

# Factors that motivated Kandahar University Lecturers learning English language

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**Abstract:** This study is to highlight the linguistic or academic dominance of English language in the educational context of Kandahar University. It also is to explore the current factors for why Kandahar University lecturers are motivated to learn English language. The medium of instruction (MOI) at Kandahar University is a Pashto which is an official and national language and spoken by a huge number of people in the southwestern zone of the country – Afghanistan. The primary data are collected through questionnaires to investigate the factors and the data is analyzed through IBM SPSS software with a collection of different ideas. The finding showed that the lecturers emphasized that English language opened up academic opportunities for them. In addition, English language helped them using technologies such as smartphones, computers etc. that is how, all of them wanted to recommend their colleagues, friends, and students to learn English language.

**Keywords:** Factors, English language, Kandahar University - KDRU lecturers.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global linguistic landscape, English is increasingly replacing local language as the medium of instruction (MOI) in schools and Universities in Asia. The internationalization of higher education according to Gill and Kirkpatrick (2013) has great impact on its curricula and MOI. One consequence is the rapid increase in the number of courses and degrees taught through the medium of English in universities worldwide. A powerful discourse in the contemporary world connects the dominance of the West and education. Perceptions of educational standards and institutions of the English-speaking West as superior have synonymized a Western education with opportunities to achieve aspirations of economic growth and prosperity (Gray, 2010). This conflation of the English language and the practices of English-speaking academia in non-Anglophone academic settings assumes an inherent superiority of such practices of learning and engagement in academic activities. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) emerged in the early 1980s, as a relatively fringe branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hyland, 2006) to meet the needs of internationalization of higher education, and has now grown into a major force in English-language teaching and research around the world (Hyland, 2006). Whether students have prior academic experiences involving educated, local varieties of English, or they have learned English for the purposes of study, language use is “very much influenced by a particular culture of a writer’s first language” (Phan, 2011, p. 24). The number of students studying outside their home country is predicted to grow to 7 million by 2025 (Ruby, 2008).

### Background of the Study

Kandahar University among other public universities in Afghanistan has approximately 282 faculty members with different designations and education levels. Most of the lecturers are employed after having passed English language proficiency tests. A big number of the lecturers used to be English language teachers in private English language learning centers comparing to other Afghan Public Universities. English language is important for all those lecturers who are about to get higher education in foreign countries. Presently, a great number of Kandahar University lecturers are holding Master’s degrees whereas a very small number of them is holding Ph.D. degrees though. This process is challenging for some while most of them are seeking English language learning in their teaching activities. Attending international programs also necessitate English language. That is how; English language learning is a motivational factor for all young lecture at the university.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hazen (2015) declared that there are about 6,900 languages currently spoken on Earth. English has become a dominant world language. There are at least 350,000,000 speakers of English who learned it as babies. Depending on how you restrict the label English, there are probably 1,000,000,000 speakers of some kind of English. With that many speakers, a lot of variation is introduced into English every day, and that diversity provides us with opportunities to examine how language works. Kachru (1985) in regards to English language emphasized that from a time (in the 1960s) when the majority of speakers were thought to be 300 million (L1) first-language speakers, we now have a situation where there are more people speaking 300–400 (L2), it as a second language, and many more speaking it as a foreign language 600–700 (F). Moreover, Gnutzmann and Intemann (2008) alleged that the worldwide spread of English is just one of the many different developments subsumed under the general phenomenon of globalization. It is furthermore associated with boundless motilities and, as such, is the language of globalization.

Crystal (2003, p. 15) said that a person needs only one language to talk to someone else. And he also believed that local languages continue to perform an important set of functions (chiefly, the expression of local identity) and English is seen as the primary means of achieving a global presence. According to him, English is now so widely established that it can no longer be thought of as 'owned' by any single nation. The socio-cultural explanation looks at the way people all over the world, in many walks of life, have come to depend on English for their economic and social well-being.

Some commentators have suggested that the English language was a major factor in maintaining American unity throughout this period of remarkable cultural diversification – a 'glue' which brought people together and a medium which gave them common access to opportunity (Herriman, et al. 1996). A study in a large public university in Mexico City found that students indeed interested in more than just learning English for utilitarian poses (Chasan & Ryan, 1995).

Haycraft (1978) stated that what is really important is that students are trained to understand different kinds of spoken English: American, British, Canadian - even French and German English. English, after all, is often used as a form of communication between non-English nationalities. He also assumed, "If you have a group of students from abroad who are going to study at English universities, you would probably give them practice in understanding lectures, in seminar discussions, and in writing compositions about their special subjects" (p. 19). Similarly, Gray (2010) is of opinion that perceptions of educational standards and institutions of the English-speaking West as superior have synonymized a Western education with opportunities to achieve aspirations of economic growth and prosperity. Whereas, Evans and Green (2007) found out that most of the undergraduates "not only require language support at university, but also that this support should be oriented towards academic rather than general English" (p.5). Wei and Flaitz (2005) emphasized that EAP is like a key responsibility in assisting ESL (English as a Second Language) students to develop the kind of English language proficiency that will lead to success in their academic endeavours. And, Liyanage and Birch (2001) identified that if English language is not the native language of the students, EAP classes are often attended and needed by almost all the students who are from a range of different academic disciplines. As, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) outlined four types of EAP situations at the tertiary level: (1) An English Speaking country such as UK or USA; (2) An ESL situation, such as in former British colonies in Africa or in South East Asia; (3) A situation where certain subjects are taught in English and the remaining in the national language; (4) A situation in which all subjects are taught in the national language and English plays an ancillary role.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Forty one Kandahar University male lecturers were selected purposively as the participants of the study. 3% of the lecturers were holding Bachelor Degrees, 95% of them were holding Master degrees, and 2% of them were holding Ph.D. degrees who were aged 28 to 40 years from various professional and academic backgrounds. The data were collected through questionnaires (each having three parts). The collected quantitative data were analyzed through IBM SPSS and the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

In regards to question, *Why English language is important to you?* The respondents presented some appropriate and specific reasons for learning English language. English language for them was an important international language for

academic opportunities. It is also an international language with deep knowledge and reliable resources in order to improve native language and translate new data to native language. Other reason in the sphere of international relations is that it is the language of modern education, media, internet etc. English is a good tool for learning through which international conferences, workshops, and other long-term and short-term educational programs can be attended. The second research question (*How did your English language affect your academic life?*) was also responded showing the reasons for learning English language. For example, English language affected academic lives of the lecturers positively. They were enabled to get higher education abroad with English language. This language also caused deep knowledge and it improved their interpersonal skills. The third question *What conferences/ workshops did you participate by the help of English language?* was also of importance. For which Kandahar university lecturers were provided many workshops/ conferences in the area capacity building. Most of them participated English medium OBE & SCL workshops inside and outside of the country including Leadership, Gender, Critical thinking, Translation, Quality Enhancement, GIZ, and FHI360. Moreover, they participated in many national and international conferences either.

#### 4.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

Based on the goals of the study, 22% ( $N=9$ ) of KDRU lecturers were English language teachers currently at Kandahar University whereas, 49% ( $N=20$ ) of them used to be English language teachers inside or outside of the University. 47% ( $N=19$ ) of the lecturers confirmed that English was the only foreign language they knew very well although 85% ( $N=35$ ) of the them had foreign friends with whom they communicated with English language, and 63% ( $N=26$ ) of them spoke English with their friends in the surroundings. 88% ( $N=37$ ) of the lecturers confirmed that English language was the language of internet and media while 32% ( $N=14$ ) asserted that they learnt English language for business transactions. A 100% ( $N=41$ ) of the lecturers emphasized that English language opened up academic opportunities for them. In addition, English language helped them using technologies such as smartphones, computers etc. that is how, all of them wanted to recommend their colleagues, friends, and students to learn English language.

The level of their English language skills was as follows: 17% ( $N=7$ ) of KDRU lecturers were excellent, 44% ( $N=18$ ) of them were very good, and 39% ( $N=16$ ) of them were good at English language. 5% ( $N=3$ ) of KDRU lecturers used English language 2-3 times a day, 27% ( $N=12$ ) of them daily, 24% ( $N=11$ ) 2-3 times a week, 7% ( $N=4$ ) once a week, and 37% ( $N=16$ ) of KDRU communicated in English with their colleagues through emails 2-3 times a month. In addition, 15% ( $N=5$ ) of KDRU lecturers learnt English for Higher Education, 5% ( $N=3$ ) for teaching, 5% ( $N=3$ ) for research, and 75% ( $N=30$ ) for all the purposes. Moreover, 2% ( $N=1$ ) of them always, 37% ( $N=15$ ) usually, 24% ( $N=10$ ) often, 30% ( $N=12$ ) sometimes, and 7% ( $N=3$ ) rarely translated English language texts into their native languages. And, 2% ( $N=1$ ) of KDRU lecturers have confirmed that Facebook, emails, and messages have improved their English language. 78% ( $N=32$ ) of them confirmed that books, newspapers, and journals have improved their English language. And, 10% ( $N=4$ ) have confirmed that film, dramas, and series have improved their English language. Additionally, 10% ( $N=4$ ) have confirmed that other tools have improved their English language.

<b>Table 4.1:</b> The Factors that KDRU Lecturers were motivated for learning English language.	Mean	S.D
English language learning is very important for a university lecturer.	1.09	.300
English language has changed my academic life at KDRU.	1.48	.745
Recommend student to prepare their homework using English language online sources.	2.19	1.345
English language made it possible to get Master's or Ph. D degree abroad.	1.29	.715
English language has improved native/ mother tongue.	3.19	1.452
Use some important academic terms while speaking native language.	2.07	.932
Enjoy reading English language articles ... rather than other languages.	1.73	1.000
Use online English language sources for my lecture notes.	1.60	.833
Want to strengthen my English language for international studies.	1.17	.380
Need to learn English for my academic purposes.	1.24	.582

Scales: (1=Strongly Agree, 2= Somewhat agree, 3= Somewhat disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree)

Table 4.1 clearly depicts the mean scores for factors that KDRU lecturers were motivated for learning English language. All of the variables had the mean scores between the ranges of two to three. Items, which gained higher mean scores were identified as ‘English language has improved native or mother tongue’ (M=3.19, SD=1.452), ‘Recommend student to prepare their homework using English language online sources’ (M=2.19, SD=1.345), and ‘Use some important academic terms while speaking native language.’ (M=2.07, SD=.932). However, the seven items of motivating factors were lower mean scores in order ‘Enjoy reading English language articles ... rather than other languages’ (M=1.73, SD=1.000), ‘Use online English language sources for my lecture notes’ (M=1.60, SD=.833), ‘English language has changed my academic life at KDRU’ (M=1.48, SD=.745), ‘English language made it possible to get Master’s or Ph. D degree abroad’ (M=1.29, SD=.715), ‘Need to learn English for my academic purposes’ (M=1.24, SD=.582), ‘Want to strengthen my English language for international studies’ (M=1.17, SD=.380), and ‘English language learning is very important for a university lecturer’ (M=1.09, SD=.300).

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the effort to determine the motivating factors for learning English language by KDRU lecturers, English language in the present educational context was of great importance. It played a significant role in getting higher education abroad. Learning English language is imperative for being lecturer at the university. English language opened up academic opportunities by participating in the national and international workshops and conferences for the purpose of capacity building. Many of the lecturers at Kandahar University use English language to communicate with their colleagues and friends through emails... and they strengthened their English language through journals, books and news. KDRU lecturers have recommend their student to prepare homework using English language by benefitting online English language sources.

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