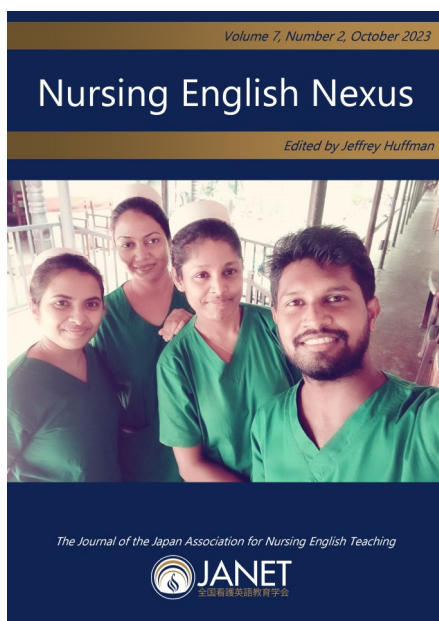


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Motivation to Learn English in Sri Lankan Nurses

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Abstract: English has become an essential language requirement for many professions by now. However, English proficiency is not considered during the recruitment process and job performance evaluation of nurses in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, this study explored the nature of the motivation of nurses to learn English. Specifically, it investigated whether nurses are motivated to learn English and the reasons thereof, the type of motivation pattern demonstrated, and the challenges they face in learning English. For this survey on motivation, 30 in-service nurses below the age of 50 were selected (convenience sample) from a state hospital in Sri Lanka. A Google Forms questionnaire based on Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was given to the participants, and the same platform was used to analyze the data. The findings show that the nurses are motivated to learn English mainly to migrate to a foreign country to find a job. This indicates an instrumental motivation pattern in Sri Lankan nurses. Those who are not motivated to learn English mentioned that English is not essential for their job and that they are not tested on English skills. Time limitations due to busy and hectic schedules are the most significant challenges to learning English for these participants.

Keywords: English, instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, nurses

About the Author: Nipunika Dilani, a senior lecturer in the Department of English at the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, has 16 years of teaching experience at the university level. Her research interests include teaching English as a second language, Buddhist studies, and comparative studies.

Motivation is commonly recognized as the primary factor affecting success in second language (L2) learning (Ushoida, 2013). Motivation provides the "primary impetus" for initiating learning an L2 as well as the "driving force" in ensuring learning (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). The other factors, such as attitude and age, that affect L2 learning also sometimes depend on motivation (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998). Thus, motivation is crucial to L2 learning from the initial stages of learning to the successful mastering of it, to the extent that without it no second language learning could take place.

The multitude of existing research and theories on motivation provides further evidence of its crucial importance in second language learning as well as its popularity as a field of research. Educators in many countries where English is taught and learned as a second language have done a great deal of research related to motivation, understanding its crucial importance in learning English. At the same time,

teachers of English, especially those who teach it as a second language, experience how difficult it is to teach learners who are less motivated.

"Nursing is an art and a science as well as a humanitarian service" (*Nursing as a Profession*, n.d.). In Sri Lanka nursing is regarded as a respected profession rather than a service, considering its humanitarian aspects in addition to the vital importance assigned to it within the health care delivery system of the country. Sri Lanka is a multilingual country where English functions as the link language, so knowledge of English and especially the ability to communicate in English is necessary for almost every profession in order to perform job roles better and provide services in an egalitarian manner. In such a scenario, English is essential for nurses, whose services are vital and must be delivered to people speaking different languages in the country. Thus, it is important to study the nature of the motivation of nurses to learn English.

Literature Review

Considering the bulk of the existing literature and scholarship on nursing English and motivation, this section limits its scope to introducing and defining the concept of motivation, theories related to motivation, nursing English education, and empirical studies on motivation in nursing English education.

Definitions of Motivation

One of the key and pioneer figures in motivation studies is R. C. Gardner, who theorized motivation in L2 learning through empirical studies. According to him, motivation is "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (Gardner, 1985, p. 2). Motivation in the language classroom is affected by classroom environment, the nature of the course and curriculum, characteristics of the teacher, and the scholastic nature of the students (Gardner, 2010). Seaman put the same idea in different terms, proposing that motivation consists of the three components: "effort", "desire", and "affect" (2009, p. 1). The learners should put forth some effort out of a desire to achieve an L2 learning goal and ultimately the learners gain a great deal of satisfaction. Lack of any of these components may result in some deficiency in motivation, so the accumulation of all these factors constitutes motivation in L2 learning. Scholars agree that motivation is a complex construct that combines effort and desire to achieve the language learning goal ensured by a favorable attitude toward the language (Gardner, 2010; Ushioda, 2013; Dörnyei, 1998). The complexity of motivation lies in its entanglement with psychological, behavioral, and cultural aspects, all of which contribute to the construct of motivation on different levels. Sometimes, due to the complexity of motivation as a construct, the component parts of an individual's motivation cannot be clearly parsed.

This explains the importance of studying it from different perspectives and angles.

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) provide an extended definition of motivation as "...the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (p. 65).

The above definition spells out the true nature of motivation. Motivation can be affected by different factors like individual differences, social changes, and requirement changes. At the same time the nature of motivation and the above dynamics will determine how motivation functions in a learner. This definition is also connected with the idea that motivation is related to the choices one makes. Moreover, this definition illustrates the complexity and multifaceted nature of motivation that is blended with different psychological, social, biological, and cultural factors.

Characteristics of a motivated individual have been pointed out to be goal oriented, persistent and desirous, self-confident and showing self-efficacy to achieve the goal (Gardner, 2010). An individual characterized by these qualities will pursue an L2 related goal persistently until it is achieved successfully.

A large number of theories related to motivation in L2 learning can be applied to the current study. Two theories that underpin this study are Gardner's Socio-Educational model of motivation and Dörnyei's concept and framework of motivation. These two theories overlap in many ways, with the former being regarded as the pioneering theory and the latter as a more recent and expanded version. These two theories have been selected for the current study, which blends these two major theories of motivation from two different eras.

Gardner's Socio-Educational Model

Based on empirical studies with French Canadian students, Gardner expanded his original socio-psychological model (1972) as the socio-educational model (1985), and later he further developed the model as the revised socio-educational model (2001). His models are widely known and discussed throughout the world, and researchers of motivation have largely accepted the fundamental importance of Gardner's findings, which have paved the way for a large body of research.

The model presents different variables affecting second language learning motivation in formal and informal learning situations that could result in linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. In terms of motivation as a variable, the model proposes that the cultural beliefs of learners affect their motivation, and those beliefs are affected by formal language training and informal language experience (Gardner, 2010, p. 83). Gardner focuses on two orientations, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrativeness is interrelated with the components of attitude toward the learning situation and motivation. Integrative motivation is the desire to integrate oneself with the target culture and people. An individual with integrative motivation demonstrates interest in learning the language in order to communicate with the members of the second language community (Gardner, 1985). In contrast, instrumental motivation is defined as the desire to learn a language for a pragmatic purpose, such as obtaining employment or a degree. Accordingly, a person with instrumental motivation is interested in learning the language because of some practical goals.

Dörnyei's Framework of Motivation

Zoltan Dörnyei is one of the key figures who has conducted highly influential research related to language learning motivation in recent times. Further expanding upon Gardner's motivation

research, he presents a tripartite construct of L2 learning motivation. Basically, the motivation contains three levels: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. The language level, in accordance with the Gardnerian approach, comprises two broad motivational subsystems, integrative and instrumental motivation. Under the learner level there are two major components: need for achievement and self-confidence. Here, self-confidence encompasses various aspects such as language anxiety, perceived L2 competence, attributions to past experiences, and self-efficacy. Finally, under the learning situation level, he identifies three sets of components: 1) course-specific motivational components which deal with the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method, and the learning tasks; 2) teacher-specific motivational components concerning the teacher's personality, teaching style, feedback, and relationship with the students; and 3) group-specific motivational components dealing with the dynamics of the learning group (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 276).

Accordingly, Dörnyei highlights the multifaceted nature of second language learning motivation, showing its true complexity. He and other researchers have identified that motivation in L2 learning is influenced by more variables than just cultural beliefs, as Gardner had identified. However, recent researchers like Dörnyei have been greatly influenced by Gardner's pioneering research.

Nursing English Education

Another key area of the current study is nursing English education. Basically, most nursing English courses are offered as English for specific purposes (ESP) rather than general English courses. Thus, nursing English courses should be related to nursing and health and apply materials that are adapted to the nursing profession (Wibowo, 2021). Nurses, who deal with human beings at crucial moments of their lives, should

have knowledge of different languages in order to communicate with patients. Moreover, considering their professional role and responsibilities, nurses should receive specialized training in order to be able to look after and attend to patients in critical moments in their lives. It is very unfortunate indeed if language becomes a barrier to helping someone at a helpless moment in their life. Similar to other language learners' academic motivation, nursing students also have multiple influences such as cultural, family, social, educational, and professional. Moreover, like in any other learner, motivation leads to academic success, increased learning performance, creativity, academic satisfaction, anxiety reduction, continuing schooling, and qualified nurse preparation (Daniel & Grande, 2022). Like in most other professions, the roles expected to be played by nurses have changed from traditional to a multidisciplinary orientation (Atwal & Caldwell, 2006). In addition to their conventional role of care, nurses are expected to perform well in leadership, advocacy, research, management and illness prevention (Fukada, 2018).

Nursing Education in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan nursing education was initially highly influenced by the traditional British nursing educational system (Kumara & Sudusinghe, 2021). After being established in 1939, nursing education in Sri Lanka has expanded to 17 nursing schools offering diploma courses in nursing and five universities offering nursing programs leading to a BSc degree (Nursing as a Profession, n. d.). Likewise, starting with a diploma in nursing, nursing education in Sri Lanka was upgraded to degree level as proposed in the National Health Policy of 1992 (Kumara & Sudusinghe, 2021).

Currently, with the high demand in the world for Sri Lankan nurses and with nursing becoming a gateway for migrating to another country due to the economic crisis of the country, recently a few private universities in Sri Lanka are offering

degrees for nurses. Nursing education has now expanded to awarding Master's and PhD degrees in nursing as well (Kumara & Sudusinghe, 2021).

Sri Lanka is a multilingual country where English functions as the link language. Thus, English language is essential for Sri Lankan nurses to ensure service to patients speaking different languages who seek care at hospitals. The nursing schools and universities, in addition to teaching subject-related courses, offer one or two English modules in order to improve students' English proficiency. However, in most universities the medium of education is English. Other than these English modules, the nursing students do not receive a formal English education during their training in schools and universities. However, a pass for Ordinary Level (O/L) and Advanced Level (A/L) is required to qualify to enter a government nursing school. These two examinations, which include English as one of the subjects and require a passing score in English, are the basic certificates awarded in Sri Lanka as proof of completion of secondary education. They are required to be eligible for most employment, university entrance, and other training courses. Thus, it is important to investigate whether or not nurses are motivated to learn English. Studying about the motivation of Sri Lankan nurses to learn English can have great impact on the society in order to confirm that their service is received equally by every linguistic group.

Empirical Studies Related to Nurses' Motivation to Learn English

The large canon of research related to nurses' motivation to learn English reveals the importance of English education for nurses as well as the enthusiasm of the scholars toward this topic. The previous research on nurses' motivation to learn English illustrates the nature of research on motivation in different contexts.

Research conducted with nurses from Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Thailand to investigate

the connection between academic motivation and self-directed learning readiness among nursing students has found that students from the Philippines and Thailand were much more ready for self-directed learning than Saudi nursing students (Daniel & Grande, 2022). Not only that, but male nursing students were found less likely to be ready for self-directed learning than female nursing students. Finally, the research found self-directed work readiness to be linked with higher levels of intrinsic motivation. This research investigated a broad scope of country and gender differences in motivation and higher academic performance.

Another group of researchers conducted a quasi-experimental study in order to apply motivational techniques to a nursing English course and to explore the effects on the learning motivation, engagement, and performance of vocational college nursing students (Zhang et al., 2023). In this research, while applying motivation-based teaching to the experimental group, traditional lecture-based teaching was used with the comparison group. The research found that motivation-based teaching effectively improved learning motivation, learning engagement, and learning performance of students in the nursing English course.

Al-Osaimi and Fawaz conducted a qualitative exploratory study titled "Nursing students' perceptions on motivation strategies to enhance academic achievement through blended learning" (2022). They tried to elucidate ways for improving academic motivation among Saudi nursing students who enrolled for blended learning. The study also confirmed the importance of motivation for nurses' academic performance and concluded that educators, students, academic staff, and clinical training staff can work together to develop academic motivation in nurses. All these factors affect nurses' motivation and further boost educational quality by instilling a good attitude among nursing

students, which helps to boost academic motivation.

The expansion of foreign language teaching in Japan has led to researchers investigating nursing English learning motivation there as well. One study conducted with undergraduate nursing students in Japan found that the students show great interest in learning English because of its usefulness in daily communication and travelling (Isoda & Kondo, 2022). It further found that students' interest in learning English, even before entering university, greatly helped in sustaining motivation and succeeding in university studies. The study recommends the importance of updating the curriculum according to the needs of the students.

In summary, these studies from different countries speak to the importance of motivation in English education for nurses. The research has found a positive correlation between motivation and performance in nurses. Further, all these studies from different contexts make it clear that motivation plays a major role in nurses' education.

Research Gap and Objectives

This survey of existing literature makes it clear that a large canon of literature on motivation in L2 learning and learning English in different contexts exist. However, there is a dearth in research with regard to motivation in nurses to learn English in the Sri Lankan context. This study attempts to address that vacuum via the following objectives, all considered within the Sri Lankan context:

1. To explore whether nurses are motivated to learn English, and the reasons thereof.
2. To ascertain the type of motivation shown by nurses.
3. To explore the challenges faced by nurses in learning English.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study follows a typical survey design. A survey "is a system of collecting data from or about people to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behavior" (Fink, 2003, p. 1). As the current study involves an exploration of a human behavior pattern, that is motivation, a survey is a valid approach here.

Data Collection Instrument

Among many survey data collection methods, the current study used a questionnaire that contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions. In formulating the questions, the questions related to motivation in Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used as a model, with some modifications (see Appendix). The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, which allows easy access to the nurses, even via their phones.

Participants

The participants for this study were selected via the convenience sampling method from a state-run hospital in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The questionnaire was distributed to more than 50 nurses, and 30 responses were received (60% response rate). The questionnaire was distributed to them after receiving their verbal consent, and in the introduction of the questionnaire, they were formally informed about the research and their anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed, and these were maintained throughout the process. All the participants were 20–40 years of age. The background of the participants revealed that they have had little exposure to English. Most of the participants rated their English as average, and they mentioned that they are not using English in the family, but they sometimes use English in the workplace.

Data Analysis

The data collected through Google Forms were analyzed using the same platform. The quantitative results are presented as percentages to report the responses. The responses to some of the closed-ended questions are also reported in graphical format. The open-ended content was analyzed using content analysis and descriptively presented.

Findings

The findings are presented in this section in, organized in accordance with the three objectives of this study.

Motivation to Learn English

The first objective was to explore whether the nurses are motivated to learn English or not. They have shown their interest toward learning English in their responses. Out of 30 nurses, as shown in Figure 1, 66.7% of the nurses said that they are currently learning English, basically out of their own interest. This shows that they are motivated to learn English. They know that there is a strong demand for English in the world, yet due to family commitments and busy work schedules, 95% of the sample engage in self-study rather than going to a class to study. Having a sense of interest and need are important characteristics of motivation. As discussed by scholars, effort and desire to

Figure 1

Are you currently learning English?

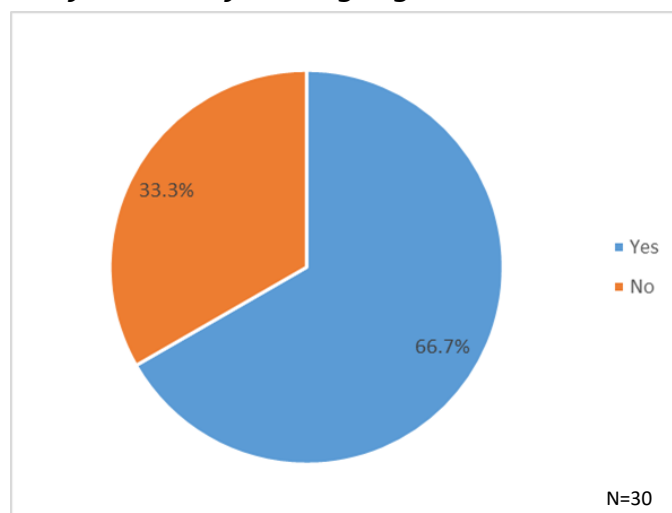
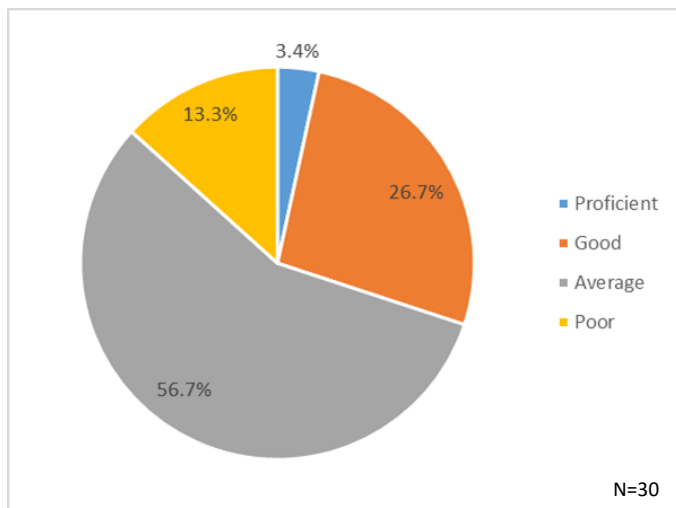


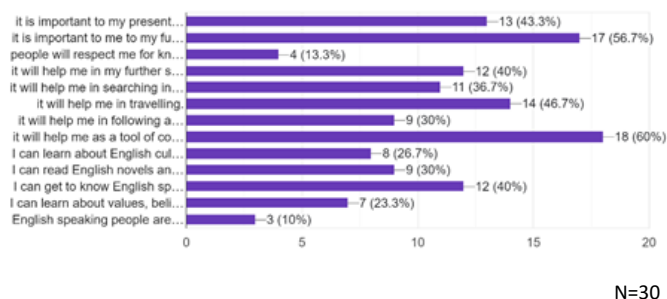
Figure 2
How do you rate your current English proficiency?



achieve a goal are also characteristics of motivation (Seamann, 2009; Gardner, 2010). These nurses have shown their interest and desire while making an effort to learn English by themselves. Not only that, in response to an open-ended question, they further mentioned that they feel the need for English language knowledge in the modern world. Out of this feeling of need and desire they have put an effort into learning the language. Thus, they show the characteristics of motivation as L2 learners of English.

The other 33.3% percent (Figure 1) of the nurses responded that they are not learning English at present. As a major reason for not learning English at the moment, 21% stated that they do not feel any need for English for the completion of employment or family tasks. A few of them (11%) also mentioned that an English requirement is not compulsory for recruitment or promotion. Maybe they do not have an intention of migrating, so they do not feel any need for learning English. As the literature review also supported, they do not need English proficiency for their career development. However, they should have a feeling that they need English for communication with patients of languages other than Sinhalese. Being nurses from a hospital in Colombo, where most people who use different

Figure 3
Learning English can be important to me because



languages live, the nurses have to use English to communicate with them in order to supply a better service.

The respondents rated their own current English knowledge. According to their responses, as shown in Figure 2, most of them (56.7%) have average knowledge in English. Thus, it is obvious that even if they feel they have no need for English for their career path development, they must improve their English in order to provide better service to patients.

Type of Motivation

The responses to the questions designed to understand the nurses' motivational patterns are shown in Figure 3. They were allowed to select more than one response for this question. Among the different responses, 60% of the respondents mentioned that they are learning English as a tool of communication, 56.7% responded that they are learning it as a requirement for future employment, 43.3% mentioned that English is important for their present job, and about 40% selected, "I can get to know English speaking friends". Other responses that were selected by fewer than 10% of the respondents were: "I can learn about English culture and people", "I can read English novels and its literature", and "I can learn about values, beliefs and culture about English people". In response to the open-ended question related to this, 10 respondents mentioned that they just want to live in an English-speaking country due to the economic instability of Sri Lanka. Among skilled migrants, nurses are foremost among Sri

Lankans. In terms of the two types of motivation mentioned above, integrative and instrumental, Gardner defines instrumental motivation as learning another language with the purpose of some pragmatic gains, instead of social implication with the target language community (2010). The main purpose of learning English for these nurses is, therefore, instrumental—they want to find a job in a European country where Sri Lankan nurses are in high demand. That is why they mention that it is important for their future employment.

Challenges Faced in Learning English

The nurses who are interested in learning English wrote the challenges they face in learning English. Among such challenges, 53.3% mentioned that having no time for learning English during their hectic and tight schedules was the most difficult one to solve. Other challenges include poor knowledge of vocabulary (16.7%), having no good learning facilities (10%), fear (6.5%), and lack of confidence (6.8%). Moreover, 6.7% responded that they do not have any challenges.

Limitations

The study has some limitations in terms of generalization. One major limitation is that the sample is not representative enough for generalization. The sample was a convenience sample from one hospital in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. So, the motivation to learn English may be different than that of nurses from rural areas.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion it is obvious that the majority of Sri Lankan nurses are motivated to learn English. It is a good sign that they have understood the importance of English to achieve their instrumental goals. The minority in the sample are not motivated to learn English as they do not feel they need it for their employment or any other purpose. Most of the nurses who are

motivated to learn English in the sample show an instrumental motivation pattern. Among the challenges of learning English, it was found that the tight schedules that the nurses have is the major challenge they face.

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Appendix

Motivation Questionnaire

This questionnaire intends to collect data on the motivation of nurses to learn English concerning a research I am conducting. I guarantee that the data collected through this is anonymous and will be used for the research purpose only. I am not collecting email addresses or any other personal information. Hope you will provide true and correct data on which the reliability of my research depends. I am immensely thankful to you for your support in this regard. Thank you

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**Indicates required question*

1. What is your age group?*

- 20-30 yrs
 30-40 yrs
 40-60 yrs

2. Are you currently learning English?* Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

3. If your answer is "Yes", how do you learn?

Mark only one oval.

- Going to an English class
 Self-studying
 Other:

4. If your answer is "No" please give reason(s).

5. Do you use English in the family?* *Mark only one oval.*

- No
 Yes
 Sometimes
 Other:

6. Do you use English in the workplace?* *Mark only one oval.*

- No
 Yes
 Sometimes
 Other:

7. Do you feel the need for learning English?* *Mark only one oval.*

- No
 Yes
 Sometimes

8. What are the challenges you face in learning English?*

9. How do you rate your current English proficiency?* *Mark only one oval.*

- Proficient
 Good
 Average
 Poor

10. Learning English can be important to me because,*
Check all that apply.

- it is important to my present employment.
 it is important to my future career.
 People will respect me for knowing English.
 it will help me in my further studies.
 it will help me in searching information.
 it will help me in travelling.
 it will help me in following a degree.
 it will help me as a tool of communication.
 I can learn about English culture and people.
 I can learn English novels and literature.
 I can get to know English speaking friends.
 I can learn about values, beliefs and culture about English people.
 English people are helpful, cheerful and good.
 Other:

11. Are you planning to learn English?* *Mark only one oval.*

- No
 Yes
 Sometimes
 Other:

12. Give reasons to your answer.

13. Do you have any other comment?
