

Intensive English Program Location and Its Effects on Students' Motivation and Inclusion

Jesse Conway

Northern Arizona University

### Abstract

This pilot study explores the differences in Intensive English Program (IEP) students' motivation to study English and feelings of inclusion as influenced by the location of their English programs. Upper-intermediate and advanced proficiency students from two IEPs, one integrated with the campus community (in which courses are conducted in a mixed-use building) and one segregated from the campus community (in which courses are conducted in a building solely designated for IEP use), comprise the sample examined in the study. Attitudes toward motivation to study English and feelings of inclusion are measured with a 13-item questionnaire administered through SurveyMonkey. Results are subjected to statistical analysis, leading to a significant difference in motivation to study English and a non-significant difference in feelings of inclusion between the groups. The results point to a link between IEP location and student motivation and attempt to supplement the area of research exploring the unique learning characteristics of IEP students which is currently lacking in contributions.

## Intensive English Program Location and Its Effects on Students' Motivation and Inclusion

### **Background**

Students at intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States attend these programs to prepare themselves for American university life, which requires language, study, and social skills. These programs are often located in areas far from the university life that students desire, the effects of which are rarely reported upon in Applied Linguistics research. This physical separation could lead to decreased feelings of inclusion with the student body, which might result in decreased motivation to study English. As these programs are so often the doorways to students' future careers as university students and beyond, identification of possible relationships between location and motivation, as well as location and feelings of inclusion, is called for to supplement the current literature which focuses primarily on matriculated international students. This study may add to a body of empirical work that can be referenced by language program administrators when negotiating for resources with university administration.

### **Motivation**

Gardner (1985) and his influential work on language learning motivation posited that there were two types of factors that influenced all students' motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative factors can be simplified to be seen as very personal factors, such as a learner's interest in, willingness to participate in, and affective attitudes towards their L2's culture. Instrumental factors also include personal factors, but these involve a different focus. These factors deal with tangible effects associated with L2 performance, such as a job promotion or recognition by a peer or family member. Dörnyei (2005) takes issue with Gardner's claims towards L2 learning motivation and makes the claim that there is currently no general consensus about L2 learning motivation – the construct itself is a fluid one that varies from learner to

learner. In response, he proposes the Ideal L2 Self, which is similar to Gardner's (1985) ideas of integrative motivation. Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 Self proposes a number of influences on motivation. The influences that can be seen as most salient for IEP learners, who are students wishing to take part in the American university experience, may be direct contact with L2 speakers, the importance of the L2 community, and attitudes toward members of the L2 community.

### **IEP Learners and Motivation**

Given the prevalence of motivation studies in the AL field (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Dörnyei, 2003), the lack of current research regarding IEP students and their motivation to study English is surprising. Weger (2013) realized this lack of research on IEP students and conducted her study into determining the extent to which the components of IEP learners' motivation were similar to those that have been identified by Gardner (1985), Dörnyei (2005), and others; those definitions of motivation which are informed by EFL learners. A factor analysis of responses to her 31-item questionnaire administered to students in an integrated IEP context identified five motivation components specific to IEP learners: learning self-confidence, attitudes toward English language learning/community, personal English use, value of English language learning, and international posture.

### **Location and Inclusion**

Feelings of inclusion can be interpreted as the extent to which marginalized groups (such as IEP students) have the opportunity to participate in programs amongst the campus community, have their differences recognized and valued, and see themselves represented as they intend (Waitoller & Thorius, 2015).

A small number of studies on international students and the effect of location on inclusion can also be found. In regards to the classroom, Zhang (2015)'s study of Chinese international students going through reverse transfer from IEP classrooms to community college ESL classrooms saw that one of the main causes of this transfer was due to the abundance of Chinese native speakers in IEP classes. Participants indicated that they desired more diversity and that attending a community college provided them with access to native English speaking students that the IEP could not supply. Other studies examine locations international students frequent other than classrooms to satisfy feelings of inclusion. Giroir's (2014) case study of two Saudi Arabian learners saw one student eager to communicate with native speakers in his dormitory lobby, with comments from an interview stating that through this communication, he felt more like a member of the community. Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) also found students seeking activities with American university students in order to integrate and be recognized by their undergraduate peers. These studies indicate a desire by these matriculated international students, who are already sharing classes with native-speaking classmates, to be included in the campus community. It follows then, that IEP students may have similar desires and that by providing them with as much access to native-speaking students as possible, such as by placing an IEP program's classes in a mixed use building, as opposed to a segregated location, students' levels of motivation and feelings of inclusion may increase.

### **Research Questions**

The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between IEP location and motivation to study English?
2. Is there a relationship between IEP location and feelings of inclusion?

## Methods

### Participants

A total of 53 participants were provided by IEP administration and 42 of these participants contributed data to the study, a 79% response rate to the questionnaire. These 42 participants were 57% male (n=24) and 43% female (n=18). First language (L1) backgrounds were varied, with a majority of Arabic and Chinese as their L1s. Twenty-four participants (57%), reported an Arabic L1 background, ten (24%) a Chinese L1 background, three (7%) a Spanish L1 background, two (5%) a Korean L1 background, and one (2%) each of Japanese, Thai, and Turkish L1 backgrounds.

### Measures

Through the use of a 13-item online questionnaire delivered via SurveyMonkey.com (see Appendix A for a print version of the complete instrument), this study attempted to measure participant attitudes towards motivation to study English and feelings of inclusion at the university their IEP is associated with. In this study, motivation is defined as the general desire or willingness for a participant to study and use English (Dörnyei, 2005). Feelings of inclusion are defined as the extent to which participants feel that they have the opportunity to participate in programs amongst the campus community, have their differences recognized and valued, and see themselves represented as they intend to (Waitoller & Thorius, 2015).

Participant attitudes were measured through ten items that required an answer using a four-point Likert scale, with answer choices ranging from “don’t agree” to “agree very much.” Five items were intended to measure motivation, while the other five items were intended to measure feelings of inclusion. Two items for each construct were negatively worded and items

were not grouped together by construct, but were instead randomly placed in order from item one to ten. The final three items collected demographic information: IEP location, sex, and L1.

To enable statistical testing, these five-item scales were assessed for reliability in order to create one mean score for each construct. Using SPSS, initial reliability estimates for the motivation scale were calculated and were seen to be weak, with a Cronbach's alpha of .18. After examining weak items and removing them from the scale, reliability statistics were run again with a result of a still weak Cronbach's alpha value of .46. This produced a scale consisting of only three items, the recommended minimum for accurate scale creation (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Attempts to increase reliability of the motivation scale ended here.

These same steps were then followed for creation of the feelings of inclusion scale. This scale's initial Cronbach's alpha was a moderately strong .69. Item-total statistics were examined showing that all items were performing as strongly as possible and that none could be removed to increase reliability. These five items created the feelings of inclusion scale.

### **Administration**

The questionnaire was administered to participants online via SurveyMonkey.com. The researcher had access to the segregated IEP group and was able to conduct the survey with participants in person. Participants in this group were separated into three sections. The researcher visited classes that occurred in a computer lab to facilitate in data collection. After a brief introduction of the study and its benefits to participants, the researcher sent an email to participants with the link to the study. Participants followed the link and completed the questionnaire within five to ten minutes.

A slightly more involved process was followed to administer the survey to the integrated-context group. The survey was initially viewed and approved by the IEP administration.

Following this, the survey link was sent to the student services coordinator at the IEP, who then inserted the link along with notes from both herself and the researcher (see Appendix B for the mail message). Some instructors at the IEP then conducted the survey with participants in class. Others chose not to and participants were relied upon to complete the questionnaire themselves. The questionnaire was open for 30 days, and one email reminder was sent to the integrated-context participants after the initial message had been sent.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Prior to subjecting the variables to statistical testing, descriptive statistics were computed for each variable. Table 1 provides statistics for all participants (N=42). In total, participants were more likely to agree that they possessed feelings of motivation to study English (3.20 out of a total 4 points) than feelings of inclusion (2.37 out of a total 4 points) as students at IEPs. Standard deviations were low (.55 and .60 for motivation and inclusion, respectively), most likely due to the presence of the four-point Likert scale used for items.

Table 1

#### *Descriptive Statistics of All Participants' Attitudes Towards Motivation and Inclusion*

Construct	N	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Motivation	42	3.20	.55	3.03	3.37
Inclusion	42	2.37	.60	2.18	2.55

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for motivation as divided by participants' IEP locations. Participants who took classes in an integrated IEP location reported higher levels of motivation to study English (3.43 out of 4) than those who were in a segregated location (2.98 out of 4). Furthermore, examination of the 95% confidence intervals reveals very little overlap



between the groups, showing that there may be a significant difference in the groups. These initial observations were interpreted cautiously, as the motivation construct suffered from a weak Cronbach's alpha (.46) and was ultimately comprised of three items.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Attitudes Towards Motivation, Separated by Context*

IEP Location	N	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Segregated	22	2.98	.57	2.73	3.24
Integrated	20	3.43	.43	3.23	3.63

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for feelings of inclusion as divided by participants' IEP locations. It can again be seen that participants whose IEPs are in an integrated location possessed higher feelings of inclusion (2.43 out of 4) than those in IEPs in a segregated location (2.31 out of 4). This difference is slight, and an examination of the 95% confidence interval shows overlap between the participants with different IEP locations, indicating a possibly non-significant difference in feelings of inclusion between the groups.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Attitudes Towards Inclusion, Separated by Context*

IEP Location	N	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Segregated	22	2.31	.60	2.04	2.57
Integrated	20	2.43	.61	2.15	2.71

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

### **Hypothesis Testing**

All assumptions were met for the variables being subjected to the t-test. Table 4 provides independent samples t-test results comparing the groups by IEP location and amount of motivation to study English. The observed t value of -2.85 exceeded the critical value, thereby

rejecting the null hypothesis and indicating a significant difference in motivation between the groups. The confidence interval of the difference confirmed the t-test results by not passing through zero with a lower limit of -.77 and an upper limit of -.13. The  $\eta^2$  value of 0.18 indicated a high association between the variables of location and motivation.

Table 4

*Difference Between IEP Locations on Motivation Measure*

IEP Location	N	Mean	SD	t
Segregated	22	2.98	.57	-2.85*
Integrated	20	3.43	.43	

Note.  $t_{\text{critical}}$  (40 df, 2 tailed) =  $\pm 2.02$ ; \* $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.18$

The second research question, *Is there a relationship between IEP location and feelings of inclusion?*, was also examined utilizing an independent samples t-test. Variables being examined again met assumptions for the test and results are shown in Table 5. The observed t value (-.65) failed to exceed the critical value and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, showing no relationship between the variables. The confidence interval of the difference confirmed this finding by passing through zero with a lower limit of -.50 and an upper limit of .25.

Table 5

*Difference Between IEP Locations on Inclusion Measure*

IEP Location	N	Mean	SD	t
Segregated	22	2.31	.60	-.65
Integrated	20	2.43	.61	

Note.  $t_{\text{critical}}$  (40 df, 2 tailed) =  $\pm 2.02$ ;  $p < .05$

### **Relevance to PIE and Second Language Learning**

#### **Research Question 1**

For the first question, the independent samples t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference in the groups' levels of motivation. Participants who take classes in an integrated IEP context which provides them with frequent contact with American university students feel higher motivation to study English than those located in a segregated context where they have little or no contact with American university students.

#### **Research Question 2**

The second question, addressing feelings of inclusion, showed no significant difference between the groups' levels of feeling included in campus life. Participants who take classes in either context report low levels of feelings of inclusion with the campus community. There are a number of ways to interpret this finding, one of which may be that students at IEPs are more concerned with their academic life as opposed to their personal life on campus and do not feel the necessity to be included in the community. Another possibility is that participants do not feel the need for inclusion through their IEP (which questionnaire items focused on), but do look for inclusion in other areas, such as in their living arrangements or extracurricular activities.

Regarding the PIE, these findings point to the importance of extensive L2 exposure and interaction with native speakers outside the classroom. These practices increase learner motivation, which may result in increased language acquisition and participation in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Even if learners are in a segregated IEP context, such as the PIE, it benefits both learners and IEP administration to take small steps towards involvement in the campus community. These steps could manifest

themselves in ways such as having one class per week in an integrated context or enacting a “conversation-tables” type weekly activity where IEP students are able to meet and interact with American university students.

### References

- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Taguchi, T. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Giroir, S. (2014). Narratives of participation, identity, and positionality: Two cases of Saudi learners of English in the United States. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48, 34-56.
- Hatch, E., & Lazaraton, A. (1990). *The research manual: Design and statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- IBM Corp. (2013). *IBM SPSS statistics for Windows, version 22.0*. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Clement, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545-562.
- Masgoret, A.M., & Gardner, R.C. (2003). Attitudes, motivation, and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. *Language Learning*, 53, 123-163.
- Ortega, L. (2005). For what and for whom is our research? The ethical as transformative lens in instructed SLA. *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 427-443.

- Poyrazli, S., & Grahame, K.M. (2007). Barriers to adjustment: Needs of international students within a semi-urban campus community. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 34*, 28-45.
- Waitoller, F.R., & Thorius, K.K. (2015). Playing hopscotch in inclusive education reform: Examining promises and limitations of policy and practice in the US. *Support for Learning, 30*, 23-41.
- Weger, H.D. (2013). Examining English language learning motivation of adult international learners studying abroad in the US. *RELC Journal, 44*, 87-101.
- Zhang, Y.L. (2015). Reverse transfer: Experiences of international Chinese students in intensive English programs. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 39*, 1079-1083.

## Appendix A

## Print Version of Online Questionnaire

**Part 1**

*In this part, I would like to know how much you agree or disagree with the following statement by choosing a number from 1-4.*

*“English program” means the program where you study English to go to university.*

*“American university students” means university students who were born in America.*

	Don't agree at all	Don't agree much	Agree a little	Agree very much
1. I look forward to talking to American university students in English every day.	1	2	3	4
2. My classes make me feel like an American university student.	1	2	3	4
3. I look forward to my classes because I don't have to talk with American university students much.	1	2	3	4
4. My English program makes me feel like I go to the same school as American university students.	1	2	3	4
5. I worry about taking classes in English outside of my English program.	1	2	3	4
6. I want to use English to be friends with American university students.	1	2	3	4
7. I think it's easy to meet American university students between my classes.	1	2	3	4
8. I study English because I want to feel like an American university student.	1	2	3	4
9. I think I have more foreign friends than American friends because of where my classes are.	1	2	3	4
10. I think I am seen as an “international student,” not a “regular student” because of where my classes are.	1	2	3	4

*Thank you for your answers. There is only one more part to complete.*

*Last, I would like a little information about you. I will never share this information with anybody.*

*I only want it to know what kind of students are completing the survey.*

**Part 2**

1. Is your English program in a building that is only for English program students?
  - Yes
  - No

2. Sex
  - Male
  - Female
3. Your first language
  - Arabic
  - Chinese
  - Korean
  - Japanese
  - Spanish
  - Portuguese
  - Other (fill in the blank)

*Thank you very much for completing my survey. Interested in the results of my research? Email me at [jc2984@nau.edu](mailto:jc2984@nau.edu). I will send you the results when they are complete.*



## Appendix B

## Email Sent to Participants at the Integrated IEP

Dear Students,

You have been selected to take the following survey created by Jesse Conway, a graduate student at the Northern Arizona University. The survey is intended to study how the location of your studies affects your motivation. Many of you have conducted your own survey projects for class work, so you understand how valuable research data can be. Please take a moment to read this message from Jesse and click on the link to begin the quick survey:

I would like to ask you to help me by answering some questions in a survey I am doing. The survey should only take you 5-10 minutes. I hope your answers will help me better understand the thoughts and feelings of students studying at Intensive English Programs like yours.

This survey is not a test, so there are no *right* or *wrong* answers. You don't even need to give me your name. I am interested in *your opinion*. The results will only be used for my research and not shared with anybody, so please be honest when you answer.

Thank you for your help!

The link for the survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/69HFZBR>

Please let me know if there are any other questions you have or clarification I can provide.

Thanks again,  
Jesse Conway  
jc2984@nau.edu