

## **Integrative and Instrumental Motivation as Factors Influencing Attained Levels of Proficiency in English**

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(Received 5/11/1411; accepted 9/10/1412)

**Abstract.** The purpose of the study reported here was to investigate the relation between the level of attainment in English of a sample of Bahraini university students and motivation. The results demonstrate a positive association between instrumental motivation and attainment for the sample as a whole and are therefore consistent with the results of similar studies undertaken in foreign and second language learning situations. However, further statistical analysis of the results shows that the positive correlation does not hold at relatively high levels of attainment. As far as the more successful students are concerned, no significant correlation was found between the two variables. The results obtained for the integrative motivation are in contrast with the results of studies undertaken in second language learning situations and are interpreted as reflecting the role played by the monolingual and monocultural background of the students. For the integrative motivation to work in the learning environment that prevails in Bahrain, students need to have opportunities of coming into contact with speakers of the language. Both types of motivation need to be fostered by positive parental attitudes towards the language and by the students' own willingness to accept themselves as bilinguals. In this report, the background and rationale of the study are first discussed and an analysis and interpretation of the statistical findings are then presented. Finally, the methodological implications of the findings for different categories of learners are considered.

### **Motivation Variables and Language Learning**

The influence of motivational variables in second language learning was first examined in a study conducted by Gardner and Lambert.<sup>(1)</sup> Their study brought to our attention the issue of motivation as a factor influencing both the level of proficiency attained and the rate of success in learning a foreign or second language. In a

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(1) Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert, "Motivational Variables in Second-language Acquisition" *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 13 (1959), 266-72.

later study they set out to measure the influence of different motivational variables on learning second languages.<sup>(2)</sup> Their pioneering work led to the construction of a socio-psychological theory of second or foreign language learning, according to which the learners' level of success in a second language is determined by the extent to which they are psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behavior which characterize members of the target linguistic cultural group.<sup>(3)</sup> Since the development of their motivational-attitudinal theory, interest in the exploration of motivational and attitudinal variables has grown considerably and a number of exploratory studies have been undertaken, mainly in second language situations, which have brought similar or alternative insights into this recent discipline of socio-psycholinguistics. A number of studies in both foreign and second language situations set out to determine the influence of motivational variables on students' proficiency.<sup>(4)</sup>

Learners' reasons for acquiring a second or foreign language are generally examined in terms of the instrumental or integrative value that they perceive to be derived from learning it. An integrative type of motivation is defined as a desire to

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- (2) Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert, *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning* (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1972), p. 44.
- (3) *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- (4) Robert C. Gardner, "Motivational Variables in Second-language Acquisition." Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1960, p. 45; Henry J. Feenstra, "Aptitude, Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning," Ph.D. thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 1968; Henry J. Feenstra and Robert C. Gardner, "Aptitude, Attitude and Motivation in Second-language Acquisition," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 13 (1968), 266-72; Bernard Spolsky, "Attitudinal Aspects of Second Language Learning," *Language Learning*, 19 (1969), 270-85; Leon A. Jackobovits, *Foreign Language Learning: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of the Issue* (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1970); Gardner and Lambert, *Attitudes*, p. 56; P.C. Smythe, et al., "Attitude, Aptitude and Type of Instructional Programme in Second Language Acquisition," *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 4 (1972), 307-21; Yasmeen Lukmani, "Motivation to Learn and Language Proficiency," *Language Learning*, 22 (1972), 261-73; Robert C. Gardner, et al., "Second Language Learning: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 32 (1976), 198-213; G.R. Tucker, et al., "Affective, Cognitive and Social Factors in Second Language Acquisition," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 32 (1976), 214-26; John W. Oller, et al., "Attitudes and Attained Proficiency in ESL: A Sociolinguistic Study of Mexican Americans in the Southwest," *TESOL Quarterly*, 11 (1977), 175-83; Sandra Savignon, *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching* (Philadelphia: The Centre for Curriculum Development Inc., 1977); Robert C. Gardner, "Social Psychological Aspects of Second Language Acquisition," in *Language and Social Psychology*, ed. H. Giles and R. St Claire (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), pp. 193-220; Robert C. Gardner, "Learning Another Language: A True Social Psychological Experiment," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 2 (1983), 219-39; M. Strong, "Integrative Motivation: Cause or Result of Successful Second Language Acquisition?," *Language Learning*, 34 (1984), 1-14; Saif Hashim Al-Ansari, "Environmental Factors Influencing Students' Achievement in English as a Foreign Language," Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 1985; B. Svanes, "Motivation and Cultural Distance in Second-language Acquisition," *Language Learning*, 37, No. 3 (1987), 341-59.

be valued as a speaking member of the second language community. The learner's possession of such integrative motivation, it is believed, will encourage him to interact with speakers of the second language and obtain intake.<sup>(5)</sup> An instrumental type of motivation is defined as the learner's desire to achieve proficiency in the language for utilitarian or practical purposes and the presence of this type of motivational orientation, it is predicted, will encourage performers to interact with the second language speakers so as to achieve certain specific ends.<sup>(6)</sup>

Foreign language learners are identified as instrumental performers if they are seen to be learning the language so as to pass an examination, to use it in their work, or even to use it in the country where it is spoken.<sup>(7)</sup> Integrative performers, on the other hand, are found to possess sympathetic attitudes toward the culture of the target language and its speakers. They probably see great value in being able to speak foreign languages and experience an appreciation of different cultures.<sup>(8)</sup>

### **Background and Rationale of the Present Study**

In many respects, Bahrain, unlike other areas in the Gulf or, indeed, in the Middle East generally, approximates to an ESL rather than an EFL environment. Certainly the classroom is not the only source from which Bahraini learners of English get their language input. It is estimated that the English-speaking expatriate community on the island constitutes 25 per cent of the total population. As a result of this, a large proportion of middle-class Bahrainis come into regular contact, usually in their place of work, with the English-speaking community living on the island. Instruction in tertiary institutions, furthermore, is conducted through the medium of English and the language is considered a prerequisite for seeking jobs in the private sector.

Despite the fact that a large number of English-speaking residents are present in various work environments, however, there is little social integration with the local inhabitants in their homes, in clubs or other social milieu. Schumann considers acculturation to be a significant variable in second language acquisition.<sup>(9)</sup> If this is so, most Bahraini learners of English will be severely handicapped by their monocultural

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(5) Stephen D. Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), p. 22.

(6) Gardner and Lambert, *Attitudes*, p. 132 ff.

(7) Krashen, p. 22.

(8) *Ibid.*

(9) J.H. Schumann, "Social and Psychological Factors in Second Language Acquisition," in *Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Jack Richards (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1978), 163-77.

orientation in their attempts to acquire a working knowledge of English. Yet most middle-class Bahrainis do achieve an acceptable level of both academic and professional proficiency in the language. It is obviously important for pedagogic purposes to understand why this should be so, given the absence of any strong integrative pressures to learn English for social or cultural reasons.

Over the past few years, the impression has been growing among the English-teaching staff at the University of Bahrain that at higher levels of learning, especially when students are required to use the language for academic purposes, acculturation and motivation, especially integrative motivation, are not major factors in determining the level of attained proficiency in English. The consensus view is that other factors become increasingly dominant. These other factors can be collectively referred to as 'general academic ability.' This general ability factor becomes clear when students approach graduation. In a recent survey, a high significant correlation coefficient of .66 ( $p < .001$ ) was found to obtain between the cumulative grade point average (cgpa) and the TOEFL scores of graduating English majors over the past four semesters.

It would clearly be of considerable pedagogic relevance to know at what level, if any, the significance of motivational variables as factors influencing learning starts to decline and with what type of learners. The relation between the variables was investigated at the first-year undergraduate level, which in Bahrain means after students have completed nine years of English instruction in the schools and a one-year preparatory program at the University. This is a major component in which students undergo 12 hours of formal intensive language instruction per week over two semesters.

## Research Method

### Subjects

A total number of 155 students constituted the subjects for the study. These take a common first-year level of English language course as part of their college requirements. In spite of being drawn from different specializations, the subjects were very homogeneous in respect of age, nationality, mother tongue and both cultural and educational background. The selection of these subjects contrasts with the samples used in many other motivational studies. Much of earlier reported research has been conducted with linguistically and culturally heterogeneous groups of language learners. These may have been open to a much wider range of background influences than the sample used in the present study.

## Materials

A questionnaire consisting of the following two variables was developed and administered in Arabic.

### Ratings of Instrumental Orientation

This seven-item scale (maximum = 28) assesses the extent to which subjects perceive utilitarian reasons for studying English as appropriate to their own feelings. The students were asked to rate on a 4-point scale the extent to which each of the seven instrumental reasons (items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12) for learning English was descriptive of his or her feelings. The higher a student's score on this measure, the more he or she is identified as being instrumentally-oriented.

### Ratings of Integrative Orientation

This four-item scale (maximum = 16) assesses the extent to which students believe that learning English is important because it enables them to interact with and share cultural experiences with the English speaking community. The students were asked to rate on a 4-point scale the extent to which each of four integrative reasons (items 1, 3, 5 and 7) for learning English was descriptive of his or her feelings. If the students are highly integratively motivated in their learning of English, they will be assumed to place more emphasis on the integrative value of learning English as a foreign language, e.g. as a means of learning more about or meeting members of the target community. The higher the student's score on this measure, the more he or she is identified as being integratively-oriented. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from Jakobovits' questionnaire.<sup>(10)</sup>

### Proficiency Measures

The students' responses to the items on the questionnaire were correlated with scores obtained from a program-neutral proficiency test. This incorporated a multiple choice reading comprehension test, a multiple choice grammar and usage test, a free composition test doubled marked by two independent examiners and a close test in the standard format for reading, with the passage gapped at fifths and the answers marked in accordance with the exact word criterion. Correlations coefficients of .67 (reading), .61 (listening), .65 (grammar), and .63 (composition), all significant at the  $p < .01$  level, were obtained between the results of the close test and the results of the

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(10) Jakobovits, p. 263ff.

proficiency test. The four components of the proficiency test were all equally weighted and each scored out of 25. It needs to be pointed out that the test was not designed as a test of functional or communicative competence. In particular, it did not incorporate any test of oral fluency. Although it did not contain any material relating directly to the students' academic program, it nonetheless tests the 'academic' rather than the 'communicative' component of language proficiency. Since my ultimate purpose was to determine the influence of both instrumental and integrative types of motivation on the students' ability to use the language for academic purposes, this bias was considered entirely appropriate.

The mean score in the final examination was used as the basis for dividing the students into two groups: high achievers and low achievers, those scoring above the mean being considered high achievers and those scoring below the mean being considered low achievers. Of the 155 students tested, 81 came out as high achievers and 74 as low achievers. The mean scores and standard deviations for the group as a whole and for the high and low achievers are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Proficiency Scores (out of 100).**

Students	Mean	Standard Deviation
All students	65.87	11.06
Low achievers	56.55	6.09
High achievers	74.40	6.97

The table shows an 18 per cent difference between the mean of the high achievers and the mean of the low achievers. A much narrower spread, of course, would have called into question the validity of the distinction between relatively high and relatively low achievers in respect of this sample.

### Questionnaire scores

An analysis of the questionnaire scores on the instrumental motivation for the three categories of respondents is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Degree of Instrumental Motivation.**

Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation
All students	16.28	7.47
Low achievers	13.51	7.75
High achievers	18.97	6.13

The mean score obtained for the tested variable indicates that the high achievers show a significantly higher degree of instrumental motivation than the low achievers. There is thus *prima facie* evidence to support the conventional wisdom that the higher the degree of motivation, the higher their level of attainment will be.

An analysis of the questionnaire scores on the integrative motivation for the three categories of respondents is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Degree of Integrative Motivation.**

Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation
All students	8.80	3.62
Low achievers	8.16	3.83
High achievers	9.47	3.29

Here again the mean scores obtained for the variable indicates that the high achievers show a somewhat more significant degree of integrative motivation than the low achievers.

### Hypotheses

The following six null hypotheses were formulated:

H.1 There is no connection between instrumental motivation and the level of proficiency attained.

H.2 There is no connection between instrumental motivation and the level of proficiency attained by relatively low achievers.

H.3 There is no connection between instrumental motivation and the level of proficiency attained by relatively high achievers.

H.4 There is no connection between integrative motivation and the level of proficiency attained.

H.5 There is no connection between integrative motivation and the level of proficiency attained by relatively low achievers.

H.6 There is no connection between integrative motivation and the level of proficiency attained by relatively high achievers.

### Correlations

To test H.1, H.2 and H.3, the students' proficiency scores were correlated with their degree of instrumentality, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation,  $r$ .<sup>(11)</sup> The correlation coefficients obtained are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Correlation Coefficient between Instrumental Motivation and Proficiency.**

Respondents	Coefficient	Significance
All students	.43	.0000
Low achievers	.42	.0001
High achievers	*.06	.28

\*Not significant at the .05 level.

To test H.4, H.5 and H.6 hypotheses, the students' proficiency scores were correlated with their degree of integrativeness, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient,  $r$ . The correlations coefficients obtained are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Correlation Coefficient between Integrative Motivation and Proficiency.**

Respondents	Coefficient	Significance
All students	*.1	.09
Low achievers	*.03	.38
High achievers	*-.17	.11

\*Not significant at the .05 level.

As a further check on the validity of the above findings, correlations for the instrumental motivation were obtained for progressively lower bands of proficiency scores, starting from 85-100 and reducing by 5 percentage points to 80-100, 75-100, 70-100 and so on. An insignificant correlation between proficiency and instrumental motivation was obtained for all bands (except 75-100 which could have resulted from the wide spread in the standard deviation) down to 65-100, beyond which a significant positive correlation began to emerge consistently down to 40 (the lowest score achieved). The mean score of 65.8, which was used to split the high achievers and the low achievers, thus coincides almost exactly with the point at which the correlations cease to be insignificant. The same procedure was applied to the findings for integra-

(11) Judith Greene and Manuela D'Oliveira, *Learning to Use Statistical Tests in Psychology* (London: The Open University Press, 1982), pp. 138-41.



for integrative motivation. Working downwards from 85–100, no significant positive correlation was obtained for all bands down to 40. In fact a low negative correlation of  $-.17$  ( $p < .05$ ) was obtained for band 65–100.

The process was then reversed, starting from the lowest score of 40 and moving progressively upwards by 5 percentage points. It was found that in all bands of up to 55 per cent, there was no significant correlation in respect of either instrumental or integrative motivation but that thereafter a consistent significant positive correlation of  $.4$  was obtained for instrumental motivation. It turns out, then, that within the category of low achievers, there is a subcategory of 'underachievers' or 'failures,' amounting to 20 per cent of the total sample, who are not consistently influenced by the amount of motivation they have for learning the language. However, it needs to be borne in mind that insignificant results obtained for the failure group may be due to the relatively small group (32 students) or the relatively narrow range of scores (40–55 per cent). Further research is obviously needed to confirm or infirm these findings.

### **Interpretation of the Statistical Findings**

Dealing first with instrumental motivation, H.1 and H.2 were rejected since a very good correlation was found between the questionnaire scores and the proficiency scores in respect of both the sample as a whole and the low achievers. However, no significant statistical result was obtained for the high achievers and H.3 was therefore accepted.

The difference between the high achievers and the low achievers in respect of the tested variable is statistically very significant. Although the high achievers as a group are more instrumentally motivated to learn the language than the low achievers, their greater degree of instrumental motivation apparently does not account for their higher attainment. The conclusion that might be drawn is that instrumental motivation to learn the target language exerts a significant influence on the level of attainment only with averagely-gifted learners up to about the intermediate level and that thereafter its importance diminishes, particularly when English is being studied primarily for academic purposes.

In attempting to interpret the findings for the high achievers, however, it needs to be borne in mind that the difference in mean scores between the low and the high achievers in respect of instrumental motivation was 5.46 points on the scale 1–28. It may well be the case that beyond a certain level, progressively higher amounts of instrumental motivation are needed to achieve progressively smaller amounts of improvement in proficiency. If this is so, then the present findings with regard to the

high achievers may be partly explained by the fact that the amount of instrumental motivation, although more than that received by the low achievers, is not sufficient to account for the difference in attainment on the kind of test that was administered.

With regard to the correlations between integrative motivation and attained proficiency, no significant correlation was obtained for the sample as whole and for both high and low achievers and H.4, H.5 and H.6 were consequently all accepted.

### **Implications**

Although, as was indicated in the introductory remarks, Bahrain approximates in many respects to an ESL environment, integration and aculturation are not significant factors influencing the level of attainment among university students. It is true that they may be in possession of certain motivational reasons for learning English, but as long as their motivation is not fulfilled outside the institutional setting, its influence on their performance is almost nonexistent, for they generally lack opportunities to come into contact with the language for actual communicative functions. Even if such opportunities exist, learners might not be able to make use of such opportunities, either because of the existence of social barriers between the two groups or because of the learners' unwillingness to accept social integration.

Opportunities to become communicatively engaged in the language are difficult to come by, particularly since social integration between members of the same group can take place through the vernacular language and this obviously inhibits learners from manipulating the target language in its contextual functions. Social integration with speakers of the foreign language is less easily achieved when learners themselves are monolingually and monoculturally oriented and tend to live within their own monolingual and monocultural community. The learning of French as a second language in a country such as Canada constitutes an entirely different socio-linguistic phenomenon. Second language learners there might be undergoing both socio-cultural and economic pressures, if not political pressures, to acquire the second language. Acquisition of the second language becomes a necessity for such learners and probably becomes a much easier task than the acquisition of English in Bahrain since opportunities for becoming engaged in social interaction with the speakers of French are readily available and so can be linguistically exploited.

Bahraini learners of English may well be aware of the instrumental reasons or values for learning the language, but such awareness is probably less evident in the earlier stages of learning the language when it is treated merely as a compulsory school subject. The economic and educational fulfillment of this motivational variable is probably more evident at the tertiary learning levels where learners have

become mature enough to perceive the influential role the language can play in their future career prospects. By this time, however, the level of proficiency in the language will have already been established, since learners in Bahrain will already have been exposed to English instruction for a period of not less than ten years. Yet this has not been the case with the low achievers whose proficiency level has found to be highly influenced by their instrumental reasons for learning the language. It is obvious that they need to be more appreciative of the instrumental value that can be derived from learning the language. This, moreover, needs to be encouraged at an earlier stage of learning the language.

### Conclusion

The present findings call into question the validity of the integrative motivational theory initiated by Gardner and Lambert.<sup>(12)</sup> Their theory seems to be workable only in situations where learners directly experience the socio-psychological benefits of living in a bilingual and bicultural type of environment. Such a theory does not have any significant value in a monocultural setting such as that of Bahrain in which the mother tongue and the culture of the learners impose no social constraints or social inhibitions.

The findings of the present study do not, of course, in any way challenge the view that integrative and instrumental motivations *can be* major factors influencing the level of achievement in foreign or second language learning. It is clear, however, that for motivational variables to act as predictors of achievement, students need to develop both integrative and instrumental orientation to a much greater extent than they appear to do in Bahrain and at an early stage.

Further data needs to be gathered in order to determine whether the students' orientation reflects that of their parents and in particular whether an integrative orientation is fostered by favorable attitudes on the part of the parents towards the other language community. Perhaps the students not only need to approach the study of English with an instrumental outlook but to receive parental support in order to achieve a higher level of integrative orientation. To confirm this view further research is needed.

Learning a foreign language such as English with natural and world-wide recognition is of vital importance for young Bahrainis, and both instrumental and integrative approaches to the learning task must be developed. The fascinating challenge for

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(12) Gardner, p. 3.

these students, however, is to keep their own cultural and linguistic identity while mastering a foreign language. Whether, with the proper attitudinal orientation and motivation, one can become bilingual without losing one's identity, however, is a question on which we must, for the time being, reserve judgement.

## الحافز التكاملي والوظيفي وأثرهما في التحصيل اللغوي لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية

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البحرين

ملخص البحث . تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد العلاقة بين مستوى تحصيل اللغة الإنجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية لدى عينة من الطلبة في جامعة البحرين وبين الحافز. وتُظهر النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية بين الحافز الوظيفي وبين مستوى التحصيل لدى طلبة العينة ككل، وهي بذلك تنسجم مع نتائج الدراسات المماثلة التي أجريت في مجال تعلم اللغة الثانية واللغة الأجنبية. إلا أن التعمق في التحليل الإحصائي للنتائج يبين أن العلاقة التبادلية الإيجابية لا تنطبق على المستويات العليا للتحصيل. أما بالنسبة للطلبة المتفوقين، فإن البحث يظهر عدم وجود علاقة تبادلية ذات مغزى بين المتغيرين. وتعارض النتائج الخاصة بالحافز التكاملي في هذه الدراسة مع نتائج الدراسات التي أجريت حول تعلم اللغة الثانية، وهي تعكس الدور الذي تلعبه أحادية اللغة والثقافة لدى الطالب. وحتى يمكن تطبيق الحافز التكاملي على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية، فإن الطالب يحتاج إلى فرصة للاحتكاك بالناطقين باللغة. كما أن كلا الحافزين يحتاج إلى تنمية من خلال المواقف الإيجابية للوالدين إزاء اللغة الأجنبية، ومدى رغبة الطالب في التحدث باللغتين. وتبدأ الدراسة بمناقشة خلفية موضوع البحث ثم تنتقل إلى تحليل النتائج الإحصائية وتفسيرها. وفي النهاية تتناول المضامين المنهجية للنتائج بالنسبة للفئات المختلفة من المتعلمين.