

Relation between Socio-economic Status and Motivation of Learners in Learning English as a Foreign Language

Ali Akbar Khansir

Bushehr University of Medical Sciences, Bushehr, Iran

Naeimeh Jafarizadegan

Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bushehr, Iran

Fatemeh Karampoor

Payamnoor University, Bushehr, Iran

Abstract—The purpose of this article is to discuss Relation between Socio-Economic Status and Motivation of Learners in Learning English as a Foreign Language, in Iran. Motivation has played an important role in global language activity, and it has been as one of the real strategies used in foreign language setting in general and in English language as a foreign or second language in particular. We are, English language teacher have never neglected motivation and its relation with socio-economic status in teaching and learning English language in classrooms. In this work, investigators selected two hundred and thirty Iranian learners who studying in third grade high school in Boushehr city. In this article, both female and male students of ten high schools were participated in order to collect data. The one of instruments of this study is designed based on Garnder's AMTB (1985). The AMTB questionnaire utilized in the study consists of the sections: Integrative component; Motivation component; Orientation component. Another instrument of this paper is designed based on Bourdieu's (1986) in order to collect data from family socio-economic status of students. The finding of this paper indicated that most of the independent variables especially economical capital has apposite relation with motivation in EFL learning. In addition, the results of the study revealed noticeable evidence of the existence of a strong relationship between socio-economic status and motivation in language learning (English as a FL).

Index Terms—EFL learners, motivation, integrative motivation, socio-economic status

I. INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to watch the Iranian EFL learners learn English language through motivation. However, many theories have been put forward by many psychologists, language teachers and linguists to explain the process of learning language through motivation strategies. In fact, motivation has been used as an important research topic in target language since 1990s. Motivation and socio-economic status are the real factors in promoting the knowledge of language learners. They have a good relationship in EFL or ESL settings. Khansir (2012) argued that language is only used as a means of human communication. Today, English language is the most universal language over the world. Khansir (2013) mentioned that "English language is taught as a second or foreign language around the world to school children and learner's adults". In Iranian educational system, English language is used as a foreign language (Khansir and Gholami Dashti, 2014). In man life, man can always see the role of motivation in his life and thus, motivation is used in all the field of human being life in order to help him show his desire, emotion, and personality. We come back to the early 1990s, when the great social psychologists such as Robert Gardner as one of the pioneers of the theory of motivation along with his supporter completed "the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery" (AMTB) at the University of Western Ontario. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is defined as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p.10). Gardner (1985), defined integrative motivation as the desire to achieve proficiency in a new language in order to know about the other culture and participate in the life of the community. Krashen (1987) mentioned that integrative motivation and instrumental motivation as two functions in learning second language acquisition. According to him, integrative motivation is defined as the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language, is predicated to relate to proficiency in terms of the two functions. He added that the presence of integrative motivation should encourage the learners to interact with speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. He indicated that instrumental motivation is defined as the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian, or practical reasons, may also related proficiency and thus; it will encourage performers to interact with second language speakers in order to achieve certain ends. Gardner (2007) mentioned the two factors such as

educational context and cultural context have vital role in the formation of motivation. Skehan (1989) made distinguishes among four main sources of motivation. According to his ideas, the four main sources of motivation divided into items: 1) Learning and teaching activities, which are related to the student's intrinsic motivation; 2) Learning outcomes, which are related the learners' successes or failures are the basis of what is termed resulted motivation; 3) Internal motivation, which is related to first point in that extrinsic motivation is present in both cases. 4) Finally, Extrinsic motivation which is related to highlights the influence of external incentives (such as rewards or punishment) on the learners' behavior. Weiner (1994) defined the concept of social motivation. According to him, social motivation used in order to involve the complex of motivational influences that stem from the sociocultural environment rather than from the individual.

In discussion of statement of problem, nowadays, the role of English language in Iranian society as an international language has positive attitude among Iranian families. This is one of the main reasons that Iranian families like to help their children learn English language in order to get the scientific knowledge and communicate with other people over the world. Motivation strategies has vital role to push the Iranian learners to achieve their goals in learning English language. According to this statement of problem, socio-economic status of the Iranian families is not the same. This study focused on relation between socio-economic status and motivation of Iranian learners in learning English language in EFL setting. However, this research work followed the following objectives: 1) the purpose of the study is to study the socio-economic background variables and EFL achievement of learners; 2) to study the amount of motivation in FL among learners; 3) to study the differential between social class and achievement motivation in EFL and finally, to examine the relationship between students' background variables and their attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language. In this paper, one research question along with one hypothesis considered as follows:

1- Is there relationship between family socio-economic status and learners' motivation in learning English?

1. There is no relationship between family socio-economic status and learners' motivation in learning English.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this area of this study, some definitions of the motivation along with many research works are considered as follows:

Many papers about learners' motivation and second or foreign language have been written by many research scholars in the area of language teaching and they explained the role of motivation as one of the most important strategies in learning and acquiring language has been positive. Gardner (1985 p. 10) mentioned that "a motivated learner is eager to learn the language, willing to expend effort on the learning activity, and willing to sustain the learning activity". Chikungam (2002) examined motivation in second language learning for Hong Kong students in Australia. He selected seventy one learners in Sydney and one hundred nine learners in Hong Kong. In this study, 16 items were used by the researcher from motivation of learning English as a second language for his participants. The learners were asked to complete two language tests at the same time to assess their proficiency in English and Chinese. The investigator chose the four beliefs such as general beliefs, norm beliefs, personal beliefs, and goal beliefs was worked by Kreidler and Kreidler in 1982 and thus, he also used four capitals such as demographic capital, economic capital, political capital, and cultural capital was written by Allard and Landry in 1994. In addition, this paper concentrated on the relative contribution of societal variables and psychological variables to the language performance of learners. This work showed that the role of motivation was positive in attitude toward language learning situation. Ushida (2005) examined motivation and attitudes in second language (L2) study within an online language course context (LOL). He selected thirty students who enrolled in the three online language courses: Elementary French online (EF), elementary Spanish online (ES), and intermediate Spanish online (IS). In this paper, the course teachers and language assistants (LA) have been involved in order to obtain contextual information from different perspectives. The outcome of this article indicated motivation can give opportunity to students in order to perfect their language skills and reinforce the students' motivation and attitudes towards second language study. Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2012) investigated motivation of a group of thirty two learners of English writing in English class in a degree of Library and Information Management in Spanish country. In this study, they selected both male and female students as participants in their project. The participants included of twenty four male and eight female learners from different backgrounds. The backgrounds of the participants were from Spanish, Erasmus, Ecuador and China. In addition, the range of language proficiency levels of the participants was wide. They had experience in the use of new technologies. The findings of data analysis of this paper showed that highly favourable reaction to the experience and related motivation with language achievement and behavioural outcomes such as classroom participation or persistence in learning, and thus, blogging as one of the new technologies can help the learners to overcome their problems involved in keeping motivation in the second language classroom. Csizér and Kormos (2008) studied the role of motivation in language learning of Hungarian learners who studying English and German. They chose 1777 Hungarian primary school children in the age range of thirteen to fourteen were studying English and German.

Results of this project showed that learners of English had a more positive attitude towards the native speakers of the language and thus, the students of English studied than learners of German, and the learners who were studying English had higher levels of linguistic self-confidence. The students who were studying English received more support from

their environment than learners of German. In addition, the findings of this research showed that the role of motivation in language learning of the learners was intensive than the language being studied.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

A total number of two hundred and thirty Iranian third grade high school students in Bushehr city were selected as participants in this research work. The population of this research work was chosen of ten high schools in Bushehr, Iran. In this research paper, one hundred and thirty male and one hundred male students were chosen for data collection. In addition, the participants of this research work had different family socio-economic status; this is why school context was chosen based on this different family socio-economic status. The following table distributes the sample of the study:

TABLE 1:
THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

participants	Male	Female	Total
100	130	230	230

B. Instruments

In this research paper, to investigate the role of motivation in Iranian EFL setting, one questionnaire was written in English and then translated into Persian language on the basis of Gardner's AMTB (1985). It consisted of 38 items which were quiet clear and they were rated based on a 4-point Likert scale (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Many of the statements were used in the questionnaire had to be adapted to the context of EFL learning in Iran high schools. The AMTB questionnaire utilized in the present study consists of the following sections:

1- Integrative component measured by

- a) Attitudes towards the target language (TL) group (items 1, 6, 21, 25, 28, 30) i.e. attitudes towards the qualities and habits of non-native Iranian speakers of English as a better socio economically positioned group;
- b) Interest in FL (items 5, 9, 13, 16, 34, 37, 38) i.e. a general preference for learning language; and
- c) Integrative orientation (items 3, 12, 24, 35, 39) i.e. a desire to strengthen or build ties with in- or out- group members;

2- Motivation component measured by

- a) Motivational intensity (items 10, 15, 17, 22, 26, 33, 34) i.e. the amount of effort expended on learning EFL;
- b) Attitudes towards the learning language (items 1, 11, 19, 20, 27, 32) i.e. the effective respond to learning English, and
- c) Desire to learn TL (items 2, 4, 32, 36) i.e. the degree of commitment to learning; and

3- Orientation component measured by

- a) Integrative orientation (1(c) above), and
- b) Instrumental orientation (items 7, 8, 18, 29) i.e. the inclination to learn EFL for pragmatic reasons.

To collect data on family socio-economic status of students, a questionnaire was written in English on the basis of Bourdieu's (1986), tripartite conceptualization of capital borrowed from Lifrieri (2005). He used this questionnaire to measure the socio-economic status of people. It was translated into Persian language. It was divided into four sections: 1) Parents' occupation; 2) Parents' education; 3) Leisure time activities; and 4) Friends' activities. Part one and two contained eight questions, part three contained six questions and the last part contained five questions. The total number of questions included in this questionnaire was 27. Some of them were either Yes- No or multiple choice questions while others were open-ended. The questionnaire aimed at measuring Bourdieu's conceptualization of economic, cultural and social capital. They are considered as follows:

1) Economical capital (items a1a, c1b.2, c1b.4, c1b.7, c1c, c2b.1, d1d.1) measured as;

- i. Parental employment status (i.e. employed or unemployed)
- ii. Paid recreational activities (classified as activities that require money or not)
- iii. Ownership of technology (i.e. computer or video game)

2) Cultural capital (items b1a, b1b, b2a, c1b.2, c2a) measured as:

- i. Parents reading of newspaper (i.e. type and frequency)
- ii. Cultural recreational activities (going to the movie) and
- iii. Access to the internet (i.e. frequency of use);

3) Parents educational level (i.e. MA and above, BA, and etc.),

4) Father's past/present occupation and 5) Mother's past/present occupation, two other possible prediction of stratification, were included in the questionnaire in the form of two open-ended questions about parents' past/present jobs (items 1ab and a2b respectively).

C. Design of the Study

The design of this research work was design based on Pflieger and Kitchenham (2001). It is a comprehensive system for collecting information in order to describe, compare or explain knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Such an adoption

was due to the nature of the research which aimed at investigating relationship between socio-economic status and motivation of learners in learning a foreign language. To achieve the aim of this study, two questionnaires were designed and 230 third grade students were asked to fill the questionnaires.

D. Data Collection

In the process of the data collection of this study, the first of all, the researchers have completed the ethics procedure in order to do this research and collect data from the participants of the high schools. After that, the researchers visited ten selected schools with the purpose of being introduced to principals and language teachers. The investigators have cleared the aim and nature of the study. They have also obtained information about the characteristics of the school's population and classroom settings from the schools teachers and principals. In the case of this collection data, they have also cleared the participants about the aim of the questionnaires and then they started to collect data from the learners of the ten high schools. In addition, the questionnaires of this paper were filled by the participants for 25 minutes in their classrooms in during class time. However, in each school, one of the third grade classes was chosen by the language teachers to fill the questionnaires.

E. Data Analysis

In the process of the data analysis, the researchers used of SPSS database for statistical analysis of their data in this study. The questionnaires had code, and every questionnaire code included of 4 items, for example; number 4 used for 'completely agree', 3 for 'agree', 2 for 'disagree', and 1 for 'completely disagree'. However, in this project, two kinds of variables were used such as 1) an independent variable, which was the family socio-economic status of students; and (2) a dependent variable, which was the students' motivation in English as an EFL.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to explore whether socio-economic status has any relationship with motivation in EFL. In the results and discussion process, the questionnaires will be discussed and the results will be cleared. First of all, reliability analysis is considered in the following table.

TABLE 2:
RELIABILITY OF MOTIVATION AND SES QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Motivation Questionnaire	.790	39
SES Questionnaire	.756	58

As shown in table 2, Cronbach alpha for this research project is high for questionnaires, .790 for motivation questionnaire and .756 for SES questionnaire. So it is concluded that the instruments are reliable.

TABLE 3:
DISTRIBUTION OF FATHERS' EMPLOYMENT

Occupational situation	N	percent
Employment	207	90
Unemployment	23	10
Total	230	100

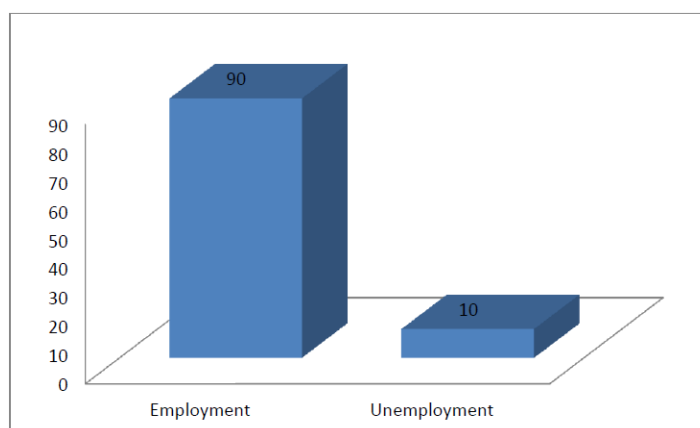


Figure 1: Distribution of Fathers' Employment

Table 3 and its figure indicated that more than 90 percent of fathers were employment and 10 percent of the fathers were unemployed. As table 4 and its figures showed that 10 percent of fathers are retired or unemployment, 9.1 percent had menial jobs, 37.4 percent were skilled workers, 12.2 percent were professional workers and 27.8 percent had clerical job.

TABLE 4:
DISTRIBUTION OF FATHERS' KIND OF PAST/PRESENT OCCUPATION

Kind of occupation	N	Percent
Retired and unemployment	23	10
Menial job	21	9.1
Skilled workers	86	37.4
Professional workers	28	12.2
clerical workers	64	27.8
Un-answer	8	3.3
Total	230	100

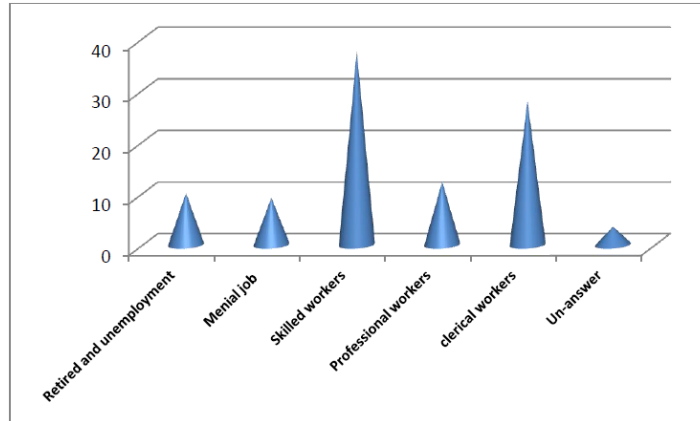


Figure 2: Distribution of Fathers' past/present Occupation

Table 5 and its figure indicated that most of the mothers (74.8) were households and only 25.2 of the mothers were employment.

TABLE 5:
DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS' PAST/PRESENT OCCUPATION

occupational	N	Percent
Un-employed	172	74.8
Employed	58	25.2
Total	230	100

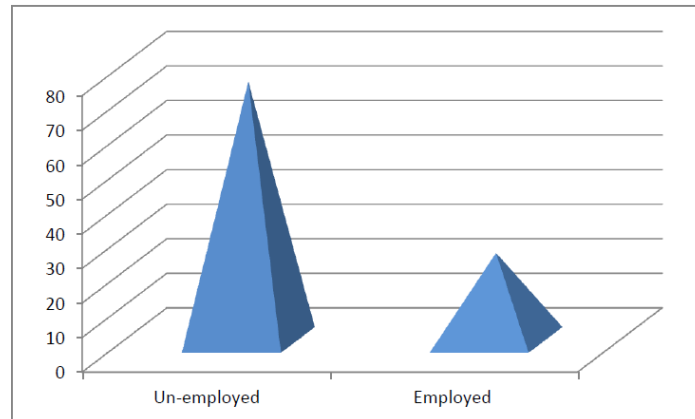


Figure3: Distribution of Mothers' Past/Present Occupation

Parental education level is presented in table 6. The analysis of this table showed that 43.9 percent of participants' father education level was diploma, 13 percent, 19.6 percent BA, and 23.5 percent MA and upper. Mothers' education levels were: 66.1 percent diploma, 11.3 percent, 11.3 percent BA, and 10.9 percent MA and upper MA.

TABLE 6:
DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Education level	Father		Mother	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Diploma	102	43.9	152	66.1
	30	13.0	26	11.3
BA	45	19.6	26	11.3
MA and upper MA	54	23.5	25	10.9
Un-answer	0	0	1	.4
Total	230	100.0	230	100.0

Table 7 and its figure indicated that 55.7 percent of fathers and 25.7 percent of mothers read newspaper.

TABLE 7:
DISTRIBUTION ON NEWSPAPER READING OF PARENTS

Reading Newspaper	Father		Mother	
	Percent	N	N	Percent
Yes	55.7	128	59	25.7
No	44.3	102	168	73.0
Un-answer	0	0	3	1.3
Total	100.0	230	230	100.0

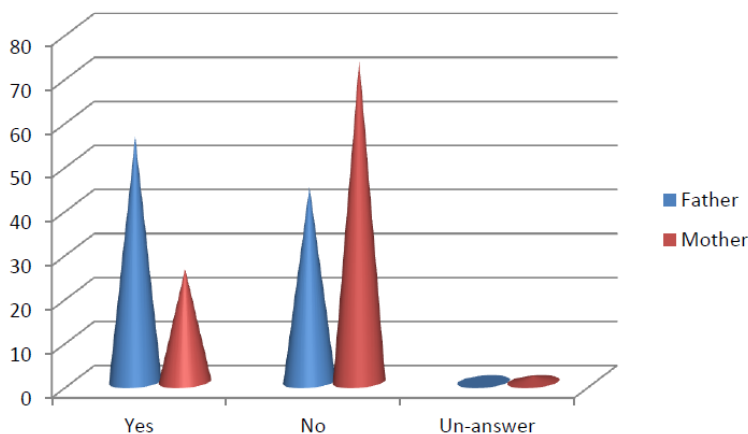


Figure 4: Distribution on Newspaper Reading of Parents

Table 8 and its figure showed that 11.3 percent of participants did not go out with their families, 29.1 percent of them went to the park with their families, 28.7 percent went to their relatives' house, and 16.1 percent of them went to the shopping mall.

TABLE 8:
DISTRIBUTION OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

	N	Percent
Park	67	29.1
Cinema	14	6.1
Theater	8	3.5
Amusement park	12	5.3
Shopping mall	37	16.1
Relative's	66	28.7
Don't go out	26	11.3
Total	230	100.0

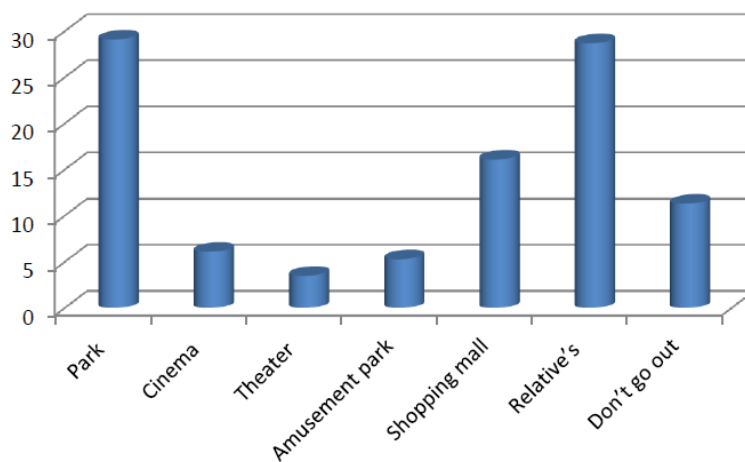


Figure 5: Distribution of Recreational Activities

Table 9 and its figure showed that 91.7 of participants accessed the internet. It showed that about 75.2 percent of participants used internet daily, 10.9 percent three or four times a week, and 2.6 percent of the participants used internet once or twice a week.

TABLE 9:
DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNET ACCESS

Internet Access	N	Percent
Yes	211	91.7
No	16	7
Un-answer	3	1.3
Total	230	100.0

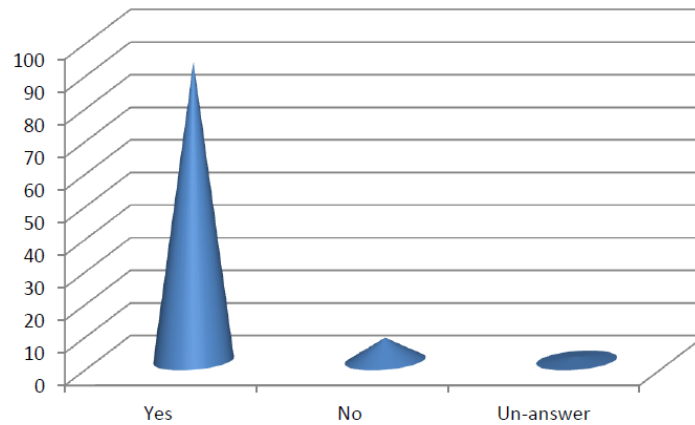


Figure 6: Distribution of Internet Access

Table 10 and its figure indicated that mean score of attitudes toward the TL was 2.7638, mean of interest in FL was 2.7845, mean of integrative orientation, mean score of motivation intensity was 2.4130, M=2.4355 for attitude toward learning language, M= 2.6815 for desire to learn, mean of instrumental orientation was 2.7163, and 2.6367 for total motivation.

TABLE 10:
PRESENTS STANDARD DEVIATION AND MEAN SCORES OF MOTIVATION VARIABLES.

Motivation Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitudes Toward the TL	2.7638	.48982
Interest in FL	2.7845	.67993
Integrative Orientation	2.5983	.55916
Motivational Intensity	2.4130	.64583
Attitude Toward Learning Language	2.4355	.51477
Desire to Learn TL	2.6815	.64615
Instrumental Orientation	2.7163	.66099
Total Motivation	2.6367	.46726

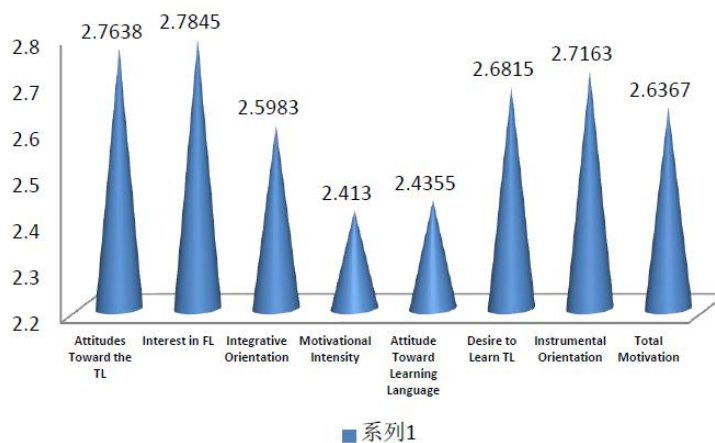


Figure 7: Presents Standard Deviation and Mean Scores of Motivation Variables

Table 11 showed that 23.9 percent of participants belonged to low class, 48.7 of them belonged to middle class and 27.4 belonged to high class of the society.

TABLE 11:
DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL CLASS

class	N	Percent
Low	55	23.9
Middle	112	48.7
High	63	27.4
Total	230	100

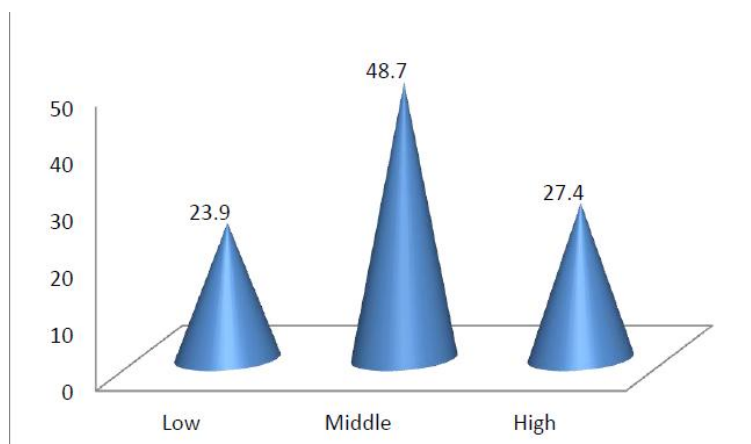


Figure 8: distribution of Social Class

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the correlation between socioeconomic factors and motivation in language learning. The role of motivation in language learning enable the EFL learners to have easy access to modern knowledge in some subjects in their educational purposes and help them maintain communicate with foreign people in order to achieve their own purposes within their country and in the outside world. The result of this paper indicated that most of the independent variables especially economical capital has apposite relation with motivation in FL learning. When parents were at the high level of the economical, participants could have better situation in dealing with English learning. They could have more financial support to start and continuing learning English. However, this paper showed that there is a positive relation between social class and motivation. When the level of social class is increased, motivation in learning English is also increased. The hypothesis of this research paper is not accepted and according to the outcome of the data analysis is rejected. Thus, the previous researches many researchers such as Lifrieri (2005) supported this study and according to him, there is significant correlation between socioeconomic factors with motivation in language learning.

REFERENCES

- [1] Allard, R. & Landry, R. (1994). Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality: A Comparison of Two Measures. *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, 108: 117-144.
- [2] Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson, ed. *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.
- [3] Chi-keungkam, M. (2002). Motivation in Second language learning: Ethno linguistic vitality or Psychological construct that counts? Paper presented at the AARE ANNUAL Conference: Brisbane.
- [4] Csiz, K and Kormos, J. (2008). The Relationship of Intercultural Contact and Language Learning Motivation among Hungarian Students of English and German, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29 (1): 30-48.
- [5] Gardner RC. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [6] Gardner RC. (2007). Motivation and Second Language Acquisition. *Porta Linguarum*, 8:9-20.
- [7] Khansir, A. A. (2012). Aspects of Language Communication: Discourse and Text. *International Journal of Communication*, 22(1-2): 167-181.
- [8] Khansir, A. A. (2013). Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 15(8): 1140-1146.
- [9] Khansir, A.A., & Gholami Dashti, J. (2014). The Effect of Question-Generation Strategy on Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension Development. *English Language Teaching*, 7(4): 38-45.
- [10] Krashen, SD. (1987). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. UK: Prentice-Hall International.
- [11] Kreitler, H. & Kreitler, S. (1982). The Theory of Cognitive Orientation: Widening in the scope of behaviour prediction. In B. Maher and W. Maher (Eds.), *Progress in Experimental Personality Research*, vol II. New York: Academic Press.
- [12] Lifrieri, V. (2005). A sociological perspective on motivation to learn EFL: The case of Escuelas Plurilinges in Argentina, Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.

- [13] Pérez-Sabater, C. and Montero-Fleta, B. (2012). The Study of Motivation in Library and Information Management Education: Qualitative and Quantitative Research. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 11:213-226.
- [14] Pflieger, S. L., & Kitchenham, B. A. (2001). Principles of survey research: part 1: turning lemons into lemonade. *ACM SIGSOFT Software Engineering Notes*, 26(6): 16-18.
- [15] Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual Differences in Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [16] Ushida, E. (2005). The Role of Students' Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning in Online Language Courses. *CALICO Journal*, 23 (1):49-78.
- [17] Weiner, B. (1994) Integrating social and personal theories of achievement motivation. *Review of Educational Research*, 64:557-573.

Ali Akbar Khansir is an Assistant professor in English Language Teaching at the Bushehr University of Medical Sciences, Bushehr, Iran. He has completed M.A. in English Language Teaching at the Aligarh Muslim University in 2003 and PhD in English Language Teaching at the Mysore University in 2010 in India. He has published some articles in the field of Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching in Academic Journals of English Language Teaching and Linguistics and published two books: English Error Analysis in 2010 and English Spelling and Sound in 2012 in Germany.

Naeimeh Jafarizadegan is an MA student of TEFL in Department of English, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bushehr, Iran. Her area of interest is Language teaching.

Fatemeh Karampoor is an Assistant professor in English Language at Payamnoor University, Bushehr, Iran.