

MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT. *Motivation in English Language Learning.* The current study aims at investigating the relationship between the learners- integrative and instrumental motivation and English language among Arab EFL learners. Motivation plays an important part in improving and developing the learners' communicative ability. Attitudinal studies conducted on Arab students, such as those of Zughouli and Taminian (1984), Salih (1980) and Harrison et al. (1975), have consistently shown that Arab students are instrumentally motivated to learn English, and that they are well aware of the utility of knowing English. This means that the main stimulus for learning English is instrumental, to achieve a goal or a career. It is true that some learners are integrative motivated, but they are in a minority.

Keywords: *EFL, motivation, attitudes, ethnicity, Druze, Muslims, Christians.*

REZUMAT. *Motivație în învățarea limbii engleze.* Acest studiu investighează relația dintre motivația integrativă sau instrumentală și studiul limbii engleze la arabii din Israel. Motivația joacă un rol important în dezvoltarea și perfecționarea abilității comunicative a studenților. Studii atitudinale facute asupra studenților arabi (ca cele ale lui Yughoul și Taminian, 1984, Salih, 1980 și Harrison et al., 1975) au arătat convingător că studenții arabi sunt motivați instrumental să învețe limba engleză pentru că sunt perfect conștienți de utilitatea stăpânirii limbii engleze în contextul din Israel. Acest lucru demonstrează că principalul stimul pentru învățarea limbii engleze este instrumental, acela de a atinge un scop sau de a garanta o carieră. Este adevărat că unii studenți sunt motivați integrativ, dar aceștia formează o minoritate.

Cuvinte cheie: *Engleza ca limbă străină, atitudine, etnicitate, Druzi, Musulmani, Creștini.*

¹ **This contribution is an homage to the Centenary of the Great Union of Romania in 1918.**
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This study deals with motivation and the attitudes of students from different ethno-linguistic communities towards the study of the English language. In Arab schools, learning the English language plays a central role in the daily study schedule since it affects the academic future of the students for whom English is an essential requirement for acceptance into the academic institutions in Israel. Shohamy (2007) stated that in Israel, English is actually a dominant second language after Hebrew. Some of the studies by Shohamy (2007) indicate that English has become the most important language among Hebrew and Arabic speakers because it is an essential requirement for their social, academic and financial success.

The main difficulty for Arab learners of English is to achieve a level of competence in speaking and communicating easily in the language. Yashima (2004) examined the association between attitudes towards a language and the willingness to communicate in it. She concluded that a positive correlation between these variables and positive attitudes towards the language and its speakers has an effect on communicative behavior.

Regarding the relationship between ethnic background and students' attitudes towards English, Gardner (1985) considers attitudes as components of motivation in language learning. The motivation of Arab learners should be a combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the English language together with favorable attitudes toward learning it. Moreover, Islamic perspectives on the role of language and the attitude that Muslims may adopt towards learning English language has a strong influence on the attitudes of students. The emphasis is on the need for English teachers and lecturers to take into account the socio-cultural aspects of learning English when teaching Muslim, Druze and Christian students. Concerning Muslim students in particular, they should stress the value and importance of learning English for the purpose of acquiring modern and current knowledge in spite of their hostility towards Israel and the West.

The uniqueness of the Druze is that they are a minority who identify with the majority population of the country in their language, politics, attitudes towards the Western world and culture. These facts have a positive effect on the attitude of Druze students towards the Hebrew language as well as towards the Western world and the English language. Druze students are aware that the knowledge of English is essential for them because of its global reach.

Motivation also plays an important part in improving and developing the learners' communicative ability. Attitudinal studies conducted on Arab students, such as those of Faruqi (1986) and Harrison et al. (1975), have consistently shown that Arab students are instrumentally motivated to learn English, and that they are well aware of the utility of knowing English. This means that the main stimulus for learning English is instrumental, to achieve a goal or a career. It is true that some learners are integratively motivated, but they are in a minority. According to Seedhouse (1996), those with integrative

motivation have a genuine interest in “the target speech community” which the learner is “aspiring to become a member of”.

Language, its role, impact and significance

Schumann (1978) regarded language as having three functions.

a. The importance of language as a communicative function:

One learns a language to communicate with society in order to obtain personal needs and benefits. Language learning has an integrative function which is for communication and social integration, and an expressive function which is to use language actively and to express oneself eloquently. According to Giles & Johnson (1987), language is used not only as a means of transmitting knowledge, but also to express attitudes and values, emotions, love and hate, praise and reprimands.

In addition, Thorne (2003) also points out that “combined learning” serves as real favorable circumstances to represent and show learning involvements that can support the appropriate learning at the proper time and in the right place for each and every learner in all kinds of places such as work, schools, colleges and even at home. It can be actually worldwide, overcoming / bridging global boundaries, and bring together groups of learners from various cultures and regions of the world. This kind of learning might become an important advancement in the field of studying EFL. González, Rodríguez-Conde, Olmos-Migueláñez, Borham & García-Peñalvo (2013) claim that ‘combined learning’ has grown into the type of education that responds to the needs of the current awareness and insight of any community. Bachman and Palmer (1982) add that since this type of education excludes and cancels out the lack of adaptability of conventional education it leads towards a wider education in which students are more attracted, committed and involved. Sánchez-Gómez, Pinto-Llorente & García-Peñalvo (2010) believe it can be regarded as an acceptable type of instruction that suits the learners’ personal experience and tendencies. Students study, exercise, and interact with all the figures of the teaching-learning process. Gan et al. (2015) and Pinto-Llorente et al. (2015) say that this provides a composite system and structure of knowledge in which learners play an effective part, unlike the classic lecturer-focused approach with little participation and cooperation between students.

b. The importance of the language from the personal aspect:

Many researchers such as Phinney (1995) have addressed the importance of language in personal terms, because it is a key component in forming self-identity and self-conception. Fishman (1977) adds that language is used as a genetic code, which preserves ethnic affiliation.

c. The significance of the language economically and politically:

Bourdieu (1991) claimed that the dominant language of a country allows access to its resources, and has more prestige than other language accessibility resources which are limited or nonexistent. Regarding the Arabs in Israel, the English language is as significant and necessary for them as the Hebrew language since Israel is very close in culture to the Western world. Rahman (2002) believes that a language serves national interests and is a mark of identity of the country. I assume that for Arabs in Israel, both languages English and Hebrew serve personal interests and they are marks of their identity in the State of Israel.

The Arab minority in Israel and the Status of Teaching English

Israel is a unique human mosaic that includes a variety of populations, cultures, languages and ethnic groups. The Arab sector is the largest minority in the Israeli society and it is also a combination of communities and ethnic groups of Christians, Druze and Muslims.

Learning the English language plays a central role in the daily life in the Arab school and affects the academic future of the students since English is an essential requirement for being accepted in the academic institutions in Israel.

In the socio-linguistic literature and according to Brosh (1988), a foreign language such as English is taught as a language used across the national territorial borders. It is generally used on special occasions or at meetings with its native speakers. Also, since speech is of primary importance in such contacts, teachers and educators emphasize the ability of talking and hearing the English language .

Regarding identity and Arab learners of English, There has always been a disagreement whether the ethnic background of a pupil affects his\her attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. Amara (1999), say that the great variety of ethnic groups and cultures as well as the existence of native language communities such as native Arabic speakers has created a fruitful ground for studies examining the relationship between language and identity in Israel. To shed light on the problems of Arab learners of English, the main difficulty for Arab learners of English is the competence to speak and communicate easily in the language. Yashima (2004) examined the association between attitudes towards a language and the willingness to communicate in it. She concluded that a positive correlation between these variables and positive attitudes towards the language and the speakers of this language affects communicative behavior in such a language.

Arab learners in Israel sometimes find it difficult to communicate freely even in Hebrew which is the formal language in the country. This may be due to the lack of motivation, which may also have an effect on learning English .Also, knowing the English language well gives a speaker the status symbol of being

educated, intelligent, and upper class. So, the lack of knowing the English language is a disadvantage when exposed to the modern Western world.

Over the years, changes in the English curriculum have taken place and were adapted to the needs of Arab learner. Textbooks and lesson plans are formulated and structured according to the requirements of Arab students and to increase motivation for learning English among Arab learners .

Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu (2004) say that one of the important goals of learning English is to allow for better communication, dialogue and understanding among people who come from different cultural backgrounds and speak different languages. Meanwhile, Oxford and Shearin (1994) added that people may wish to learn a foreign language in order to be intellectually motivated and stimulated, to boast and show off to other people that they are capable of speaking English well.

In addition to Arab motivations for learning English, the very status of the English language increases the motivation of students towards being taught this language and its culture. However, in the last few decades, Amara (1999) claimed that English is no longer the language of any one nation but has long since become a means for worldwide communication. This means that it belongs to the Arabs in the same way as it is for other nations. It is not only for its native speakers but, for the whole world because it is an international language.

Motivation - Instrumental and Integrative Orientation

In Israel, the English language is accepted as a window to the modern world. For some students it is an opening into the academic world, and many others find that it is a useful tool to communicate some day with English speakers. Others see it as an entrance into the modern world of advanced technology. The three ethnic groups see the English language as a status symbol and it is a compulsory subject throughout elementary and high school in Israel. Also, it is a major component in university entrance exams. A review of the research literature indicates that, in terms of academic learning objectives and outcomes, the students should leave high school with a sufficient knowledge of the English language and skills to enable them make an easy start at university.

McDonough (1983) and Ellis (1994) believe that the motivation of learners is widely accepted as a key factor in influencing the rate and success of second language learning. McDonough (1983, p.142) states that "motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language". A learner's motivation in second language learning is affected by his/her attitudes towards learning the language, and vice versa.

Motivation also plays an important part in improving and developing the learners' communication ability. Harrison et al. (1975) stated that studies

conducted on Arab students have consistently shown that Arab students are instrumentally motivated to learn English and that they are well aware of the usefulness of knowing English. This means that the main stimulus for learning English is instrumental, to achieve a goal such as a career. Harrison (1975) added that it is true that some learners are interactively motivated, but they are in a minority. According to Seed house (1996: 69), those with integrative motivation have a genuine interest in "the target speech community" which the learner is "aspiring to become a member of". Yet I think that there might be certain people who desire to be part of an English-speaking community; I am one of them! Some like to join the English language department because it will be easier for them to get a job with a degree in English than in any other specialization.

The relation between motivation and attitudes has been considered a prime concern in language learning research. Gardner and Lambert (1972, p.3) state that "his [the learner] motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his orientation towards the learning task itself". In addition, Lifrieri (2005, p.14) assert that "attitudes are necessary but insufficient indirect conditions for linguistic attainment. Only when paired up with motivation proper do attitudinal tendencies relate to the levels of student engagement in language learning, and to attainment". All in all, a better understanding of students' motivation and attitudes may assist ESL/EFL curriculum and instruction designers to devise language teaching programs that generate the attitudes and motivation most conducive to the production of more successful ESL/EFL learners (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Midraj, 1998, 2003). Additionally, it can help writers to create material and teachers to select activities and tasks that tap students' motivation and attitudes (Midraj et al., 2008).

Moreover, with relation to instrumental orientation (intense wish to study a language in order to fulfill particular career, educational or financial purposes) and integrative orientation (strong wish to study language coming from a favorable influence towards a community of its speakers), I see that the English language today is in a globally unique position. Furthermore, the position of English as the world's most prestigious language seems to place demands on students to be able to communicate with people from different parts of the world. Cooper and Fishman (1977) pointed out that students are entirely conscious of the advantages of English language acquirement. There is also a positive tendency to the study of English as an official language for internal purposes, and many students from the non-English-speaking countries desire to study in countries where English is the mother tongue. In light of a study by Gardner (1985), there is a difference between instrumental and integrative orientation. Brown (1987) relates to integrative motivation as the desire of students to study another language in order to communicate and to learn about the other group's culture without the necessity for immediate contact with them. He also claims that integrative orientation was more powerfully connected to accomplishment in

language study than instrumental orientation. Clement, Gardner, and Smy the (Note 4) said that the integrative motive is associated with both the individual's proficiency in English and persistence in its acquisition. Also, the integrative motive has also been shown to be related to the individual's spontaneous use of English in an inter-ethnic contact situation as well as the student's participation in English class activities. Yet, the integrative motive has not been the only motivational aspect found to be associated with English language as a second language achievement. Gardner and Santos found that achievement in English was positively associated with an instrumental orientation (the desire to learn the language in order to achieve pragmatic goals such as a good job or social recognition) as well as an integrative motivation.

El-Dash and Busnardo (2001), in their research about attitudes toward English, revealed that the majority of adolescents prefer English to other native languages in terms of status and solidarity. Favoring the English language over native languages is attributed to the general perception of English as a prestigious international language and as having symbolic status among adolescent peer groups.

Students in many spheres of study favor English. The students' attitudes are influenced by their integrative motivation as they can easily identify themselves with the culture. Their attitudes towards English are conditioned by the choice of profession/vocation, age, teacher influence and peer group influence.

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