



A Mixed-methods Approach to Investigating Iranian EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Academic Motivation in Learning Vocabulary

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Abstract

The present study aims at analyzing EFL learners' attitudes towards motivating factors in learning vocabulary. A mixed-methods approach was used to conduct the study. In the qualitative analysis, Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards learning vocabulary were investigated through a semi-structured interview encompassing 36 participants. Subsequently, a 56-item 'motivation for vocabulary questionnaire' (MVQ) was devised by the researchers and administered to 70 language learners in the pilot study. However, the number of participants in the main study was 315. A factor analysis through the quantitative analysis extracted three motivating factors as learners' expectations factors, internal conditions of the learners' factors, and learners' satisfaction factors. The results also indicated that, opportunities to use English, new technology, classroom activities, and teaching method were considered as the most significant motivating factors among Iranian EFL learners in learning vocabulary.

Keywords: Academic motivation, Vocabulary learning, Motivation for vocabulary questionnaire (MVQ), Qualitative data, Quantitative data.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is equally essential for performance due to the fact that learning enables learners to acquire new knowledge and skills, however, motivation provides the impetus for showing what we have learned (Weiner, 1990). One of the most polemical questions in language learning research is why some students are more successful and motivated than others in learning a second or foreign language. Hence, several second language acquisition researchers have endeavored to find

the answer to this question (Dornyei, 2001, 2005; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Ushioda (2009) brought some reasons for the dramatic rise of interest in motivation in SLA and claimed that it is well worth pursuing as an undernourished field of inquiry due to its prominent role in whether learners learn something or not, how much effort they put into learning, how long they persist in learning, and how successfully they learn a language. Startlingly, the vigorous growth of interest in motivation has spawned a rich variety of theoretical models and frame-

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works, generated a wealth of research, instigated intense debate, and resulted in limited straight-forward solutions (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In fact, the complexity of the term 'motivation' has prevented a consensus in researchers' understanding of motivation. The term is derived from the Latin word *movere* which means 'to move' (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). As mentioned by Ryan and Deci (2000), "to be motivated means to be moved to do something" (p. 54). Accordingly, a person who does not have any inspiration to act is recognized as unmotivated. However, the one who is energized or engaged in an action directing towards an end or an inclination is regarded as motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). To this respect, academic motivation is defined as "enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation, curiosity, persistence, task-endogeny, and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (Gottfried, 1990, p. 525).

Before 1990, L2 motivation was researched through a socio-psychological approach and motivation at that time was usually operationalized on the basis of the three components of motivational intensity or effort, desire to learn the language, and attitudes towards learning the language (Dornyei, 1994; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). Basically speaking, there are two types of motivation including intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and instrumental/integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Ryan & Deci, 1985). It is worthwhile to mention that in L2 acquisition, intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation are considered in social psychology (Harmer, 1991), however, instrumental and integrative types of motivation have their roots in cognitive psychology (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

1. Ryan and Deci (2000) clarified the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and defined extrinsic motivation as an activity which is performed with the purpose of gaining some distinct consequences. Conversely, intrinsic motivation refers to the process through which an individual performs an action primarily for its

inherent satisfactions without considering its separable outcomes. Extrinsic motivation thus contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity simply to enjoy it, rather than considering its instrumental value (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Generally speaking, lack of intrinsic motivation could lower extrinsic motivation (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

2. The second type of motivation is referred to as instrumental/integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation is where language learning is associated with pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency such as getting a better job. However, integrative motivation is a desire to become a member of the community that speaks the language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Vocabulary learning is of primary importance for both perception and production of the language (Kochapilly, 2011). It is regarded to be a complex and life-long task (Stahl & Nagy, 2006); therefore, students need to be motivated to expand their vocabulary to satisfy their communicative needs. However, motivating students is one of the greatest challenges teachers become involved in (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008). Teachers need to be aware of the factors that can generate and increase learners' motivation. As a consequence, they would be able to provide learners with incentives to enrich their vocabulary.

Concerning motivation and vocabulary learning, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) mentioned that evaluating and analyzing students' motivation is a necessary step towards identifying the factors affecting students' behaviors and emotion in learning new words. Students without motivation for vocabulary learning might not pursue learning new words encountered in written texts or listening situations, hence, in this regard only an incidental learning of vocabulary may happen (Deng, 2010).

Surprisingly, research evaluating students' attitudes towards motivating factors in vocabulary learning is scarce. In other words, no exploratory study has been devoted to the analysis of the factors affecting students' motivation in learning vocabulary particularly in Iranian EFL environ-

ment. This being the case, the researchers were motivated to conduct a mixed-methods study to scrutinize Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards motivating factors in vocabulary learning.

Early theories of motivation focus on human behavior such as unconscious emotions and feelings, but through the second half of the 20th century, theories of motivation shifted from unconscious behaviors to conscious cognitive processes such as beliefs and goals (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Three motivational theories including 'attribution theory', 'expectancy theory', and 'dissonance theory' have been introduced on the basis of the cognitive approach (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The 'attribution theory' was introduced by Bernard Weiner. The purpose was to explicate individual's success or failure through offering certain attributions which may be internal or external. On the basis of the attribution theory, a person's failure or success in learning a language is attributable to some internal reasons such as learners' own knowledge and efforts or external factors such as luck, fate, and other environmental issues like social/cultural and physical factors (Weiner, 1986, as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). This theory pertains to individual's consideration and evaluation of his/her past experiences; both successes and failures (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The term 'expectancy theory' developed by Victor Vroom expatiates upon learners' expectations of success and goals. The individual's expectancy attaches to success in a given task, including the value of the rewards in performing the task. In essence, as Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) stated "the greater the perceived likelihood of goal-attainment and the greater the incentive value of the goal, the higher the degree of the individual's positive motivation" (p. 13).

Finally, the 'Dissonance theory' proposed by Leon Festinger demonstrates the idea that whenever people find discrepancies between their actions and beliefs, they try to resolve them which relates to changing their behavior (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). In other words, the dissonance theory concentrates on how individuals strive for internal consistency in which they wish to be-

come psychologically comfortable as well as more motivated to reduce this dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

Dornyei (2001) provided ten comments for motivating language learners encompassing the process of setting teacher's behavior, creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere, performing the task properly, making a good relationship with the learners, increasing learners' self-confidence, developing an interesting language class, increasing learners' autonomy, personalizing the learning process, promoting the learners' goal-orientedness, and finally familiarizing learners with the target language.

Gardner (1985) established a model of motivation in second language learning called the socio-educational model which considers the learners' intelligence, aptitude, motivation, attitudes, and social anxiety as factors determining the learners' outcome. The model reveals that the learners' attitude towards the target language and the culture of the target community has vigorous effect on language learning motivation. In other words, integrativeness and attitude towards the learning situation are particularly pertinent to the learners' motivation.

It is important to note that the Attitude / Motivational Test Battery (AMTB) which includes five constructs of integrativeness, instrumental motivation, motivation, anxiety, and attitudes towards learning situations was developed on the basis of the Gardner's socio-educational model. Instrumental motivation, however, was not a part of Gardner's model, and was developed as a small part of Gardner's Attitude/Motivational Test Battery.

A key issue in Gardner's (1985) motivation theory is the relationship between 'motivation' and 'orientation'. The role of orientation is to direct motivation towards a set of goals. Gardner's motivation theory focuses on the concept of the 'integrative motive', which is defined as a "motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speaks the language" (Gardner, 1985, pp. 82-83). The integrative motive has three main components as integrativeness, attitudes towards the

learning situation, and motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Integrativeness includes attitudes towards the L2 community, interest in learning foreign languages, and integrative orientation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). It puts emphasis on “the individual’s willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups” (Gardner & Mac-

Intyre, 1993, as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 42). Attitudes towards the learning situation could be simply defined as learners’ attitudes towards the L2 course and their teacher, and finally, motivation refers to learners’ willingness, effort, and attitude towards language learning (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Figure 1 provides schematic representation for Gardner’s conceptualization of the integrative motive.

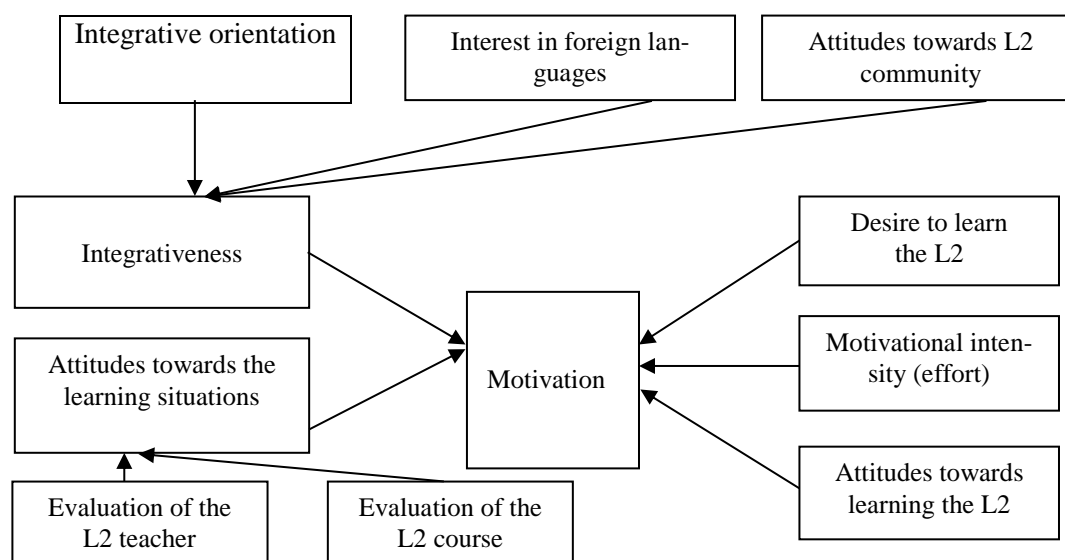


Figure 1. Gardner’s conceptualization of the integrative motive (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 42)

Dornyei (2005) pointed out that there are at least three phases of motivation: First, motivation requires to be generated, which is called choice motivation; second, the generated motivation needs to be protected which is referred to as executive motivation. The final phase is called motivational retrospection. It concerns learners’ retrospective evaluation of how things went. Teacher’s role in learners’ motivation is complex, but the teacher has an impact on learners’ motivation (Dornyei, 2001). The teachers’ motivational influences, as well as parental influences, are a part of social motivation.

Vocabulary is an essential part of language, and also a very important element in the process of teaching and learning a language (Schmitt, 2010). According to Wilkins (1972), “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without

vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (as cited in Schmitt, 2010, p. 3). Furthermore, the significance of vocabulary learning could be crystallized in terms of the idea proposed by Graves who believed that vocabulary is the building block of language, and language is the core in the process of attaining literacy competency (Graves, 2009). In other words, literary competency pertains to the development of individual’s language ability (Cohen, 1992). Nation (2008) stressed the significance of vocabulary in language learning through introducing some useful guidelines for designing activities requiring learners to make use of target words appropriately as a central task to complete the activity.

Lexical acquisition is a multidimensional and complex construct (Read, 2000, as cited in Tseng & Schmitt, 2008). In other words, learning a

word involves numerous types of word knowledge, such as word form, meaning, collocation, and register (Nation, 2001). Highly motivated language learners usually use more variant vocabulary learning strategies compared to their less motivated peers (Oxford, 1989). Different studies like Deng (2010) and Sadeghi (2013) demonstrated that motivation positively affects vocabulary learning. Therefore, there can be a link between vocabulary learning and language learning motivation.

It is logical to claim that motivation as a key factor facilitates vocabulary learning (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). However, it has been recognized that “neither the theoretical nor the empirical literature of motivation has so far shed enough light on the field of L2 vocabulary learning” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, as cited in Tseng & Schmitt, 2008, p. 358). The general consensus is that literature on affective components of cognition like motivation has not yet reached a level of sophistication and substantial progress in L2 vocabulary learning studies (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). In other words, little studies have been proffered to the field to examine the role of motivation in vocabulary learning (e.g., Deng, 2010; Elley, 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Kim, 2008; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Sadeghi, 2013; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008).

Elley (1989) conducted a study to evaluate the effect of teaching materials on learners' vocabulary learning. He concluded that teaching materials that raised learners' interest and motivation led to better word learning. Children could learn new vocabulary incidentally through illustrated storybooks read to them. In other words, “students who start out with less vocabulary knowledge gain at least as much from the readings as the other students, and that the learning is relatively permanent” (Elley, 1989, p. 184).

Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) confirmed that both integrative and instrumental motivation could help vocabulary learning. They stated that “both integratively and instrumentally motivated students spent more time thinking about the correct answer than those not motivated, suggesting that

both elements have an energizing effect” (p. 57).

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) focused on the theory of cognitive and motivational factors on vocabulary tasks which was referred to as the involvement load hypothesis. On the basis of the involvement load hypothesis, they proposed a motivational-cognitive construct of involvement which is composed of three basic components including need, search, and evaluation.

Kim (2008) investigated the theory proposed by Laufer and Hulstijn and reported an association between motivational factors and lexical performance. As mentioned by Kim (2008), “it is possible that all three components might not be equal in contributing to vocabulary learning” (p. 313).

In a different line, Tseng and Schmitt (2008) proposed a framework related to vocabulary knowledge and motivation in which motivated vocabulary learning sheds light on a series of developmental modes and functions as a cyclic process through focusing attention on learners' motivation towards vocabulary learning over a period of time.

Deng (2010) investigated motivation for vocabulary learning among college students in order to construct and validate an instrument to measure motivation for vocabulary. He concluded that English native speakers had higher motivation for vocabulary learning compared to their non-native counterparts. In another study pertinent to vocabulary learning and motivation, Sadeghi (2013) analyzed the impact of motivation on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning and found significant differences between highly and less-motivated learners and their vocabulary knowledge.

It is evident that research on academic motivation has not touched the area of vocabulary learning deeply. However, there are several studies evaluating the term ‘motivation’ in its general sense as well as motivation for reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield & Asher, 1984). Besides, many scholars have found a positive correlation between students' motivation and strategy use (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). The results of the study conducted by Csizer and Dornyei (2005) showed a

positive correlation between students' motivation and language learning behavior. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) found a positive correlation between different types of motivation and language learning and finally the study conducted by Yu and Watkins (2008) demonstrated a positive correlation between motivation, culture, and language proficiency.

Among studies pertinent to the issue of motivation and language learning, Uribe (2000), Tuan (2012), Aliakbari (2004), and Nikolov (1999) reported almost similar findings. They found a positive correlation between students' motivation and second language learning. Uribe (2000) studied the relationship between the students' attitudes and their performance in the English class. The major purpose of the study was to determine whether the students' attitudes in the language classroom depend on a set of contextual variables affecting their performance. He found that the teachers' performance and behavior were the most important factors affecting learners' attitudes. Likewise, Tuan (2012) found teachers' behavior as a motivating factor concerning teacher-related factors. Aliakbari (2004) perceived that the quality of the English program and the proficiency of the teacher or teachers working in each school may affect a family's choice to send their children to one school or another. It is worthwhile to mention that in a similar study regarding motivation in language learning Nikolov (1999) found some factors like learners' attitudes, teacher, as well as materials as the most prominent motivating factors.

In actual fact, no study has been dedicated to the analysis of motivating factors in learning vocabulary in Iranian EFL context. This being the case, the current study aims to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards motivating factors in learning vocabulary through a mixed-methods approach. It seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What factors are regarded to be motivating in learning vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners?
2. What is the frequency and order of significance of the motivating factors for the popula-

tion of the present study?

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-six intermediate language learners were selected from Iranzamin House of Language in Tehran. They participated in a semi-structured interview which was conducted to elicit their ideas about motivating factors in learning vocabulary. All participants were native speakers of Persian and their age ranged between 19 and 27.

In the pilot study, the participants were 70 intermediate language learners who were studying English at Iranzamin House of Language. "The typical sample size at this stage is around 50 (+/- 20). This number will already allow the researcher to conduct some meaningful item analysis, which is the next, and final, step in the questionnaire construction process" (Dorneyi, 2003, p. 68).

However, the participants involved in the main study were 315 language learners selected from three different English language institutes. Their age ranged between 16 and 29. All the students were native speakers of Persian and were studying English at intermediate level of language proficiency based on the scores obtained from the placement tests administered by language institutes. Table 1 presents the demographic information pertinent to the participants involved in both phases (qualitative and quantitative) of the study clearly.

Table 1
The Setting and Demographic Background of the Participants in the Interview, Pilot study, and the Main Study

Target Population No.	315 Language learners
Proficiency Level	Intermediate
Target Sub-skill	Vocabulary
Number of Participants in Semi-Structured Interview	36 Language learners
Number of Participants in the Pilot Study	70 Language learners
Age	16-29
Sex	Males and females
Setting	English language institutes
Mother Tongue	Persian

Instruments

The participants' opinions regarding motivating factors in vocabulary learning were elicited and assessed through a semi-structured interview and Motivation for Vocabulary Questionnaire (MVQ).

Semi-structured Interview

Thirty-six intermediate language learners were interviewed by one of the researchers. The interviewees were supposed to explicitly mention at least three reasons they considered to be motivating in learning vocabulary. The respondents' descriptions were recorded for further analysis.

Motivation for Vocabulary Questionnaire (MVQ)

The researchers reviewed several motivation questionnaires used in different ESL/EFL studies in order to develop a questionnaire assessing motivating factors in vocabulary learning. A Likert Scale questionnaire was developed on the basis of the items selected from different questionnaires (Dornyei, 1998; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Kim, 2009; Tran & Baldauf, 2007; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) and the data obtained from semi-structured interviews. The devised questionnaire included 56 items.

Procedure

The following steps were followed to collect the initial data required to construct and validate MVQ.

1. At the very beginning of the study, permission was gained from the supervisors of the English language institutes who showed their willingness to collaborate in this study. The participants involved in the semi-structured interview, pilot, and main study were ensured that their responses would be confidential.

2. One of the researchers interviewed 36 EFL learners at intermediate level to elicit their ideas about motivating factors in learning vocabulary. They were supposed to mention at least three factors they regarded to be motivating in learning vocabulary. The interviewees' responses were

recorded for further analysis. The researchers reviewed several motivation questionnaires used in different studies. This procedure resulted to initial draft of 114 items which were thoroughly analyzed by carrying out a think-aloud protocol with three experts in TEFL. Finally, the number of items in MVQ was reduced from 114 items to 56 items through omitting inappropriate, redundant, irrelevant, or ambiguous ones. In other words, a Likert Scale questionnaire was developed on the basis of the items selected from different questionnaires and the data obtained from semi-structured interviews.

3. The final draft of the questionnaire was translated into Persian by the researchers to prevent any misunderstandings and to ensure that the items were quite comprehensible. The fact remains that translating the questionnaire into EFL learners' native language has some advantages: It diminishes the degree of the respondents' misunderstandings through clarifying the ideas translated into their native language. Besides, the respondents require less time to complete the questionnaire, and finally they feel more confident about the way they understand and interpret the items (Dornyei, 2003; Dornyei & Csizer, 2012). The Persian form of the questionnaire was checked and evaluated by two colleagues who were professional in English language and were native speakers of Persian.

4. The current study had two parts encompassing the pilot and the main study. In the pilot study, the researchers administered the questionnaire to a sample of 70 participants who were in every way similar to the target population to fine tune the final version. The data obtained at this stage was used to a) improve the instructions provided and the clarity of item wordings; b) rehearse the administration procedures; c) dry-run the analysis to check whether the researchers' expected findings will finally emerge from the data; d) finalize the layout of the instrument; e) time the completion of the newly devised questionnaire; f) monitor the range of responses elicited by each item; g) estimate the reliability of the

questionnaire; and h) finally double check to ascertain that there are no mistakes left in the questionnaire. The above-mentioned points have been recommended by Dornyei and Csizer (2012) for piloting newly devised questionnaires. The revised questionnaire was administered to a group of 315 EFL learners in the main study.

RESULTS

A semi-structured interview was conducted among 36 language learners at Iranzamin House of Language, an English language institute in the west of Tehran in order to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards motivating factors in vocabulary learning. It is worth mentioning that the following factors are regarded to be the most salient ones proposed by the interviewees.

1. Using new technology to practice new words (using CDs, DVDs, or computer-based teaching aids)
2. Teachers' use of new, effective, and attractive methods in teaching vocabulary
3. Teachers' behavior towards students (kind and patient)
4. Opportunities to use English words (ability to use new words in different situations and/or contexts appropriately)
5. Teaching methodologies focusing on classroom activities
6. Close relationship between teacher and students
7. Teachers' competence (good knowledge of vocabulary)

The analysis of the findings obtained from the interviews revealed that the major factors motivating the participants to learn vocabulary in English were opportunities to use English words, teaching method, new technology, classroom activities, teachers' behavior, and finally teachers' competence. However, the factor of 'opportunities to use English' was regarded to be the most important motivating factor. It comes somewhat of a surprise to learn that 'teachers' competence' was reported to be the

least important factor motivating students to learn vocabulary. The factors are shown on the basis of the reported percentages in Table 2.

Table 2
Percentages of Motivating Factors (Interview)

Factor	Number	Percentage
Opportunities to Use English Words	36	22.39%
Teaching Method	36	20.37%
New Technology	36	17.21%
Classroom Activities	36	15.1%
Teachers' Behavior	36	13.3%
Teachers' Competence	36	11.63%

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted among 70 intermediate EFL learners to estimate the reliability of "Motivation for Vocabulary Questionnaire". Table 3 reveals the Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the MVQ.

Table 3
Reliability Statistics, Pilot Study

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
MVQ	.812	56

Main Study

Concerning the first research question of this study, i.e. determining motivating factors in learning vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners, the responses of the participants to MVQ were analyzed. A factor analysis through the varimax rotation method was run to probe the underlying constructs and components of the MVQ. The SPSS extracted three motivating factors which accounted for 63.03 percent (Table 4) of the total variance.

Table 4
Total Variance Explained, MVQ

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Variance	Cumulative	Total	Variance	Cumulative	Total	Variance	Cumulative
1	3.586	35.856	35.856	3.586	35.856	35.856	2.634	26.338	26.338
2	1.485	14.852	50.707	1.485	14.852	50.707	2.169	21.689	48.027
3	1.232	12.316	63.023	1.232	12.316	63.023	1.500	14.996	63.023
4	.911	9.109	72.132						
5	.763	7.626	79.758						
6	.625	6.249	86.007						
7	.475	4.747	90.754						
8	.407	4.070	94.824						
9	.322	3.217	98.041						
10	.196	1.959	100.000						

As displayed in Table 5, the first factor is a combination of four factors: classroom activities, teaching method, teachers' behavior, and learners' interest. The first factor could be labeled as "learners' expectations factors". The second factor is also a combination of four factors including learners' effort, classroom envi-

ronment, new technology, and opportunities to use English. The second factor could be labeled as "internal conditions of the learners' factors". Finally, the teachers' competence and learners' attitudes loaded on the third factor. The third factor was labeled as "learners' satisfaction factors".

Table 5
Rotated component matrix, MVQ

Components	Component		
	1	2	3
Classroom Activities	.751		
Teaching Method	.712		
Learners' Interest	.678		
Teachers' Behavior	.666		
Learners' Effort		.816	
Classroom Environment		.778	
New Technology		.621	
Opportunities to Use English Words	.496	.528	
Teachers' Competence			.858
Learners' Attitudes	.460		.631

Considering the second research question related to the frequency and order of importance of the motivating factors, the respons-

es of participants to MVQ were analyzed. Table 6 displays the frequencies and percentages of the motivating factors.

Table 6
Frequencies, Percentages, and Components of MVQ

Section		Frequency	Percent
New Technology	Strongly Disagree	11	.9
	Disagree	101	8.0
	No Idea	104	8.3
	Agree	607	48.2
	Strongly Agree	437	34.7
	Total	1260	100.0
Teaching Method	Strongly Disagree	22	1.0
	Disagree	134	6.1
	No Idea	279	12.7
	Agree	997	45.2
	Strongly Agree	773	35.1
	Total	2205	100.0
Teachers' Behavior	Strongly Disagree	182	11.6
	Disagree	111	7.0
	No Idea	196	12.4
	Agree	589	37.4
	Strongly Agree	497	31.6
	Total	1575	100.0
Teachers' Competence	Strongly Disagree	63	6.7
	Disagree	50	5.3
	No Idea	299	31.6
	Agree	355	37.6
	Strongly Agree	178	18.8
	Total	945	100.0
Learners' Attitudes	Strongly Disagree	49	1.6
	Disagree	184	5.8
	No Idea	402	12.8
	Agree	1480	47.0
	Strongly Agree	1035	32.9
	Total	3150	100.0
Learners' Effort	Strongly Disagree	87	3.1
	Disagree	482	17.0
	No Idea	476	16.8
	Agree	1189	41.9
	Strongly Agree	601	21.2
	Total	2835	100.0
Learners' Interest	Strongly Disagree	93	3.7
	Disagree	220	8.7
	No Idea	537	21.3
	Agree	1119	44.4
	Strongly Agree	551	21.9
	Total	2520	100.0
Opportunities to Use English words	Strongly Disagree	6	.6
	Disagree	13	1.4
	No Idea	142	15.0
	Agree	350	37.0
	Total	511	100.0

	Strongly Agree	434	45.9
	Total	945	100
Classroom Activities	Disagree	9	.7
	No Idea	225	17.9
	Agree	642	51.0
	Strongly Agree	384	30.5
	Total	1260	100.0
Classroom Environment	Strongly Disagree	30	3.2
	Disagree	64	6.8
	No Idea	164	17.4
	Agree	457	48.4
	Strongly Agree	230	24.3
	Total	945	100.0

Based on the language learners' responses to MVQ, the most important motivating factors were opportunities to use English words (83 %), new technology (82.9 %), classroom activities (81.5 %), and teaching method (80.3 %). However, the factors of learners' interest (66.3%), learners' effort (63.1%), and teachers' competence (56.4%) were considered to be less important in motivating vocabulary learning.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Nunan (2003) argued that motivation and learning attitude are important predictors of achievement. Students who are highly motivated to learn are more eager than others to plan their learning as well as to retain the information they have obtained (Slavin, 2009). Second, language vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in language learning and teaching (De Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997). Having considered the importance of motivation and vocabulary learning in second language acquisition, the researchers set out to find out motivating factors among intermediate EFL learners in learning vocabulary, and also the frequency and order of importance of these factors from language learners' perspectives as an area deserving deeper scrutiny.

Initially, a semi-structured interview was conducted to elicit interviewees' ideas about motivating factors in learning vocabulary. A Likert Scale questionnaire (DVQ) was constructed on the basis of the items selected from several questionnaires (Dornyei, 1998; Gu &

Johnson, 1996; Kim, 2009; Tran & Baldauf, 2007; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) and the data collected from semi-structured interviews.

The results of the interview conducted at the very beginning of the study revealed that opportunities to use English words, teachers' teaching method, competence and behavior, materials, classroom environment, new technology, and attitudes towards English were the most significant sources of motivation in learning vocabulary among Iranian language learners.

The selection of the above-mentioned internal and external factors (reported by the participants of the current study) could be interpreted in terms of the 'attribution theory' developed by Weiner, 1986 (as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). The theory claims that a person's failure or success in learning a language is attributable to some internal and external reasons based on his/her experience of success and failure. Accordingly, the respondents assumed that success in vocabulary learning is attributable to different internal and external factors encompassing opportunities to use English, teachers' teaching method, competence and behavior, materials, classroom environment, new technology, and attitudes towards English based on their personal experiences. Among the above-mentioned factors, opportunities to use English words had the highest frequency. In other words, the interviewees believed that learning vocabulary is highly attributable to the opportunities available to make

use of the target items practically. However, teachers' competence stands at the lowest position with regard to its significance as a motivator.

The informants' responses to MVQ were analyzed to answer the first research question related to motivating factors in learning vocabulary. On the basis of the results of the factor analysis, three motivating factors were extracted based on language learners' opinions. The first factor referred to as 'learners' expectations factor' was a combination of four components encompassing classroom activities, teaching method, teachers' behavior, and learners' interest. The second factor which was labeled 'internal conditions of the learners' factor' was also a combination of four components including learners' effort, classroom environment, new technology, and opportunities to use English words. The third factor called 'learners' satisfaction factors', however, included only two components as teachers' competence and learners' attitudes.

Given that few researches have been done to determine sources of motivation in vocabulary learning, hence, the results of the current study are compared with the sources of motivation in learning English as general. Therefore, the outcomes of this study stand in conformity with some previous established results regarding sources of motivation in learning English reported by Dornyei (2001) and Uribe (2000). It is worthwhile to mention that they found the above-mentioned factors as motivating factors in learning English.

The findings related to the second research question indicated that the most prominent components of motivating factors were opportunity to use English words, new technology, classroom activities, and teaching method respectively. Among different motivating factors, 'opportunities to use English words' factor was regarded to be the most important motivating factor. In the light of these results, it could be inferred that those language learners who considered 'opportunities to use English' as the most motivating factor in learning vocabulary seek an opportunity to use the language and perhaps the reason is

communication. The findings could be interpreted in terms of the idea stated by Pikulski and Templeton (2004) who believed that "communication gives students reasons to want to learn new vocabulary" (p. 17).

Surprisingly, the results showed that the factor of 'teachers' competence' was a less important issue in learning vocabulary compared to the other factors. The findings in this regard stand in contrast with the results reported by Aliakbari (2005), Dornyei (2001), and Uribe (2000) who found teachers as the most salient source of motivation. Besides, the results stand in contrast with the findings reported by Nikolov (1999). His study revealed that the factor of teacher had significant role in learners' motivation.

The findings indicated that the two factors of 'learners' attitudes' and 'materials' were regarded to be less important compared to 'opportunities to use English' and 'new technology' as the most significant factors motivating vocabulary learning. The findings in this regard stand in contrast with the results reported by Tuan (2012) who found 'learners' attitudes' and 'materials' as the most important factors in learning English.

In the present study, the participants suggested new technology as an important factor motivating EFL learners' vocabulary learning. The findings indicated that EFL learners prefer to learn vocabulary with the help of technological aids like computers or internet. They may believe that vocabulary learning becomes facilitated and more enjoyable through using new technology. In other words, language learners are more interested in modern ways of practicing vocabulary in comparison with the traditional methods which are primarily focused on memorization without practicing new words effectively.

In sum, the present study comes to the conclusion that the factors reported to be motivating in learning vocabulary primarily focused on intrinsic, extrinsic, and integrative motivation. Accordingly, the findings obtained from the interview and MVQ revealed that factors like learners' effort, interest, and attitudes play a prominent role in learning words. These factors could be placed

under the category of intrinsic motivation which is defined as the process of engaging in an activity for its own value (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). However, the other factors like new technology, teachers' competence, teachers' behavior, teaching method, classroom activities as well as environment emphasize extrinsic motivation defined by Pintrich and Schunk (2002) as the process of engaging in an activity as a tool to achieve a goal. It is important to note that the factor of 'opportunities to use English words' belongs to the category of integrative motivation respectively which was developed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). It refers to the situation in which learners are motivated to learn new words because of their positive attitudes towards the foreign language or community or because of their interest to integrate with the community using that language.

Based on the results of the current study, 'opportunities to use English words' and 'new technology' were the most important motivating factors in learning vocabulary. However, 'teachers' competence' was regarded to be the least significant motivating factor among Iranian EFL language learners. The current study may offer some pedagogical implications for language learners, language teachers, syllabus designers, as well as supervisors as the main beneficiaries.

Generally speaking, the present study can make EFL learners more sensitive to the significance of vocabulary learning through highlighting the role of different internal and external motivators in learning new words. In other words, the results may be helpful in raising a general awareness and understanding of the factors encouraging vocabulary development. As a consequence, learners would be able to cope with the difficulties involved more easily.

In fact, language teachers are expected to help students to become integratively motivated to learn from their classroom experience as well as out of class communication to build up students' confidence and make them more interested in learning English words. The findings of the present study could be useful in helping

teachers to adapt their teaching methods and strategies to the learners' interests and motivation through focusing on the most important factors motivating vocabulary learning. As a consequence, they can provide better learning environment for language learners to encourage them to be more adventurous in expanding the depth and breadth of their vocabulary knowledge. In other words, teachers can encourage and remotivate learners to foster their vocabulary knowledge through maximizing the impact of positive or motivating factors.

To this respect, syllabus designers should be sensitive to language learners' needs and interests to help them become more proficient in vocabulary use. On the basis of the fact that vocabulary plays an essential role in both comprehension and production of language, thus, it is suggested that language institutes and supervisors set up counseling programs for more experienced teachers to help students to be psychologically prepared to learn new words more practically through analyzing and discussing motivating factors involved in learning new words.

This study was conducted on a small group of language learners in three language institutes in Tehran, Iran, and its results cannot by all means be generalized; however, other researchers in similar situations can benefit from the findings. The researchers concluded that this was just the beginning of many more studies to be conducted in the same area. However, the present study could be replicated to investigate motivating factors in learning vocabulary (as individual words) at different proficiency levels and age ranges to understand whether the results would be similar.

Learning formulaic language is as significant as learning individual words. Therefore, we should fully recognize the need for considering the prominent role of formulaic language in future vocabulary studies (Schmitt, 2010). Further studies could be conducted to explore motivating factors in learning different types of formulaic language (e.g., multi-word units, idioms, collocations, etc.) in a more focused manner.

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Appendix A Interview

Question of the Interview

1. What factors do you think have positive effects and motivate you in learning vocabulary?

Appendix B Motivation for Vocabulary Questionnaire (MVQ)

Read the statements carefully and circle the most appropriate answer. Remember that there are not right or wrong answers to these statements. The researcher wants to find out what **motivates** you in learning vocabulary.

Sex: Male **Female**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Knowing a lot of vocabulary helps me use the computer programs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
2. I like my teacher to use only English equivalents while teaching new words.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I feel well when my teacher has good pronunciation.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I like to be able to send an English email or to chat with English speakers using appropriate words.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. My teacher has a dynamic and interesting style in teaching vocabulary.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I like the teacher to use CDs or DVDs to improve our vocabulary knowledge.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. If the teacher introduces interesting words, I might learn better.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Using computer-based programs to learn and practice words makes it more interesting.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. I feel well when I can successfully guess the meaning of a new word used in a text.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
10. Teacher should give immediate feedback to students so that they know if they are correct in getting the meaning of the new words.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
11. I like knowing frequently used words in communication.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
12. I prefer my teacher to ignore my mistakes in using new words.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
13. When class ends, I really wish that we could continue.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
14. I like to learn vocabulary with examples.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
15. The teacher lets me guess the meaning of a new word in a text.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
16. I like learning words and using them in speaking.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
17. I like playing English video games requiring my knowledge of words.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
18. My teacher is a good supporter of my vocabulary questions.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
19. I can learn vocabulary better in everyday life environment compared to classroom environment.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree

20. Learning English vocabulary is really interesting.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
21. I prefer to write the Persian translation next to the English word I would like to learn.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
22. I like to learn words about different topics.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
23. I feel well when I see I have improved in my vocabulary knowledge.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
24. I like vocabulary learning activities in which students work together in pairs or small groups.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
25. Reading a word aloud helps me improve my pronunciation.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
26. I like to know different ways to learn new words.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
27. I like my teacher to use new methods in teaching vocabulary items.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
28. Analyzing words in terms of prefixes, stems, and suffixes helps me remember the words better.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
29. Learning English vocabulary is a necessity these days.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
30. I look new words up in dictionaries to learn them.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
31. Repeating a word aloud helps me remember it.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
32. Having rich vocabulary knowledge is important because I will be able to interact more easily with English speakers.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
33. I learn additional words that my teacher does not necessarily ask us to learn.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
34. I try hard to understand English texts word by word.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
35. I memorize words to improve my grades.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
36. I ask my teacher the meaning of the words that I do not understand.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
37. Writing, reading, and practicing new words helps me learn them more easily.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
38. I can expand my vocabulary knowledge simply through reading different texts a lot.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
39. I look up words that I am interested in.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
40. I have my own ways to remember the words that I have learned.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
41. I like my teacher to use lots of authentic and interesting materials to teach new words.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
42. I like to know words that are frequently used in everyday life.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
43. I like learning vocabulary with Persian equivalent.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
44. I like my teacher to patiently check the pronunciation of new words.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
45. I like to learn every new word with correct pronunciation.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
46. I want to learn new words to understand films, videos, or songs.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
47. I feel happy when I understand English texts including academic, technical, and high-level words.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree

48. I feel well when I understand English which is spoken to me due to my rich vocabulary knowledge.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
49. I like to hear that the teacher says I have good vocabulary knowledge.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
50. I enjoy the vocabulary learning activities in our English class.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
51. I feel well when I can use new words in different sentences.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
52. Vocabulary learning activities should be designed appropriately to help the students improve their abilities to communicate in English.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
53. My teacher has good knowledge of vocabulary.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
54. I enjoy my class with a small number of students.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
55. I like the atmosphere of vocabulary classes.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
56. I like my teacher to teach vocabulary items energetically.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree

Thank you for your participation