

Pilot Validation Study of “Students’ Attitudes, Motivation, and Anxiety Towards English Language Learning” Questionnaire to the Kuwaiti Context

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Abstract: *Attitudes, motivation, and anxiety are three factors that can determine how successful a student is in learning a second language. This research is a pilot study to validate the survey questionnaire that is used by Shams (2008), which is originally taken from Gardner (1985), and see whether the survey items can be applied and are considered suitable for the Kuwaiti culture. The pilot study was practiced on 34 students that were randomly selected at PAAET, Kuwait, and consisted of both male and female students. Despite that some survey items were dropped due to them having low factor findings for not confirming with the criteria of component analysis, the rest of the survey items were found to be applicable to the Kuwaiti context and the analysis resulted in having three major components for achieving optimal English language learning. The three components are communication anxiety and confidence that talks about students’ nervousness and fear of being judged while speaking in English; perceived value and practicality of English that talks about how students perceive the English language and its practical benefits; and motivation drive for English fluency that talks about the motivation that students need to maintain their ambition in wanting to learn English. The current study concludes with believing that such three components are vital in every language learning environment, making the components applicable worldwide and not specific to one cultural context.*

Keywords: attitudes, motivation, anxiety, English language learning, PAAET, Kuwait

INTRODUCTION

As cited in the study by Shams (2008), it takes several variables for a person to acquire a second/foreign language; such variables include, and are not limited to, attitudes, motivation, and anxiety, and for a successful journey for language learning to occur such variables need to have a complicated relationship among them and such complex relationship could effect a learner's success in language learning (Gardner, 1960; Lehmann, 2006; Schmidt, Borai & Kassabgy, 1996; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Boyle & Houndoulesi, 1993; Dornyei, 1994; Norris-Holt, 2001). As a result, it comes to such variables that students' language learning could either excel or take a back seat in such process and it is particularly natural that a high level of students' anxiety could hinder and restrict students' language learning. Moreover, it is only natural that if a student's fear is controlled then this student's performance in learning is consequently and positively affected. However, if a teacher fails to positively control a student's fear, then the student's accomplishment in language learning will surely be inadequate (Howirtz, 1987). A pilot study is defined as a study that is small-scaled which is made to test different aspects of methods that are prepared to be given to a large-scaled population (Arain, Campbell, Cooper, & Lancaster, 2010). The purpose of this pilot study is to utilize the survey questionnaire items that are used in Shams's study (2008) and validate them in the Kuwaiti society; so, the current researchers applied the survey questionnaire items to see whether the items can be suited into the Kuwaiti culture according to principal component analysis (PCA).

METHODOLOGY

The survey questionnaire used by Shams (2008) is a survey that is formulated by Gardner (1985) and is called the AMTB survey which stands for 'Attitude Motivation Test Battery'. According to Gardner (1985), the AMTB examines language learning in three leading categories which are attitudes, motivations and classroom anxiety, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and instructor and curriculum. It is also important to note that the reason behind Shams (2008) choosing Gardner's AMTB survey was because of its validity and reliability being proven over the past decades. The survey questionnaire employed by Shams (2008) follows a five-point Likert scale to validate the three areas intended for study, which are attitudes towards the English language, classroom anxiety, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Like Shams (2008), the current validation pilot study consists of a total of 35 questions. However, for the current validation study the sample size consists of 34 students that were randomly selected, both male and female. The participants are students at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Kuwait, whose first language is Arabic and where English is being taught to them as a second language. The students were randomly selected and were asked to rate each statement in the survey as (100% strongly agree, 75% agree, 50% neutral, 25% disagree, and 0% strongly disagree) to view their level of

compliance with every statement. The researcher ensured data anonymity and administered the survey during class time to make sure that any questions were answered. In return, a total of 34 responses were collected and a thorough statistical analysis was performed to obtain the following results.

Statistical methods

The statistical methods utilized in this study combined reliability analysis and principal component analysis (PCA) to determine the internal consistency and underlying structure of the data. Reliability analysis was executed with the values of Cronbach's alpha that were calculated to determine the reliability of each scale, and items negatively correlating with the total scale were recognized for potential reverse scoring. PCA was used to investigate the dimensionality of the dataset, with component loadings, uniqueness values, and variance explained by every component that was analyzed. A varimax rotation was also used for a clearer interpretation, and assumption checks, including Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, confirmed the data's suitability for PCA. All statistical calculations were done using JAMOV Version 2.4.14.0, with a p-value of 0.05 considered statistically significant.

Pilot Testing

In order to enhance the tool's design, it is necessary to conduct a pre-test of the research survey. A successful pilot test entails the following steps: selecting a sample, negotiating access, delivering the instrument, calculating the response rate, and analyzing the results in the same manner as the final study (Gorad, 2003). Consequently, to guarantee that the questionnaire employed functions optimally prior to the final survey administration, a pilot study was conducted by Shams (2008) on a small group of 11 students that were randomly selected. The students were provided with an overview of the primary research study and were requested to provide feedback and responses that would assist in the enhancement of the questionnaire. As a result, and since this is a validation pilot study, no further testing was viewed necessary since the survey utilized by Shams (2008) had proven to be well constructed, worded, and designed.

RESULTS

Reliability of The Questionnaire

The 'Cronbach's alpha' was used to check the reliability of the survey questionnaire tool. The overall internal consistency estimated 0.862 highlighting the instrument to be highly reliable in measuring students' responses (see table 1). A similar process was carried out to estimate the reliability coefficient for each sub-scale (see table 2). It is also important to mention that due to component analysis items from the survey questionnaire were excluded due to them not confirming to the criteria of the component analysis itself and because of low factor loadings.

Table 1: Item Reliability Statistics

	Mean	SD	Item-rest correlation	If item dropped
				Cronbach's α
Native English speakers have much to be proud about because they have given the world much of value.	51.5	31.9	0.432	0.859
I wish I was fluent in English.	86.8	23.2	0.345	0.862
I would rather see a TV program in Arabic than in English.	55.9	30.8	0.354	0.863
I give up when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something.	26.5	23.8	0.565	0.851
It makes me feel shy to answer in English when my teacher asks.	39.0	34.9	0.691	0.842
I am not confident of myself when I speak in English.	37.5	32.1	0.751	0.838

Table 1: Item Reliability Statistics

	Mean	SD	Item-rest correlation	If item dropped
				Cronbach's α
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	38.2	29.7	0.563	0.851
I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	30.1	28.7	0.612	0.848
I get nervous and confused when I speak in English.	50.0	33.1	0.685	0.842
Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	85.3	16.4	0.519	0.856
English will make me a more conversant and knowledgeable person.	81.6	20.7	0.372	0.860
I feel knowledge of the English language will make me a better educated person.	86.8	17.7	0.402	0.859
Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	87.5	15.4	0.378	0.860
Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.	52.9	30.6	0.569	0.850

Table 2: Item Reliability Statistics for the sub-scales

Sub scale - Component	Items	Cronbach's α	Mean	SD	Item-rest correlation	Item-rest correlation if item dropped
1	I am not confident of myself when I speak in English.	0.861	37.5	32.1	0.782	0.818
	I get nervous and confused when I speak in English.		50.0	33.1	0.727	0.827
	It makes me feel shy to answer in English when my teacher asks.		39.0	34.9	0.701	0.832
	I give up when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something.		26.5	23.8	0.588	0.848
	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English.		30.1	28.7	0.648	0.839
	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.		85.3	16.4	0.405	0.868
	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.		38.2	29.7	0.579	0.849
	2		I feel knowledge of the English language will make me a better educated person.	0.828	86.8	17.7
English will make me a more conversant and knowledgeable person.		81.6	20.7		0.677	0.780
Studying English is important because it will		85.3	16.4		0.624	0.797

	make me more educated.					
	Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.		87.5	15.4	0.529	0.835
3	I wish I was fluent in English.	0.604	86.8	23.2	0.466	0.427
	I would rather see a TV program in Arabic than in English.		55.9	30.8	0.426	0.560
	I plan to learn as much English as possible.		86.0	15.3	0.451	0.532

Principal Component Analysis

The component loadings table displays the outcomes of a component analysis with varimax rotation, which identifies three unique components associated with student's attitudes and views about learning English (see table 3). The initial component mostly encompasses concerns related to anxiousness and self-assurance when communicating in English, with loadings ranging from 0.632 to 0.799. These findings indicate that anxiety, apprehension about being evaluated, and a sense of incompetence are important elements in students' encounters with English language. The second component is distinguished by a significant focus on the perceived importance of English for personal and professional growth, with high scores ranging from 0.645 to 0.917 on items linked to gaining more knowledge and respect, as well as the practicality of English in obtaining a desirable career. The third component represents a motivational aspect, specifically emphasizing students' desire to study and achieve fluency in English, with loading ranging from 0.600 to 0.841. The uniqueness values indicate that the components together account for a significant portion of the variability in the data. However, certain items, especially in the third component, exhibit higher uniqueness, implying the presence of additional factors. In summary, the analysis highlights the intricate relationship between anxiety, perceived usefulness and motivation in students' experience of learning English language.

Table 3: Component Loadings

	Component			Uniqueness
	1	2	3	
I get nervous and confused when I speak in English.	0.799			0.293
I am not confident of myself when I speak in English.	0.781			0.285
I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	0.770			0.376
It makes me feel shy to answer in English when my teacher asks.	0.756			0.357
I give up when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something.	0.739			0.403
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	0.680			0.469
Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.	0.632			0.502
I feel knowledge of the English language will make me a better educated person.		0.917		0.151
English will make me a more conversant and knowledgeable person.		0.816		0.317
Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.		0.751		0.341
Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.		0.645		0.425

Table 3: Component Loadings

	Component			Uniqueness
	1	2	3	
I plan to learn as much English as possible.			0.841	0.267
I wish I was fluent in English.			0.702	0.245
I would rather see a TV program in Arabic than in English.			0.600	0.535

Note. 'varimax' rotation was used

Component Statistics

The summary table (see table 4). Displays the amount of variance that is accounted for by each of the three components that were found during the factor analysis. The initial component explains 28.6% of the overall variation, suggesting that it reflects the most significant underlying element in the dataset. The second component accounts for an additional 20.6% of the variability, resulting in a total explained variability of 49.2%. The third component accounts for 13.0% of the variance, bringing the cumulative total to 62.2%. These three components collectively account for a substantial amount of the overall variation in student's attitudes and views towards learning English. This forms a string basis for comprehending the primary factors that influence their language learning experiences.

Table 4: Summary

Component	SS Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.29	28.6	28.6
2	3.09	20.6	49.2
3	1.95	13.0	62.2

Assumption Checks

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a method employed to evaluate the suitability of component analysis for the given dataset. The test resulted in a chi-square (χ^2) value of 222 with 105 degrees of freedom, and the corresponding p-value is less than 0.001. The extremely significant outcome ($p < 0.001$) suggests that the relationships between the variables are substantial enough to do factor analysis. This rejects the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Therefore, the data is appropriate for doing exploratory factor analysis which confirms that the variables are sufficiently interconnected to be categorized into underlying components. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, with an overall value of 0.736, indicates that the sample is adequate for conducting component analysis. A KMO value closer to 1.0 suggests that data are well-suited for component with values between 0.7 and 0.8 considered good in this case. The KMO value of 0.736 suggests that the factor analysis will likely have reliable and interpretable results as the variable share enough common variance to be grouped into underlying components. This supports the validity of the component analysis conducted on the dataset.

Eigenvalues

The scree plot in figure 1 shows the eigenvalues for each component derived from the component analysis. The plot reveals a clear elbow point after the third component, where the eigenvalues begin to level off. This indicates that the first three components account for the most significant variance in the data, with eigenvalues above 1, suggesting those should be retained for further analysis. Components beyond the third exhibit diminishing returns, contributing progressively less to explaining the overall variance, and are likely less meaningful. This scree plot supports the selection of three primary components for a robust and interpretable component solution.

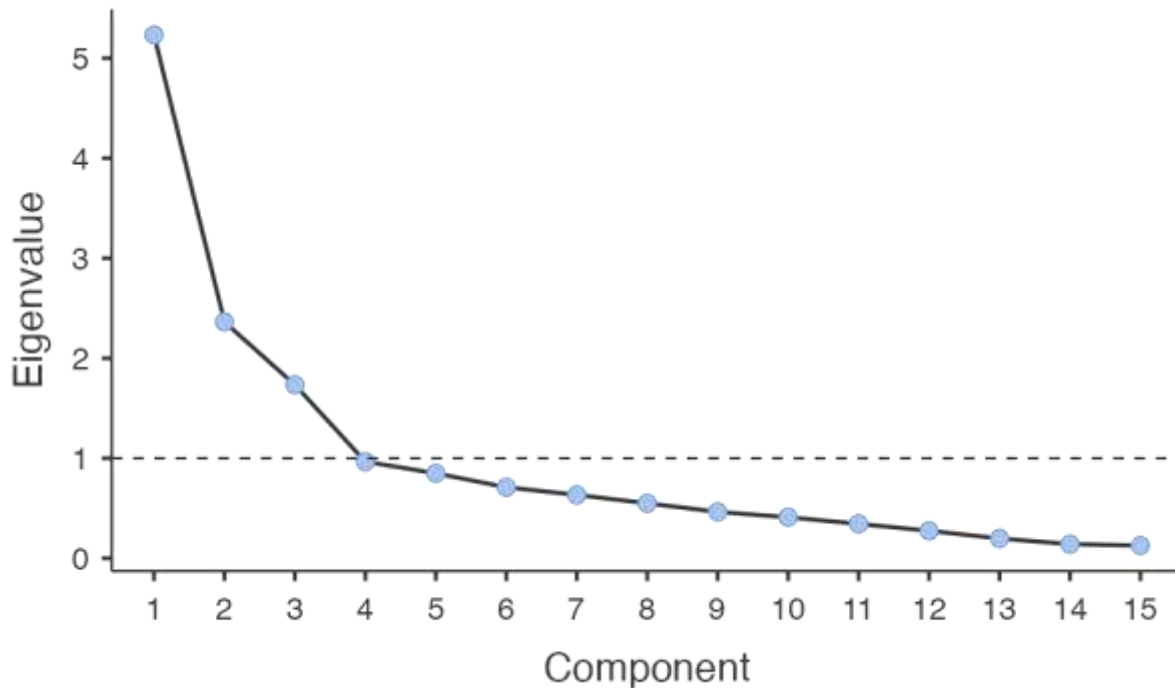


Figure 1: Scree Plot Depicting the Eigenvalues for Each Component in the Factor Analysis, Highlighting the 'Elbow' at the Third Component, Indicating the Optimal Number of Factors to Retain.

The analysis presented in this study reflects a thorough examination of students' attitudes and experiences with learning English, utilizing various statistical methods to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The use of Cronbach's alpha confirmed that the survey instrument was highly reliable, with an overall internal consistency score of 0.862, indicating that the questionnaire effectively measures students' perceptions and attitudes. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) revealed three primary components that explain a significant portion of the variance in the data, accounting for 62.2% of the overall variability. These components have been named **Communication Anxiety and Confidence**, **Perceived Value and Practicality of English**, and **Motivational Drive for English Fluency**.

- The **Communication Anxiety and Confidence** component encompasses students' nervousness, self-confidence, and fear of being judged while speaking English, highlighting the emotional challenges faced by students in language learning.

- The **Perceived Value and Practicality of English** component captures the students' recognition of the importance of English for personal education, social respect, and career opportunities, underscoring the practical benefits of language proficiency.
- The **Motivational Drive for English Fluency** component focuses on the students' intrinsic motivation and desire to learn and achieve fluency in English, pointing to the inner drive that fuels their language learning efforts.

The assumption checks, including Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure, confirmed that the dataset was suitable for component analysis, further supporting the robustness of the findings. The scree plot analysis suggested retaining these three components, reinforcing the decision to focus on these key areas. Overall, the analysis provides valuable insights into the factors influencing students' English learning experiences, highlighting the significant roles of communication anxiety, perceived utility, and motivation. This comprehensive assessment forms a solid foundation for understanding and potentially improving educational approaches to English language learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current validation study agree with previous literature done on student's attitudes, motivation, and anxiety towards English language learning. In this pilot study there were three main key components that were identified; these components are communication anxiety and confidence, perceived value and practicality of English, and motivation drive for English fluency. The first compelling component that the current study has identified has to do with communication anxiety and confidence. This component is related to students' obtaining low self-esteem and being nervous when having to speak English in class in front of their peers due to scared of being judged or laughed at because of their pronunciation mistakes. The component validates the finding in Shams's (2008) study and also agrees with Liu & Huang's (2011) research on how fear and anxiety can operate as a hurdle and serve as an obstacle in learning the target language. It was also proven that, like any other negative emotion, anxiety can have a negative effect on student's readiness in wanting to be part of the language learning process and, therefore, affecting their performance negatively. The second component that the current study has identified is perceived value and practicality of English. This component focuses on how vital students perceive learning English is, and how learning English can offer better job opportunities for students making them socially respected figures in society. This agrees with several previous literature findings like Shams (2008) and Altamimi & Shuib (2009) who proved that students tend to hold a positive demeanor towards learning English because of how valuable they view its appraisal in the future. Furthermore, Weger (2013) argued that students tend to view the opportunities for obtaining better careers are due to learning English and this outweighs any other kind of motivation, which requires teachers to emphasize the benefits of learning English in order to increase students' learning performance. The

third component that the current study has identified is motivational drive for English fluency, which focuses on students' intrinsic motivation and students' eagerness to obtain fluency in the target language. Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi (2015) found that both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation have an important effect in language learning. They argue that despite having extrinsic motivation, obtaining intrinsic motivation is considered crucial for students to maintain deep-rooted goals in language learning and acquisition. Their findings also suggest that attending students' intrinsic motivation is vital to obtaining fruitful language learning results. The three components of this current validation study are found to be consistent across several cultural contexts worldwide, as described by Oguan et al. (2014) and Bahçecioğlu Turan et al. (2021). The previous existing literature focuses on how crucial it is to maintain steep motivation along with normal anxiety and positive mindset to maximize and achieve the ultimate language learning experience, and this is not limited to a specific population but rather is generalized to universal language learning environments and educational facilities worldwide.

CONCLUSION

The current validation pilot study is aimed at utilizing the survey questionnaire items that are used in Shams's study (2008) for the purpose of validating them in the Kuwaiti society. The areas of study that were examined are students' attitudes, motivations, and anxiety levels towards learning English as a second language. The survey questionnaire method that was utilized is derived from Gardern's (1985) AMTB survey and the current study resulted in three major components after running statistical analysis on the data collected from 34 students at PAAET, Kuwait. The three components, which are communication anxiety and confidence, perceived value and practicality of English, and motivational drive for English fluency, are proven to be essential and important for students' successful language learning outcomes to be met. Not only that, but previous literature findings also supported and proved that there seems to exist a positive relationship between such positive attitudes and mindsets in language learning for the purpose of obtaining the desired target language. Therefore, it is critical for teachers to foster such students' needs and positive relationships to acquire the best learning outcomes both short-termed and long-termed.

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