Learning this language is an enjoyable experience.	4.39	.711	4.63	.570
12	If I were to visit other countries, I would like to be able to speak this language.	4.38	.767	4.70	.539
13	It is important for everyone to learn this language.	4.17	.816	4.73	.515
14	I want to read the literature of this language where its culture is in the original language.	3.85	.900	4.49	.728
15	I would really like to learn this language.	4.47	.662	4.71	.533
		4.2383	.56738	4.6019	.47031

Extrinsic motivation is revealed to be the dominant type of language learning motivation which has encouraged Malaysian university students whether to study English (M = 4.6339) and Mandarin (M = 4.2538). For extrinsic motivation among Malaysian university students in this study, the mean score of students' motivation when learning Mandarin language has recorded 3.84 (item 7) as the lowest and 4.62 (item 3) as the highest, while the mean score of students' motivation when learning English language has recorded 4.24 (item 7) as the lowest and 4.80 (item 3) as the highest. There are similarities in terms of the mean score for both languages, which are lowest mean score is for item 7 and highest mean score is for item 3. The lowest mean scores for language learning motivation in the two languages have showed that when learning both languages, students did not emphasize on the recognition that they will get from others, such as from their friends or lecturer, if they are able to master the target language. The highest mean score however specified that students accentuate more on getting themselves a better job with the language ability they acquired in English and Mandarin.

Hence, intrinsic motivation is subservient as compared to extrinsic motivation due to the mean score for English (M = 4.6019) and Mandarin (M = 4.2383). In terms of intrinsic reasons to learn Mandarin, the lowest mean score is 3.85 (item 14) while the highest mean score is 4.47 (item 15). On the other hand, for the intrinsic reason to learn English, the lowest mean score is 4.49 (item 14) and the highest mean score is 4.73 (item 13). Similarly for both languages, item 14 is recorded as the lowest mean score, while there are slightly different in terms of highest mean score as for Mandarin, it is item 15 while for English, it is for item 14. For the lowest mean scores of language learning motivation, this has shown that regardless of learning English or Mandarin, Malaysian university students are not enthusiastic in reading the literary works from both cultures and original languages. Besides, the highest mean score for Mandarin has indicated that students

picked Mandarin as their choice of learning the third language as they themselves are interested to learn the language. As for English on the other hand, they are highly motivated to learn the language because they are aware of the importance of English in many aspects.

## **Discussions**

Motivation is an important factor in learning a foreign language regardless of how complex the target language is. Therefore, it is important to know and realize the reason for some choices made by students as a reason, either extrinsically or intrinsically, for them to learn any language, regardless if it is a second or a foreign language. Understanding the real motivation behind studying the target language helps to increase students' performance by influencing the students' decisions based on their knowledge on motivation of achievement (Meyad, Roslan, Chong & Haji, 2014). This section will highlight the main aspects from the findings according to Malaysian university students on their language learning motivation when studying English and Mandarin during their Diploma and Degree level.

In answering the first research question, the findings from this research showed that Malaysian university students have a high level of language motivation for both ESL and MFL. This result is similar as produced by Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013) as the pre-university students in their study show a very high motivation towards learning English. On a different note, in comparing the study conducted by Tachinamutu and Mohd Shah (2018) on English learning motivation among lower secondary students (Form 1 until Form 3), their students displayed an average level of motivation ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ). Despite the moderate level of motivation among secondary school students, another study on secondary school student (Form 2) as conducted by Singh (2014) has shown that her students displayed positive motivation towards learning English. Based on these two studies on secondary school students, these has shown that university students are much directed as they understand why they have to learn English or Mandarin and thus a higher level of language learning motivation among university students. This is further explained by a qualitative study conducted by Tan, Ooi and Ismail (2010) on understanding Malay undergraduate students' purpose of learning Mandarin. Apart from their high level of motivation to learn Mandarin, these Malay university students believe that Mandarin will help them in their future career and also their interests in learning the language.

The second research question was answered through the findings which showed that Malaysian university students have a high level of language learning motivation when learning English as compared to Mandarin. Based on this study, the Malaysian university students prefer to learn English over Mandarin due to employment purpose in order for them to secure a good job and career as well as these university students are aware about the importance of learning the language. The current employers highly emphasize that the potential employee should be at par with the language requirement by their company or organization. The result from this study can be further explained through a study conducted by Liu and Su (2016) where they compare the language learning motivation between English and Japanese for Chinese students studying in Japan. Liu and Su (2016) stated that their participants studied English as learning English is seen as an in-

strument which allows them to achieve language learning goals stemming from their extrinsic motivation, while learning Japanese gives them an ideal L2 self which is related to intrinsic motivation. Ideal L2 self is based on the individual's aspirations and goals as a language learner (Dornyei, 2005; as cited in Ryan, 2008). The current and the previous studies are both aligned with the perspective from Humphreys and Spratt (2008) whereby different languages learned might trigger different emotional responses from learners.

In other words, different target language will bore different patterns of language learning motivation due to the role of language in accomplishing their learning purpose.

However, Mandarin is also a preferred language by Malaysian university students in this study although the level of motivation to study the language is lower than their level of motivation while studying English. The respondents stated they choose to study Mandarin with the reasons of getting a job in the future, learning the language for fun and allowing them to meet and converse with variety of Mandarin-speaking people. Mandarin language is seen as an extra attribute while competing in the work force especially among Malay students as stated by two previous studies (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009; Tan, Ooi & Ismail, 2012).

For the third research question, the findings from this study showed that Malaysian university students are more extrinsically motivated when they are studying either ESL or MFL. This result is similar to previous studies as reported by Zubairi and Sarudin (2009). However, Zubairi and Sarudin (2009) explained the extrinsic motivation among respondents on their study are due to encouragement from other parties such as their friends or lecturers and earning respect from other people if they learn the language. As for this study, students displayed their strong extrinsic motivation while learning ESL and MFL due to reasons such as (1) this language will assist them in getting a job, (2) this language will be needed in their career, and (3) this language will make them more knowledgeable. Mandarin and English are the most spoken languages in the working field and highly sought by potential employers. A study by Hafizoah and Fatimah (2010) indicates fluency in English language in the engineering field in Malaysia is perceived as vital for career advancement. Likewise, in the IT industries, most companies are requiring an English placement test prior to employment in order to ensure effective communicative ability in English language among the staff (Fareen, 2017). On the other hand, the demand of Mandarin language in workplace is apparent based on a study by Ting (2016), which shows the main language used in the business sector in one of the states of Malaysia is Mandarin language. This is because of several factors such as the main ethnic involved in the sector and the need to adapt to the interlocutor's culture as a business strategy (Ting, 2016). University students display prominent extrinsic motivation while learning any target language as they are focused on getting good grades for better employment and approval from others (Lau & Elias, 2011).

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At the same time, the students in this study are also intrinsically motivated for learning ESL and MFL for different reasons. For MFL, students displayed their strong intrinsic motivation while learning the language due to reasons such as (1) their personal interest to learn the language, (2) they want to converse with variety of people, and (3) they enjoyed learning Mandarin. On the contrary, the students exhibited strong intrinsic motivation while learning ESL due to reasons namely (1) they are aware with the importance of English, (2) their personal interest to learn the language, and (3) they want to travel to English speaking countries. When discussing the language learning motivation among the respondents of this study from intrinsic perspective, the findings from this study has produced a similar result as displayed by the previous study conducted by Tan, Ooi and Ismail (2012) where the Malay undergraduate students in their study showed a strong inclination towards intrinsic orientation. When students are intrinsically motivated to learn any target language, it is an ideal language learning situation as they are mentally prepared in terms of their own interest, enjoyment and satisfaction. Students display strong inclination to intrinsic language learning motivation when they are allowed to learn any language that they prefer. When students are given with autonomy to choose the language that they should learn, hence students will learn the target language with integral pleasure enjoyment and satisfaction.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

From this study, it is found that Malaysian university students are highly motivated to learn any target language, either English or Mandarin. Abdul Rahman, Rajab, Abdul Wahab, Mohd Nor, Wan Zakaria and Badli (2017) stated that the secondary students (Form Five) in their study are teacher-centred learners and are highly dependent on their teachers in supporting them while learning the language. However, this will not be the case in the context of university level students as lecturers can use the finding from this study as leverage because by knowing that the students are highly motivated, lecturers can plan and infuse any types of language classrooms activities and this will encourage active participation from the highly motivated students. However, in university level, lecturers must be play an active role as facilitators and promote the idea of self-regulated learning as language learning is not only taken place in the classroom, but active language learning can take place outside of the classroom too. Lecturers should encourage their students to proliferate their language comprehension and to be constantly active with their participation in class or any diverse lessons. Students need to be informed with language learning objectives such as improving their communication skills so that their language learning will be more meaningful (Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013). Besides, lecturers should also remind their students that possessing the master of other language apart from their mother tongue will help them to see the world from another point of view and becoming more indulgent of different social norms.

Besides, the findings from this study also revealed that Malaysian university students are more motivated to

learn English as compared to Mandarin. Therefore, in order to encourage more Malaysian university students to choose Mandarin as their preference language to learn, there are several ways for the lecturers to motivate their students to learn Mandarin.

Firstly, lecturers need to help their students in understanding one's cultural background. According to Wen (1997), intrinsic motivation has significant correlation with the desire outcome which is to understand Chinese people. There are no doubts about intrinsic interest and the desire to understand one's cultural are initial motivation for learners to learn the language. Learners motivated with culture-oriented are expected to learn Chinese and perform well in the target language.

Besides that, lecturers can motivate their students too by making their students realise the expectations of self and learning outcomes. The expectations of self and learning outcomes interact with motivation (Wen, 1997). It is suggested that appropriate and realistic expectations of learning task and one's ability is vital for learners to start or continue to learn Mandarin. Hence, Mandarin language instructors could help learners to develop and understand their learning goal.

Moreover, lecturers can also implement task-based teaching and learning (TBTL) to motivate their students to learn Mandarin. Task-based teaching and learning (TBTL) emphasizes more on student-centeredness, active participation, interaction and cooperative learning can be promoted in language classroom. There are few previous studies (Du & Kirkebæk, 2012; Edwards & Willis, 2005) revealed that completing tasks is a motivating and effective method in education. Chua, Wong and Chen (2009) also argued that learning environment associated with the "task-orientation" is recommended in turn to motivated learners to learn Mandarin. In a previous study conducted by Du, Ruan, Wang and Duan, (2015; as cited in Ruan, Duan & Du, 2015), students found to be motivated to learn in a TBTL environment. The tasks are recommended to be challenging yet fun and develop learners' self-efficacy.

Finally, Mandarin will also become a preference by Malaysian university students if IT is frequently integrated into MFL classroom. As the technologies are at the great speed today, integrating technologies in classroom is the trend. Several studies (Chung, 2013; Chu & Toh, 2015) have reported that intervention of technology in teaching and learning process could enhance students' learning interest and motivation which might have great potential to improve the learning achievement of students.

As for English language, the discussion on how to maintain the motivation among Malaysian university students can be discussed using the Ten Commandments for motivating language learning based on results of an empirical study conducted by Dornyei and Csizér (1998). The first commandment as stated by Dornyei and Csizer (1998) is set a personal example with the lecturer's own behaviour. In other words, to encourage language learning motivation within students, the lecturers must first be motivated in their teaching and created a learning environment that could motivate students to manage and sustain their language learning. There is a general belief that a lecturer is able to enhance their students' motivation when he or she employs

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the use of motivational strategies in a class. The term motivational strategies refer to two aspects, in which the first is the instructional interventions a lecturer utilizes in order to encourage learner motivation and the second, bears reference to the self-regulating strategies employed by individual learners with the intention to control the level of their own motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

The second commandment is to create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. In order to implement this commandment, firstly, lecturers must involve their students in some decisions on related programme, issues, or interest, create a safe classroom environment, a supportive atmosphere for learners in the class with mutual trust and respect and with low levels of anxiety and stress. The first category consists of components that address the classroom condition. To create basic motivational condition, it is necessary that teachers practice appropriate behaviours such as promoting good relationships with learners, maintaining an atmosphere that is pleasant and supportive in class, and facilitating group norms to promote a cohesive learner group. (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

The third commandment is lecturer must present the language tasks properly especially through scaffolding. In doing so, lecturers need to set challenging tasks but scaffold them to success can also be the way to maintain the learners motivated. Learners will have a greater tendency to do an activity if they feel they will succeed in that particular activity. Hence, it is unlikely to aim for something if the students know that they will eventually fail. The simplest way to ensure that learners expect success is to make sure that they achieve it constantly.

The fourth commandments to maintain the motivation of Malaysian university students to further learn English is to develop a good relationship with the learners. Teachers and peers interact with learners on a personal level and show that they care about learner's personal issues and challenges that they face in the classroom and outside the classroom. Besides that, the use of pair and group work for learning language is close collaboration and communication among learners is in itself motivation and provides more opportunities to practice using language.

The fifth commandment suggested on increasing the learner's linguistic self-confidence in order to be continuously motivated while learning English. Linguistic self-confidence can be developed through a sense of community and promote a sense of belonging and be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious in classrooms; therefore, if learners recognize their teacher's enthusiasm to the task, they will be enthusiastic as well. Furthermore, learners need to be helped with creating realistic beliefs about language learning. Some learners bring some unrealistic learning beliefs about how much progress or learning they can achieve in a term or year. If they do not see that their beliefs or expectations achieved, they will become disappointed and lose interest. Teachers, therefore, should explain the complexity of learning a second language and help them to see the progress that they are making. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) stated that building learner motivation or creating learner initial motivation are crucial by helping learners improve their language-related values and attitudes, enhancing their goal orientation, planning a curriculum that is relevant, and building real-

istic learner beliefs. They also added that promoting positive self-evaluation by encouraging acknowledgment to effort instead of attribution to ability, giving effective and encouraging motivational feedback, enhancing learner satisfaction and offering grades in manner of motivation. Additionally, Williams and Williams (2011) were focusing on positive verbal encouragement and praise in learning because they can influence students' motivation. Therefore, in class, teachers should apply appropriate praising methods that can further encourage students' participation, so that they will not be afraid to share and discuss ideas that they have. When students are comfortable with their learning environment, they will be more motivated to learn and attend classes besides doing well in the subject learnt.

The sixth commandment taps on making the language classes interesting. As mentioned earlier on relating to Mandarin language, lecturers can make their language learning enjoyable and interesting through methods such as texts, audiovisual, ICT materials, tasks, and class activities should be related to learners' interests and culture. In order to encourage learning autonomy among students, teachers should give learners choices in assigning a task, and learners' preferences should get priority. Elements such as music and humour can be incorporated in teaching to add fun to a lesson. As stated by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), all these efforts would entails the maintenance of motivation through proximal setting of sub-goals, enhancing the quality of the learning experience, raising learner self-confidence, generating learner autonomy, and encouraging learner strategies that are self-motivating. Teachers protect and maintain learner motivation through tasks which are stimulating, enjoyable and relevant to the lesson.

The seventh commandment is related to the sixth commandments as Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) suggested on promoting learners' autonomy. What the learners can do is setting their own learning goals and use such as assessment for learning strategies pre and post the lesson. This helps them to think about their learning and be more connected to it. Lecturers then have to ensure that their feedback is specific and linked to the learning goal.

In addition, personalizing the learning process is the eighth commandment as proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998). Lecturers need to make their teaching materials relevant to the learners. The motivation to learn English will increase dramatically if the lecturers provide material that will assist them to succeed in the mainstream classroom and in their world beyond the school ground.

Next, the ninth commandment is focusing on increasing the learners' goal-orientedness. Clément and Kruidenier, (1983; as cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998) stated that the orientation of goals when students choose to learn any target languages can be referred to as integrative (intrinsic motivation) or instrumental (extrinsic motivation) in nature. From the pertinent findings of this study for instance, it is clear that students are more extrinsically motivated to learn English and Mandarin as compared to being intrinsically motivated. This has been a concern as expressed by previous study (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009; Ng & Ng, 2015) where students need to be intrinsically motivated to be more successful in the language that they learned. However, this is not the case for most Malaysian university students in this present study as well as in

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Zubairi and Sarudin's study as students are more extrinsic in nature when taking up a language course. Thus, Ng and Ng suggested a few ways to motivate students in an intrinsic path by using the similar Ten Commandments for motivating language learning by Dornyei and Csizér (1998) as applied by this study.

Finally, the tenth commandment discussed on familiarizing learners with the target language culture. Similar to what is discussed in motivating university students to learn Mandarin language earlier, teachers can enhance the language learning motivation for English when they use materials from other parts of the world. By doing this, students will be more interested in their learning since they will learn more about other customs, language, food people and environment (Shahbaz & Liu, 2012). Students are already aware of their own surrounding and culture, therefore when teachers integrate learning with materials that are not local, students will feel more interested to learn and to discover what others culture is all about. What makes them different and also what makes them the same.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the present study conclude that Malaysian university students in this study has a high level of language learning motivation, they are highly motivated to learn English as compared to Mandarin and they are extrinsically motivated to learn both target languages which are English and Mandarin. This study has recommended several practical implications for language lecturers on motivating their students in learning either English or Mandarin language effectively in the classroom.

The present study indicates that the tertiary institution needs to give attention to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to motivate and influence Malaysian university students to be more motivated in learning either English or Mandarin and most importantly, to sustain the motivation in them so that their language learning will not only be relevant when they are still called as a student, but as a lifelong language learner as well. Hence, the lecturers who are teaching English and Mandarin should acknowledge their vital role in motivating their students during the language learning process in ensuring students will not only enjoy their language learning but also perform in their language assessments and achieve the language proficiency as expected from them.

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