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MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING SETTINGS: THE CASE OF ARABIC IN THE USA

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**MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING SETTINGS:
THE CASE OF ARABIC IN THE USA**

by

Abdelmohssen Bouteldjouné

B.A. Université Mentouri Constantine, 2009
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A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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THESIS APPROVAL

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Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the field of Applied linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
(TESOL)

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

ABDELMOHSEN BOUTELDJOUNE, for the Master of Arts degree in APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL), presented on MAY 9, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING SETTINGS: THE CASE OF ARABIC IN THE USA

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Paul McPherron

The term motivation has been the key for several research studies in language learning since Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced the term to the field; however, the term did not go beyond the two types instrumental and integrative. Several studies were built over these terms, but none of them has explicitly investigated the motivation for learning Arabic language as a foreign language in the USA.

Arabic is one of the languages where motivation for learning in the USA is increasing, thus came this study to investigate the reasons and orientations i.e. initial motivation for learning Arabic and if the materials presented during a period of a semester affected the students' motivation.

The main aim of this study was to explore the orientations of U.S. students at a public mid-western college to learn the Arabic language through a class research design. The obtained results showed that the participants were attracted to learn Arabic for personal development reasons such as understanding a different culture, understand the world and travel to an Arab country. A sub group of the participants were instructors and administrative staff at an Intensive English Program at the school who wanted to learn Arabic for new academic reasons; they wanted to learn Arabic because it provides helpful techniques and knowledge for the TESL teachers and instructors to facilitate their teaching English as a second language for Arabic native

speakers in the US. The study found that the US students in the university were more communication oriented in their learning and that they have shown a great interest in conversing with Arabic speakers and building friendships with them.

The study has reinforced the direction of expanding the motivation in language learning scope and developed the classic integrative- instrumental dichotomy with the addition of a social motivation component. The students showed a huge interest in learning Arabic to socialize and build new relationships with individual native Arabic speakers.

The study participants' development of the orientations for learning Arabic to sustained motivation was reinforced with the use of the class materials, mainly the textbook. The use of the textbook and the motivation of the students made it clear that the US students were highly concerned more about the communicative aspect of the language.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to:

My first teacher, my beloved mother FADILA, who taught me the most valuable lessons and laid the foundations for everything that I have been able to achieve in my life. Thank you for your prayers, endless inspiration, encouragement, and continuous support that enabled me to pursue my dreams.

My brothers Djallel Eddine, Imed Eddine, and Abderrahim. Their unconditioned encouragement, support, muse and laughter have made my journey in the US much shorter.

Much appreciation and gratitude to my beloved grandmother and my dear uncles and aunts, especially Dr. Chaib Rachid, and Dr. Chaib Ghania for their valuable help, endless support and academic advice which are key features for the academic person I am today. I, also, would like to dedicate this thesis to my friends in Algeria.

In the memory of my beloved father Rachid, and grandfather Chaib Eltahar

And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, "The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind has not been given of knowledge except a little."

The Noble Qur'an
(*Al-Isra'a* ~ TheNight Journey – Chapter 15, Verse 85)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise and thanks is due to Allah. I acknowledge His Grace and Guidance to complete this study. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Mohammad. This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

Motivation has been and is still being extensively studied by SLA researchers for the important role it plays in language learning; however, Lightbown and Spada (2006) noted that it is still a complex phenomenon in second language learning. These facts led them to define motivation “in terms of two factors: on the one hand, learners’ communicative needs, and, on the other, their attitudes towards the second language community” (Lightbown & Spada, p. 63), which means that learners will seek to achieve proficiency in terms of the communicative aspect of a language because they may want to fulfill personal achievement, or because they want to succeed in achieving professional ambitions.

The fundamental work of Gardner and Lambert (1959) has long taken motivation in SLA to be one of two types: instrumental motivation or integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation is one in which the learner wants to succeed at concrete goals, such as school or job requirements, the ability to translate others’ works. Norris-Holt (2001) noted that this kind of motivation “is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired” (p. 2). Integrative motivation in language learning is for “personal growth and enrichment” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 64). Learners with this type of motivation are believed to like the people who speak a given language and the culture that corresponds with that language and want to be part of the community where it is spoken.

Researchers in SLA (Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) have called for broadening the scope of motivation; they include other variables and views from other fields that are related to language acquisition (e.g. psychology). The application of these variables has shown that it is difficult to account for only one type of motivation during learning since it depends on the learner and the way he perceives the language, and that there may be factors that have shifted the learner's orientation. This led to the introduction of the term *orientations* and the confusion of this with *motivation*. Gardner and Tremblay (1994) made a clear distinction between *orientation* as the reason for studying a second language, and *motivation* as a "combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goals of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language" (p. 361).

Arabic is considered to be a foreign language (one of the less commonly-taught languages) in the United States of America, and Arabic classes there are primarily taught in institutions of higher education. According to Welles (2004), the number of enrollees in US-taught Arabic classes nearly doubled from 5,505 in the fall of 1998 to 10,584 in the fall of 2002. Also, according to a survey conducted in 2006, The Modern Language Association (MLA) (2007) noted that enrollment in Asian-language classes has grown significantly in the US, with a 13% enrollment rise since 2002. According to this survey, Arabic ranked 10th with a 126.5% on a list of most-studied foreign languages (see Table 1.1.).

Table 1.1

Fall 1998, 2002, and 2006 Foreign Language Enrollments at US Colleges

2006 Ranking and language	1998	2002	% Change 1998-2002	2006	% Change 2002-2006
Spanish	656,590	746,267	+ 13.7	822,985	+ 10.3
French	199,064	201,979	+ 1.5	206,426	+ 2.2
German	89,020	91,100	+ 2.3	94,264	+ 3.5
American Sign Language	11,420	60,781	+ 432.2	78,829	+ 29.7
Italian	49,287	63,899	+ 29.6	78,368	+ 22.6
Japanese	43,141	52,238	+ 21.1	66,605	+ 27.5
Chinese	28,456	34,153	+ 20	51,582	+ 51
Latin	26,145	29,841	+ 14.1	32,191	+ 7.9
Russian	23,791	23,921	+ 0.5	24,845	+ 3.9
Arabic	5505	10,584	+ 92.3	23,974	+ 126.5
Ancient Greek	16,402	20,376	+ 24.2	22,849	+ 12.1
Biblical Hebrew	9099	14,183	+ 55.9	14,140	- 0.3
Portuguese	6926	8385	+ 21.1	10,267	+ 22.4
Modern Hebrew	6734	8619	+ 28	9612	+ 11.5
Korean	4479	5211	+ 16.7	33,728	+ 37.1
Other Languages	17,771	25,716	+ 44.7	33,728	+ 31.2
Total	1.193.830	1.397.253	+17	1.577.810	+ 12.9

Source: Adapted from Modern Language Association (2006).

This significant increase in Arabic-language study led the author to wonder about the reasons behind the growing interest in Arabic, and to look for the factors (i.e. the motivation) driving Americans to study this language despite the many difficulties it poses for them, due in part to being a Semitic, rather than an Indo-European, language (DeYoung, 1999). The orientations, or the reasons for the students taking Arabic language classes, also pose the

important question of whether they will still want to learn the language after realizing how difficult it is, due to its diglossic status.

1.2. Motivation for the study

After observing large numbers of Americans talking to Arabic (especially Saudi) students around the campus of a mid-major public university in the Midwest, and knowing that there is an offered Arabic class which gets full registration each semester, the author thought to perform a study to investigate the level of interest towards learning Arabic, the possible reasons for this interest, and the possibility to shift to a sustained motivation for learning Arabic. The ultimate motivation of the US students helps determine under which type of motivation it falls: instrumental, integrative, or some other type. For this reason, the author conducted a research study about the students who were enrolled in the Arabic class at SIUC, regarded as one of the “Less Commonly-Taught Language” classes in the SIUC Department of Linguistics.

According to the department’s history of the “Less Commonly-Taught Languages” program, which was initiated in 2005, the Arabic language had regularly been voted by the faculty to be one of the languages offered to linguistics students in particular, and to SIUC students in general. The class has always contained students from multiple ethnicities, and introduced itself as a perfect sample to study motivations for learning Arabic, especially given that no current university offered programs consider Arabic as a required course.

The “Elementary Arabic” class was designed to provide the students with a basic knowledge of Arabic (such as the alphabets and vocabulary of daily use), where the aim was to have them acquire the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing Modern Standard Arabic Language (MSA) i.e. so that all students, to an extent, had the same level of proficiency.

In addition, the observed Fall 2011 class involved faculty members from an Intensive English Program (IEP) within the university (two instructors and two administrative staff). This last group of students was categorized as non-traditional, because they were taking Arabic as a non-credit class. This group seemed to signify a new trend of learners approaching the Arabic language for different reasons, especially since the majority of the IEP students are native Saudi speakers of Arabic.

1.3. Outline of the study

The outline of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 presents a general view of the terms *motivation* and *orientation* followed by a description of the growth of foreign languages in the USA, with extra emphasis on Arabic and the motivation for the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on the subject, which includes background information about previous related studies, the purpose of this study and the research questions. Chapter 3 explains the methodology employed in this research. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the obtained data, illustrating the most pertinent findings of this study. Lastly, Chapter 5 answers the research questions presented in Chapter 2 and discusses other relevant findings. This final chapter also includes the theoretical implications of this study and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Motivations for learning Arabic as a foreign language have not been discussed extensively in the literature; however, previous research in SLA and foreign language settings in terms of motivation fits in that domain (Belmecheri and Hummel, 1998; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Kruidenier and Clément, 1986; Inbar, Schmidt & Shohamy, 2001; Norris-Holt, 2001).

2.1. Reasons for learning Arabic in the USA

In 2006, President Bush launched an initiative to encourage Americans in general—and students specifically—to learn the so called “critical-need languages”. The initiative included several languages such as Farsi, Hindi, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. Taha (2007) listed some of the reasons that made Arabic one of the paramount critical languages: first, the US government should realize that it needs to start promoting the study of foreign languages and not wait for more tragic events like 9/11 to see how important these languages are; second, the United States of America has a profound shortage of bilinguals and the need for them became clear after 9/11, as the job market saw an increase in jobs for bilinguals where US agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the national security services were desperately looking for translators and interpreters (even in the United Nations where Arabic is one of the six official working languages); third, Arabic and the other critical languages are official languages in their native countries such as China, Russia, India, and the Arab world, and are thus important in terms of international business, trade, economy and diplomacy; fourth, Arabic is the language of Islam and is a requirement for Islamic practices to all Muslims, at least to read the Quran and do

prayers appropriately; and last but not least, Arabic is not just a tool to accomplish business and commerce deals, but also a means for fostering relationships and global understanding to secure peace.

Taha (2007) also conducted a quantitative study among American undergraduate students and international graduate students who were attending a Fulbright pre-academic program, to evaluate the need for Arabic in the USA. The study was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, where the students answered three sections: (1) students' background information; (2) students' opinions regarding Arabic-language teaching programs in a post-9/11 world; and (3) agreement/ disagreement with statements dealing with instrumental and integrative motivation and attitudes toward learning Arabic.

The results showed that the students expressed agreement of opinion about having Arabic learning programs throughout the USA, and that the already-existing programs at universities should be strengthened. The participants in Taha's study agreed that the need for Arabic is primarily for utilitarian reasons (such as tourism and travel) as a tool both linguistically and culturally; however, they gave less importance to the use of Arabic in future careers, especially in terms of security agencies. In terms of integrativeness, 40% of students who participated in the study did not see a need to learn Arabic because simply because they like the language and the culture; 81% of them also disagreed with the idea of learning Arabic because it is not their heritage language.

The very few other studies conducted about learning Arabic in the United States have been categorized under three major reasons for learning the Arabic language specifically and foreign languages in general.

2.1.1. Arabic and foreign languages as heritage languages in the USA

Sehlaoui (2008) developed reflections about his personal literacies and “a rationale for the acquisition of and teaching of language in general...and applies it to Arabic as a heritage language of the USA” (p. 280). Sehlaoui stated that Arabic speaking families in the USA care greatly about their children learning Arabic as part of their heritage. He also mentioned that some families have resorted to private tutoring in special schools or weekend programs to preserve their language; some of them have even built private schools to preserve the Arabic customs among their US-born children.

Sehlaoui’s article (2008) has drawn attention to the fact that Arabic-speaking families’ motivation for learning Arabic is for saving their Arabic heritage. Sehlaoui reflected upon this by saying that, “I feel sad when I hear of children who are forced to become monolingual because the opportunity to teach them their heritage language is not available” (p. 287).

Husseinali (2005) conducted a case study of three students in his Arabic class at the University of Texas at Austin. He reported on Donia, one of his case-study participants; according to Husseinali, Donia’s need for Arabic was neither to meet academic requirements nor political interest. She wanted to learn Arabic so that she could perform her religious duties, such as prayer, in Arabic. Husseinali noted that she was as keen to learn about the Arabic culture as she was to learn everyday expressions and the names of objects in daily use. Donia also reported to Husseinali that she believed that she could not acquire Arabic due to her belief in the ‘sensitive period’ (she took a psychology class where this theory was presented), and that she considered learning Arabic to be a challenging task at her age. From her experience in the class, Donia expressed her discomfort with the course material and found the grammar to be difficult to grasp: “The grammar of the book is very difficult ... it does not explain everything, and for

example they will introduce things that they haven't discussed in the grammar" (p. 107).

Husseinali, who used the student grades and a 45-minute interview for his study, concluded that Donia's motivation had dropped because the class material did not meet her orientations.

2.1.2. Arabic and foreign languages as an instrument to meet personal or academic goals

Another case study conducted by Husseinali (2005), with a student named Smith, demonstrated also that motivation for learning Arabic could be due to academic purposes. Husseinali reported on Smith, a history student, who wanted to learn Arabic because he wanted to make himself "remarkable with it" (p. 103). Smith also confirmed that the 9/11 events were not his reason for taking Arabic language classes, but admitted that he was aware of the importance of Arabic to get a job in a Middle Eastern country where the economy and highly-paying jobs were growing rapidly.

Husseinali's analysis (2005) concluded that Smith had achieved his goals (he got the best grades among the case-study participants), and that he was satisfied with the material used in class, especially that regarding written Arabic and Arabic grammar. Though Husseinali did not include the case of Smith in his discussion, his analysis of Smith's achievement gave the impression that Smith's motivation was steady during the whole term he took the Arabic class; Smith reported that he invested almost ten hours each week preparing for this class, and he admitted that Arabic was the most difficult language he has ever learned. The analysis indicated that Smith may further his language abilities by taking more-advanced Arabic language classes.

Norris-Holt (2001) reported on the case of learning English in Japan as an instrument to achieve academic excellence. Norris-Holt reported on a study conducted by Berwick and Ross

(1989) who examined “a group of 90 first year Japanese university students who were taking an obligatory English class along with their mandatory international commerce classes.”(4).

Prior to entering university, Japanese students took English-language classes in high school; the focus of these classes was more on English grammar structure and understanding, i.e. the ability to understand a large amount of English vocabulary and grammatical structures for the sake of taking university entrance exams, which require the translation of difficult passages.

The study concluded that the Japanese students were primarily learning English to complete an educational goal (passing the university entrance exams). Japanese students were taking this class as a requirement to obtain good grades for the final average to determine which institutions they would get accepted to. Norris-Holt (2001) concluded that the majority of both junior and senior high school students felt that better results on examinations could be achieved by taking English classes.

2.1.3. Arabic and foreign languages as a facilitator to integrate within the speaking community

In his last case study research, Husseinali (2005) reported the case of Kate, who admitted that she was always interested in learning one of the Middle Eastern languages for enjoyment. Kate started taking Arabic classes just right after the events of 9/11; she reported that she took some “extension classes” in California prior to moving to the University of Texas. Husseinali classified Kate’s learning of Arabic in terms of instrumental motivation (because she wanted to learn Arabic for integrative reasons; she was especially looking for the speaking aspect of the language), and Donia (the Pakistani participant), who was trying to cope with her Islamic roots and Islamic community as integrative.

In his conclusion, Husseinali reported that neither Donia nor Kate has maintained her motivation. As previously mentioned, Donia and Kate were looking for more communication in class, and perceived the grammatical and written aspects of the class to be difficult. According to him, "...Kate was frustrated with the level of the language used in the class, and wished for more basic conversational Arabic that would be relevant to her future work or travel in the Middle East" (p. 105).

Belmecheri and Hummel (1998) were interested to see the motivation for learning ESL in Francophone Grade 11 high school students from Québec City. They started from the results of Kruidenier and Clément (1986), which indicated that "students' orientations for learning English were to meet the following goals: 'friendship, travel, prestige, and knowledge/respect'" (p. 219). In addition to an instrumental orientation, Clément and Kruidenier found in their research that three other distinct general orientations to learn an L2 have emerged, namely the knowledge, friendship, and travel orientations; these three interests were put under the integrative motivation umbrella. Belmecheri and Hummel have detected another integrative orientation, which they labeled socio-cultural. According to them, this orientation was observed when L2 was a foreign rather than a second language, i.e. learners had no direct contact with the L2 community.

The data Belmecheri and Hummel (1998) collected, by using an adapted form of the Likert-type scale questionnaire of Kruidenier and Clément's (1986) study, was analyzed through factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that the students' orientations included: travel, understanding/ school (instrumental), friendship, understanding, and career (instrumental). Belmecheri and Hummel concluded, unlike the previous study of Kruidenier and Clément, that there was an absence of integrative motivation.

2.2. Motivation type

These last themes fall under Gardner and Lambert's (1959) and Gardner's (1985) integrative-instrumental dichotomy. Gardner and Lambert defined integrativeness as studying a language with the goal of knowing more about the native speakers of that language, or getting acquainted with more diverse people through the process of learning the targeted language; while they saw that instrumental motivation as the learners' objectives behind learning the target language i.e., the learners approach the language for the utilitarian value of the linguistic aspect as a means of achieving personal agenda/goals.

Dörnyei (1994) has stated that the integrative-instrumental dichotomy received popularity because of its simplicity and because it is intuitively convincing. Dörnyei attempted to take motivation from the dichotomy point of view and revised it with another theme (social motivation). He reinforced his opinion by stating that language learning is not only acquiring the language but also:

a) *a communication coding system* that can be taught as a school subject, b) an *integral part of the individual's identity* involved in almost all mental activities, and also c) the most *important channel of social organization* embedded in the culture of the community where it is used.

(Dörnyei, 1994, p. 274)

Dörnyei (1994) attempted to bring the social motivation aspect to language learning, which he claimed that Gardner and Lambert (1959) have excluded due to the nature of the bilingual status of language in Canada (Anglophone vs. Francophone); thus Gardner and Lambert “were particularly sensitive to the social dimension of L2 motivation” (p. 274).

The importance of motivation in foreign language learning has been discussed extensively in the literature. However, according to Inbar, Schmidt and Shohamy (2001), no clear relationship was established—whether high motivation towards a certain language may lead one to study it, or whether the motivation developed while studying the foreign language.

The case of learning Arabic in Israel, conducted by Inbar, Schmidt and Shohamy (2001), discusses a setting where learning a foreign language is not an option but an obligation, due to political conflicts. This does not mean that the study of motivation in such settings would be irrelevant; it is a case that investigated the effect of learning a foreign language rather than motivation. In their study, Inbar, Schmidt and Shohamy discovered that Israeli students who were set to study a particular variety of Arabic (the Palestinian dialect) were more motivated towards learning Arabic and the culture associated with the language. The students in the study were also found to have more positive attitudes towards Arabic than their peers.

Husseinali (2006) conducted a study on ‘Arabic as a Foreign Language’ (AFL) learners at Yale University. The study included first- and second -year students who were divided into two groups (according to their heritage background). A survey was distributed to the students; descriptive and inferential statistics were used to find their initial language-learning motivation and compare the obtained results for the two groups. Husseinali concluded that there are various initial motivations, or orientations, that draw students to learn Arabic. He initially grouped them into “travel and world culture orientations, instrumental orientations, and cultural identity orientations” (p. 395); a more elaborate grouping was later given where the former were merged under one of three instrumental orientations (identification orientations, and travel and culture orientations). According to Husseinali, the combination of these implications were in terms of course offering, classroom instruction, maintaining the student’s motivation throughout the

course, and retention; however, the results were obtained during the first half of the semester, six weeks after the fall semester begun.

Husseinali's study (2006) shows a lack of performance. First, the students' orientations or initial motivation could have completely changed during the six-week period of the study, after the students realized how different Arabic is from Indo-European languages. Secondly, Arabic classes are considered a requirement for those who are enrolled in "Religious Studies" such as the Ph.D. program in Islamic studies; this indicates that some of them, if not a great deal of them, are taking the class to meet program requirements. Finally, Husseinali came up with three types of orientations where he merged the results taken from the two study groups. This study might have been more conclusive if Husseinali did not divide the groups from the beginning.

Nearly all the previous studies show an increasing interest in investigating motivation in language learning, and demonstrate that they want to go beyond the traditional aspect, the "instrumental-integrative dichotomy" (Dörnyei, 1994). In addition, all the former studies have classified the students' initial orientations without a follow-up to check if they became a final-stage motivation. For this reason, Dörnyei (2001) developed an approach, the "process-oriented approach," to assess how language learners' initial orientations switch to generated motivation, then how this motivation would be protected and preserved during the learning process until it turns to a final-stage motivation. Dörnyei (2003) explained his three-stage approach as follows:

- 1) the preactional stage, also referred to as choice motivation, in which the learners set their reasons to learn a second/foreign language because it will generate the goals they want to achieve;
- 2) the actional stage, also referred as executive motivation, in which the learners are carrying out the action of learning the language in classroom settings, and being exposed to several influences such as the difficulty of the language and the tasks carried out during the class

sessions; 3) the postactional stage, also known as motivational retrospection, which follows the end of the learning. At this stage, the learners evaluate their learning process and determine if they have achieved their goals with a look at the future activities they will perform with the language.

Most of what has been said or written about motivation has been assessed according to the initial orientations of the students, and has been grouped under one of the two parts of the “instrumental-integrative” dichotomy. Moreover, there is not a lot of literature regarding motivation towards learning Arabic as a foreign language in the US, and with the increasing interest among students, a longitudinal study must have been conducted, following “the process-oriented approach” developed by Dörnyei (2001).

The number of students who want to learn Arabic has significantly grown after the events of 9/11, which implies that there is more than instrumental or integrative orientation to learn it. In his study, Husseinali (2005) has reported that his case study participants denied that the events of 9/11 were a direct reason for them to learn Arabic; however, they did not neglect the fact that their interest in the language increased just after those events. The participants Kate and Smith admitted that they had an increasing interest in Arabic as a language, but also an interest in the community and the heritage of Arabic-speaking communities as well. This last makes it difficult to assign this interest to one of two instrumental or integrative motivations. In addition, previous studies about Arabic as a foreign language made the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation based on the students’ orientations, which Gardner and Tremblay (1994) defined as nothing more than the reasons and the desire that push learners to approach a given language.

Dividing motivations according to students' reasons for studying a language seems a weak approach, thus a much better division of students' motivation can be determined after they have gone deep in the study of the language. The depth of immersion into the language may affect the students' reasons and become a sustained, final motivation, or their reasons may change and shift to another kind of motivation, or they might well lose motivation and give up learning the language.

2.3. Research problem

According to the 2006 survey of the MLA, the Arabic language is considered the fastest-growing foreign language taught in the United States of America among offered Asiatic languages. Enrollment in Arabic classes doubled just one year after the events of 9/11, which made Americans eager to learn more about Muslim-Arabic speaking communities, although many American universities offered Arabic language classes long before these events.

The primary objective of this research was to look for the different orientations students were following to learn Arabic as a foreign language at US institutions of higher education where Arabic is not a requisite for any of the programs provided by the university. In addition, the researcher analyzed the class materials, specifically the textbook and the recommended additional materials, to see if they helped in sustaining the motivation of the learners.

2.4. Research Questions

To investigate the issues of motivation and classroom materials, the following questions are modeled to help guide the research:

Question 1: What are the initial reasons or orientations of U.S. students for learning Arabic as a foreign language in a beginner-level course?

Question 2: Will these orientations develop into sustained motivation to learn Arabic throughout the course of the semester? If so, do these sustained motivations fall in the instrumental/ integrative motivation dichotomy? Or are there other types, such as the social motivation?

Question 3: Do the materials presented during the class help to sustain the learners' motivation? Why or why not? What are other materials and experiences both inside and outside the classroom that affect the learners' motivation?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology followed in this study to seek the initial orientations of the participants and the influence of the class materials on these following an action research method. This methodology chapter details the following sections: Section 3.1 describes the participants; Section 3.2 presents the instruments employed in the study; Section 3.3 describes procedures followed during the data collection; and Section 3.4 describes the data analysis.

3.1. Participants

The participants for this research were students from the Arabic language class offered by the Department of Linguistics in a Midwestern public university. The class had 18 students in total (10 male, 8 female), but only 13 volunteered to be part of the study. The study participants consisted of seven female students and six male students whose ages ranged between 21 and 63 years old.

The participants were consisted of five students from the Foreign Languages Department and seven from the Linguistics Department, and both graduate and undergraduate students; four of them were graduate students who worked as instructors and administrative staff at the Intensive English Program (IEP), while the others were Pre-Medical and Criminology and Criminal Justice graduate students. The other 7 participants were undergraduate students studying Applied Linguistics, Aviation Flight and Management, Computer Science, Criminal

Justice, Zoology, Political Science and International Affairs, and German Studies and International Studies, respectively.

The course was given in the Fall of 2011 at the Department of Linguistics, where Arabic falls under the category of “Less Commonly-Taught Languages.”

3.2. Instruments

To get better results, in-class research was determined to be the best for the study. The instruments consisted of a group of two surveys, class assessment, class observations and one-on-one interviews with selected participants. The whole process of data collection was carried out by a TESOL graduate student who volunteered to be a research assistant.

3.2.1. Surveys

The first survey was adapted from Husseinali (2006). The survey (A) consisted of two parts; the first part was a demographic data collection, while the second part was consisted of 16 statements. The first 15 statements were answered according to a Likert scale. The scale consisted of six degrees where 6 represented “strongly agree” and 1 represented “strongly disagree.” The last statement was left blank for the participants to include their own statements that detail their own personal reasons for learning Arabic (Appendix A). The survey was filled out by the participants on early in the semester by the fifth week of classes, and it was aimed to capture the students’ orientations to approach the language as early as possible.

The second survey, survey (B), was the last part of the data collection and aimed to check the participants’ personal assessment regarding their orientations and language achievement.

This survey was made up of two parts. Part one was a personal assessment to check if the students’ orientations have developed to a sustained motivation, to look at other reasons they

may have developed, and which would lead them to take advanced Arabic classes in the future. Part two served as a class assessment to seek the opinions of the participants about achieving the class objectives, the quality of the textbook and the materials provided during the class, and the materials that they have used outside of the classroom context (see Appendix B).

3.2.2. Class Assessment

The class assessment was a two-part process where the students write their answers on a provided sheet (see Appendix C). First, the participants answered a couple of open-ended questions which were designed to gather the opinions of the students about the most-important/helpful aspects of the class, and the least-important/helpful as well. The assessment also included a set of statements in a PowerPoint slide (see Appendix D) from which the students were supposed to express their opinions by placing the number of the statement under one of the three categories: “agree,” “no opinion,” or “disagree.” In addition, the students were also allowed to give their own comments and suggestions at the end of the assessment sheet. The aim of this assessment was to check on the class development and to see if the expectations of the students about the class materials and the instructor were met.

3.2.3. Case Study Interviews

The assistant also conducted one-on-one interviews with selected students because they were assessed to have a new orientation towards learning Arabic. Prior to filling the survey, the participants were asked to sign a consent form. These interviews were recorded and transcribed with the permission of the students. The author aimed to see if there were other orientations for learning Arabic and if the motivation for learning Arabic may not necessarily be instrumental or integrative, and thus to explore and expand the motivation theory in language learning.

The class materials included the textbook *Alif Baa: Introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds*. The book consists of ten units, with each unit providing a different set of letters, a set of vocabulary and a culture section; it also includes some Egyptian colloquialisms so that the students get an introduction about the diglossic linguistic situation of Arabic and learn the most commonly-used and widely-understandable dialect in the Arab world. The book is accompanied by a DVD to provide the students with listening practice (in the form of listening drills, dictation drills, and cultural conversations). Other drills aim to help the writing of the students and practice the vocabulary bank provided in each chapter. I also recommended some extra materials such as the website *Madinah Arabic* (<http://www.madinaharabic.com/>), which provides the students with introductory lessons about the Arabic language and some basic grammar rules, as well as a writing copybook which they could use to better their handwriting (which was difficult due to writing Arabic in a cursive manner), some YouTube videos, and recordings of the instructor for some of the vocabulary in the textbook.

3.3. Procedure

During the last session of the fifth week of classes, the students were approached by the research assistant and asked if they would volunteer for the study. Those who chose to be part of the study were given two consent forms which were provided to meet the university requirements regarding the use of human subjects in research. The form clearly stated that the subjects were participating voluntarily and they were assured that their personal information was to be kept anonymous to the researcher throughout the data-collection process (only the assistant knew the participants). The consent forms also assured that the entirety of the obtained

data was to be confidential and access was only granted to the researcher, the chair, and the assistant, and that the raw data was to be shredded after classifying the information.

The assistant asked the participating students to keep one of the consent forms with them and return the other. The participants were then given the first survey and were told that they could fill it at home and return it on the beginning of the sixth week. The assistant asked the participants to return the filled surveys in his mailbox, which was located at the Department of Linguistics.

The survey had a demographics section to get the participants' language-background information and other data like age, gender, and national origins.

After collecting the thirteen surveys, the assistant assigned numbers to each completed survey and kept the demographics portion and the consent forms with him until the end of the semester to ensure the anonymity of the participants. A week later, I received the surveys and began the analysis.

A month later, the class assessment was carried out during the last 20 minutes of the class session half way the semester. Again, I left the class, and the assistant handed out the assessment sheet to the whole class (including those who did not participate). The assistant asked the students to take 10 minutes answering the first two questions (see Appendix C). Then he projected a slide with the statements (Appendix D), and asked the students to complete question 3 and to write any comments or suggestions at the end of the paper as well. The goal was to provide the researcher with feedback about the class materials and see if the students' goals were met during the courses.

The assistant also conducted the one-on-one interviews. The interviews targeted only the Intensive English Program instructors and staff for two reasons: 1) they represented a specific

category of non-traditional students; and 2) because their Arabic learning resulted in a new orientation. I decided to have the interviews carried out with only this group after a primary analysis of their answers for survey (A). The IEP faculty have provided one more reason to learn Arabic in terms of the blank statement (16); the given reasons were for teaching ESP Arabic speakers and to do research, which fall under the category of academic achievement.

These interviews took place during different times within week 13 of classes. However, only two of them were completed during that time. Two instructors at IEP were busy during the end of the semester, which required conducting the interviews with them during the first week of the spring semester. The assistant contacted all four participants and held the interviews, upon their request, at their offices during their break hour. The assistant conducted the interviews in approximately 15 to 20 minutes of recording; he used his smart phone (iPhone 4) for the recording, due to ease of access and to assure good quality of recording.

Prior to the recording, the assistant handed out two consent forms to each participant; he collected one and asked the participants to keep the other. He then proceeded to ask all four participants the same questions (Appendix E). The forms aimed to assure the participants' privacy and stated that I would delete the recordings and their transcriptions as soon as I am done with the discussion.

Finally, the second survey was delivered by the assistant in the session just before Thanksgiving break during the last weeks of school. The assistant handed the survey to the participants during the last 10 minutes of class, after I had left, and asked them to put the completed surveys in his mailbox the day after the break. The survey addressed the participants' expectations for taking advanced classes in the future, how they assessed their learning experience, and what they thought of the class materials in general.

To assure the anonymity of the participants throughout the whole process, the assistant kept the study demographics from the first survey, the recordings from the case-study interviews, and the second survey's data. The assistant delivered the data to the researcher only after the semester was over, and after all the students' final grades were posted on.

3.4. Data Analysis

The aim of this action research was to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data obtained from the survey (A) was analyzed through descriptive statistics to classify the orientations from the most important to the least important. I used the PASW Statistics 18 (SPSS) and ran the data through. The third question on the assessment sheet (Appendix C, where the students placed the given statements according to the "Agree, No Opinion, Disagree" scale) were run through Microsoft Office Excel 2010.

The quantitative data obtained from survey (A) was discussed under five themes which were constructed from the 15 statements given in the survey. The five themes were established on the basis of previous research related to motivation in learning foreign languages. The themes were: 1) personal growth, 2) professional achievement, 3) social contact, 4) sociopolitical understanding, and 5) academic achievement. "Sociopolitical understanding" was the new addition; this theme was created because of the important role Arabic came to play after the events of 9/11, as the need to know more about the culture of Arabic-speaking countries became prominent and Arabic became one of the most-coveted spoken languages in the job market.

The quantitative data obtained from survey (B) of the students' assessment was discussed in terms of the previously-mentioned themes because I sought to ascertain if the orientations of the students had changed by the end of the semester, as well as how much they were willing to

continue learning Arabic. The class assessment was analyzed according to the questions asked in the survey.

The study case interviews conducted with the IEP faculty were analyzed according to their common points of view and reasons they have shared for learning the Arabic language. These students showed a different orientation to learn Arabic; they also comprised a group of non-traditional students who were taking the class because the university did not charge them for the class and because some of them were auditing the class and never dropped out of the course. The analysis resulted in three themes of discussion which were quoted by the IEP faculty; the themes were the reasons they took the elementary Arabic class, and they were the same reasons for them to take the spring class as well.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study was designed to examine the orientations and the motives of American students at a mid-western public university in the United States towards learning Arabic, and the possibility for these orientations to develop into a sustained motivation. The classroom research conducted to achieve this has resulted in two types of data, qualitative and quantitative.

There are two sets of quantitative data that were collected. The first was through the entrance survey (A) which sought the reasons that drive US students to learn Arabic; the survey was distributed as early as possible in the semester to capture the initial orientations of the students before they got deep into the language and may have lost interest or felt frustrated due to the difficulty of the language. The survey was constructed of 16 statements grouped under the following constructs: 1) personal growth, 2) professional achievement, 3) social contact, 4) sociopolitical understanding, and 5) academic achievement. This part of the study data was processed through descriptive and inferential statistics using PASW Statistics 18 (SPSS 18). The second batch of collected data aimed to examine the class progress and how it affected the learners' orientations. The data collected from this evaluation was processed using the Microsoft Excel Program 2010.

The qualitative data was collected through two different instruments. The exit survey (B) aimed to be a self-evaluation for the students to consider their learning process, what they have achieved from the class through a semester of studies, and to help me decide if the students' initial orientations were preserved and became constant motivation for learning Arabic. The survey also served as a class assessment to check if the materials helped motivate the students

during their learning, and it was a good opportunity to provide recommendations for future research and to understand class implications.

The quantitative data also included the interviews conducted with the IEP faculty members. These seemed of importance to the study for two reasons: first, the IEP faculty provided a new brand of learners, being non-traditional students who were interested in learning the Arabic language and the culture associated with it; second, they seemed to provide an example of students who are approaching the learning of Arabic for new reasons. The data in this sample was analyzed according to the most common reasons the IEP faculty learners approached Arabic, from which they have provided three new orientations.

4.1. Results of the initial motivation/ orientations

4.1.1. Results of Survey (A)

The survey was measured on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 6 represented “strongly agree.” For clearer and more accurate results, and for ease of interpretation, the scale was sought to be rearranged as follows: values between 1 and 2 were considered as *strong disagreement*; values from 2.1 to 3.5 as *moderate to slight disagreement*; from 3.6 to 5 as *slight to moderate agreement*, and from 5.1 to 6 as *strong agreement*.

The first set of statements, (1), (3), (4) and (12), were grouped together because they represented the personal growth of the participants. Statement (1) was established to measure the willingness of US students to understand and value Arabic literature and art; statement (3) aimed to measure Americans’ desire to explore Arabic culture, which would help to understand the Arabic persona. Statement (4) was formulated to look up Americans’ interest in Islam as a religion, especially after the events of 9/11; while statement (12) aimed to look up Americans’

interest in travelling to the Arab world and use Arabic while conversing. The collected data was analyzed and gathered in table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Orientations of Learning Arabic for Personal Growth

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
S1: So I will be able to understand and appreciate Arabic art and literature.	13	3.54	1.76	1	6
S 3: Because I want to learn more about the Arabic cultures and understand the world better.	13	5.15	0.89	4	6
S 4: Because of interest in Islam as a world religion.	13	3.92	1.70	1	6
S 12: Because I want to be able to use Arabic when I travel to an Arab country.	13	5.23	1.36	2	6
Personal Growth Total	13	4.46	1.18	2.50	6

Statement (1), “*I will be able to understand and appreciate Arabic art and literature a slight disagreement,*” showed a very slight agreement among the participants, resulting in a Mean of 3.54 out of 6. This shows that the participants are not strongly interested in Arabic art and literature. Statement (3) revealed that the participants seem to strongly agree with “*learn(ing) more about the Arabic cultures and understand the world better,*” which is supported by a Mean of 5.15 out 6. The participants also have a moderate agreement with statement (4), “*interest in Islam as a world religion*” with a Mean of 3.29 out of 6. This means that the participants are not learning Arabic to find about Islam as a religion. However, the participants seem to be strongly in agreement with statement (12), “*I want to be able to use Arabic when I*

travel to an Arab country,” providing a Mean of 5.23; this shows an interest among participants to travel to the Arab world and use Arabic for basic communication skills. In sum, the participants seemed to be approaching Arabic for personal growth reasons, with a total Mean of 4.46. The obtained findings are supported with Figure 4.1, showing that 39% of the participants (N=13) scored between 5 and 6, and 38% scored between 3.50 and 5.

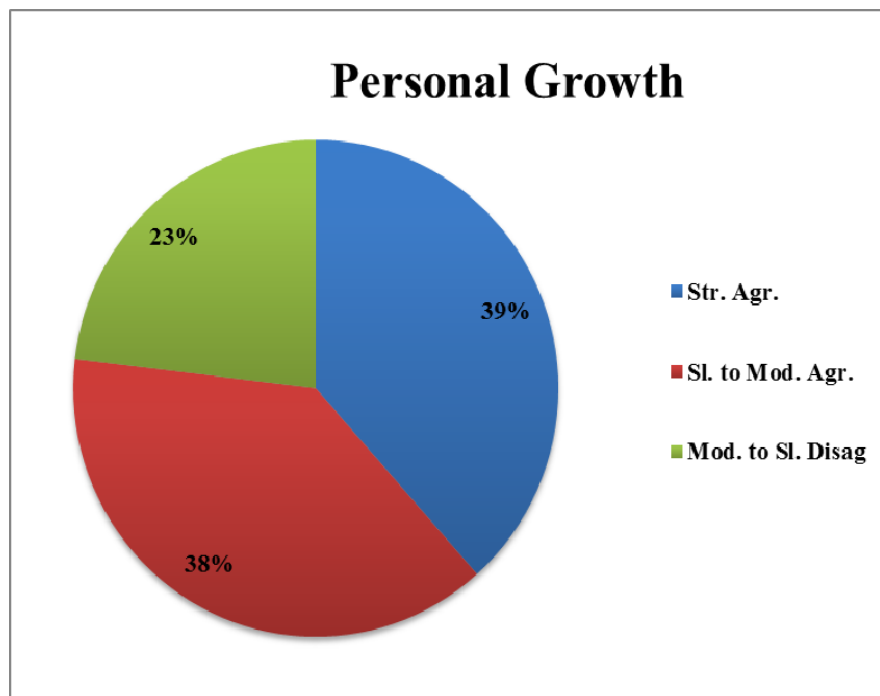


Figure 4.1: Distribution of scores within total personal growth

The second set of statements, (7), (10), and (15), were grouped to assess the learners’ orientations towards professional growth. Statement (7) aimed to examine the awareness of students and their willingness to join a US security agency where Arabic is one of the most-often required languages in such positions; statement (10) looked at the beliefs of the students and how often they see Arabic as a tool to get a good job; statement (15) aimed to examine if students are

willing to use Arabic if going to study abroad. The obtained results from the data are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Orientations for Learning Arabic for Professional Achievement

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
S 7: Because I want to join the military, the FBI or other security agencies.	13	1.85	1.46	1	5
S 10: Because I think it will be useful getting me a good job.	13	3.69	1.49	1	6
S 15: Because I plan to study abroad.	13	2.77	1.87	1	6
Professional Achievement Total	13	2.76	0.93	1	4.33

The obtained Mean (1.85 out of 6) showed a disagreement with statement 7, reflecting that the participants are not interested in joining any of the security agencies that requires Arabic. On the other hand, the participants showed a slight agreement to learn Arabic for getting a good job, which is supported by a Mean of 3.69 for statement 10. The participants also moderately disagree with statement 15, “*plan to study abroad*” yielding a Mean of 2.77; this might mean that the participants are not willing to study in Arabic-speaking countries. In general, the participants seemed not to approach Arabic for professional reasons or for getting a good job (even though American security agencies offer some of the highest-paying positions for Arabic-language specialists), nor for studying in abroad in Arabic-speaking countries. The participants showed a slight disagreement towards learning Arabic for professional achievement, with a Mean of 2.76 out of 6. These findings are illustrated in Figure 4.2, where 54% of the participants’ (N=13) answers were between 2 and 3.5, and 23% were between 1 and 2.

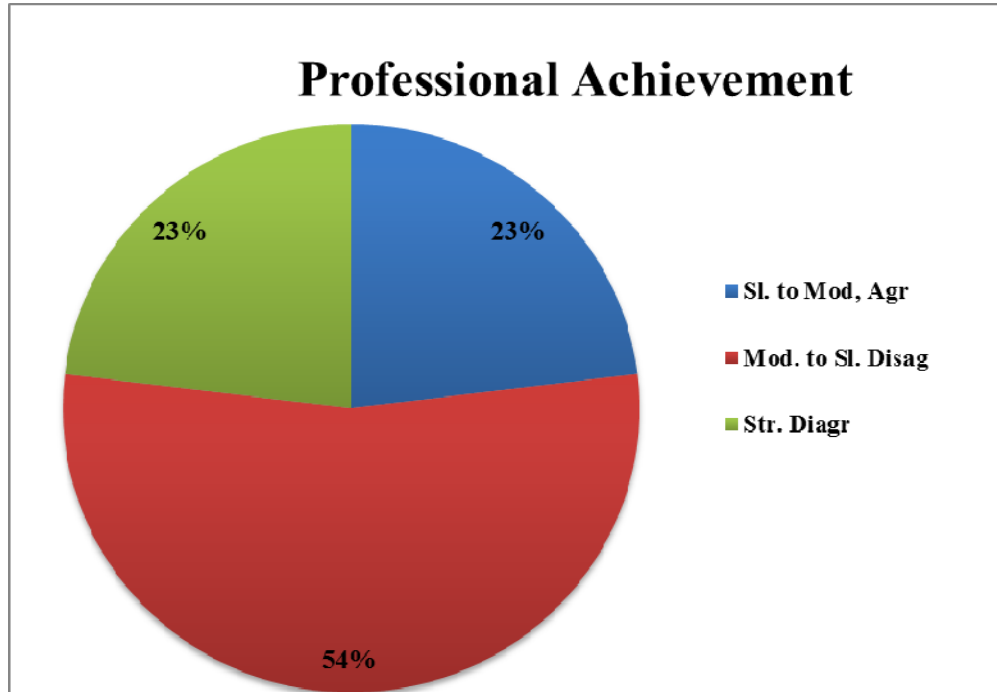


Figure 4.2: Distribution of scores within total professional growth

Statements 2 and 11 were grouped under the social contact orientation. Statement 2 aimed to evaluate the need of American students for using Arabic as a tool to meet and converse with people around the world in general, while statement 11 aimed to look at the American students' willingness to use Arabic with native Arabic speakers, either on campus or in the community, especially due to the increasing number of Saudi students in the last couple years. The obtained results are summarized in table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Orientations to Learn Arabic for Social Contact

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
S 2: So I will be able to meet and converse with more and varied people.	13	4.77	1.23	3	6
S 11: Because I want to be able to use Arabic with Arabic-speaking friends.	13	4.69	1.49	2	6
Social Contact Total	13	4.73	1.18	3	6

The participants showed a moderate agreement towards using Arabic “to meet and converse with more and varied people” with a Mean of 4.77 out of 6. The participants also showed a moderate agreement to learn Arabic “to be able to use it with (their) Arabic-speaking friends,” which is supported by a Mean of 4.69. The findings revealed that the participants moderately agree to learn Arabic for social contact reasons, with a Mean of 4.73 out of 6. The findings are supported by Figure 4.3, which shows that 46% of the participants scored between 6 and 5, and 31% scored between 3.5 and 5.

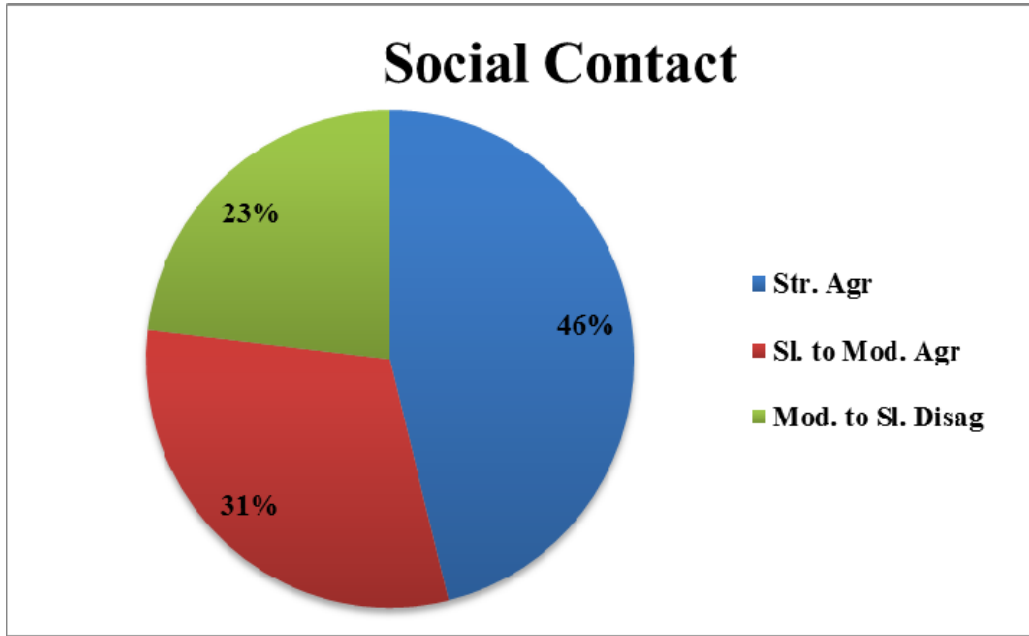


Figure 4.3: Distribution of scores within social contact

Statements 5, 6, 8, and 9 were included to examine the sociopolitical orientations of the American students. Table 4.4 presents the obtained results.

Table 4.4

Orientations to Learn Arabic for Sociopolitical Understanding

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
S 5: Because I feel Arabic is an important language in the economic development of the world.	13	4.62	1.26	3	6
S 6: Because I feel Arabic will help me better understand the middle east politics.	13	4.00	1.68	1	6
S 8: Because of the events of 9/11.	13	1.77	1.30	1	6
S 9: Because it will help me better understand the problems that Arabs face	13	4.38	1.55	2	6
Sociopolitical understanding Total	13	3.69	0.96	2	5.25

Statement 8 yielded a Mean of 4.26, which reflected moderate agreement among the participants to approach Arabic because they “*feel (it) is an important language in the economic development of the world.*” The participants also showed a strong disagreement for learning Arabic because of 9/11 events; this is supported by a Mean of 1.77 out of 6. Statement 9 revealed a moderate agreement as well; this showed that the American students were approaching Arabic in order to understand the problems the Arab world is going through. However, statement 6 showed a slight agreement among the participants to understand Middle East politics; this is supported with a Mean of 4 out of 6. In general, the participants revealed a slight agreement to learn Arabic for sociopolitical reasons, with a Mean of 3.69. These findings are supported by Figure 4.4, which shows that 46% of the participants (N=13) have scored between 2 and 3.5, while 38% have scored between 3.5 and 5.5.

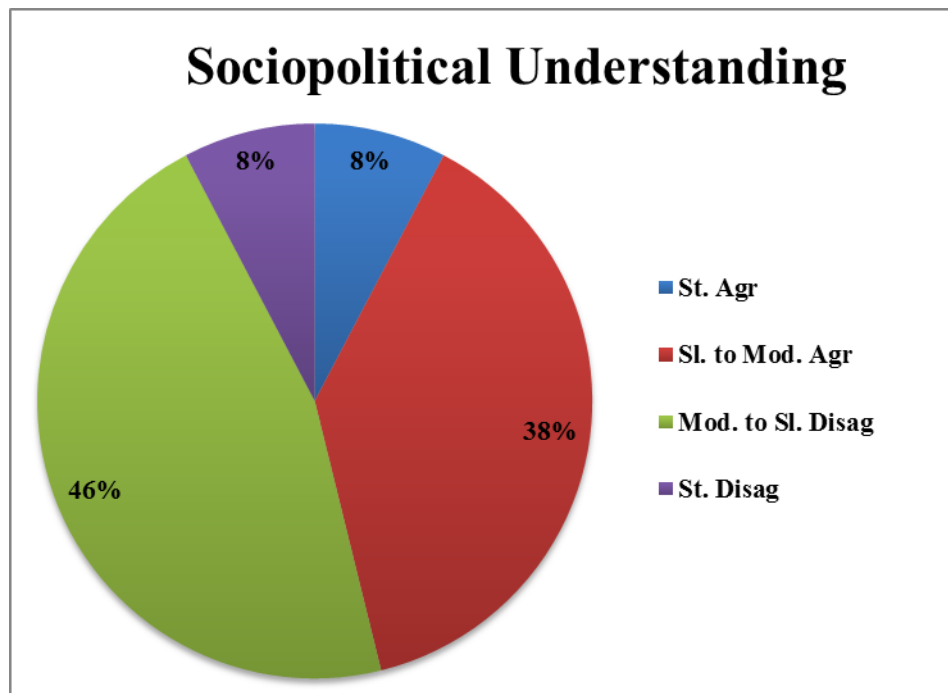


Figure 4.4: Distribution of scores for sociopolitical understanding

Statements 13 and 14 aimed to determine if the students were learning Arabic for academic reasons. Statement 13 measured the students' need to take Arabic because of their studies/degree program, while statement 14 aimed to see if the students believed the course was less demanding than other foreign-language classes. The obtained results are summarized in table 4.5.

The findings of statement 13 revealed that the participants were not approaching Arabic “to study a foreign language as a requirement for (their) degrees,” with a Mean of 1.38 out of 6. Statement 14 revealed that the participants were not taking the class because it is less demanding than other language courses. The statement yielded a Mean of 1.62. In total, the findings showed that the participants did not approach Arabic for academic achievements, yielding a Mean of 1.50.

Table 4.5

Orientations to Learn Arabic for Academic Achievement

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
S13: Because I need to study a foreign language as a requirement for my degree	13	1.38	0.96	1	4
S 14: Because I feel the class is less demanding than the other courses	13	1.62	0.87	1	4
Academic Achievement Total	13	1.50	0.64	1	4

The findings are supported in Figure 4.5, where 85% of the participants (N=13) have scored between 1 and 2, and 15% scored between 2 and 3.5.

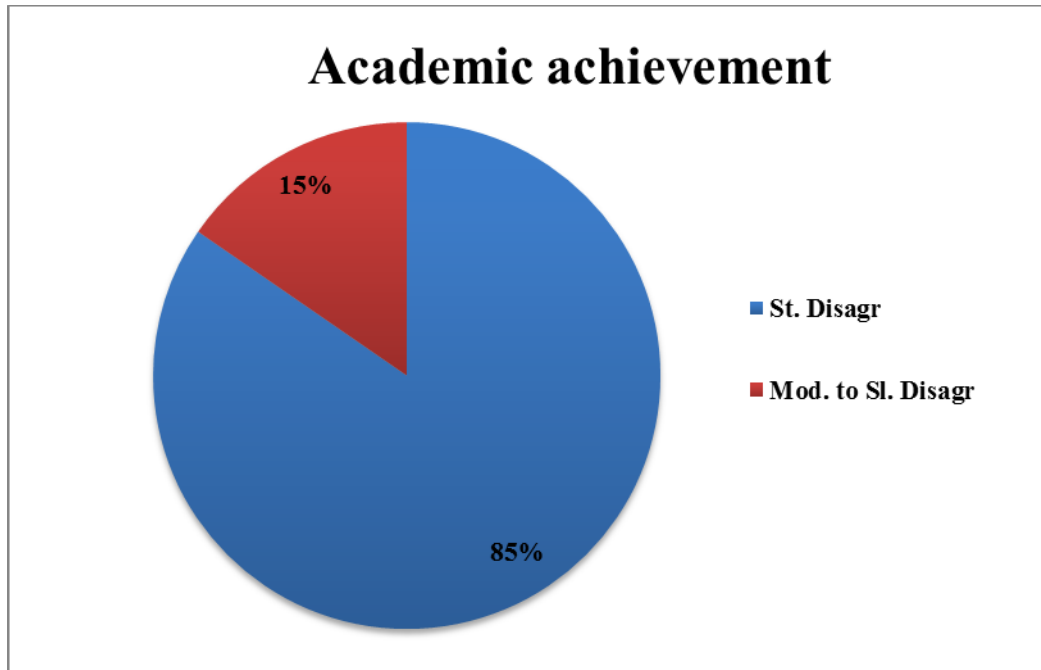


Figure 4.5: Distribution of scores for academic achievement

Statement 16, which was left blank, resulted in a group of entirely-new statements, as seven participants supplied further reasons for learning Arabic. These reasons varied between personal reasons due to an interest in the language itself (Subject 3 stated “because it is always something I wanted to learn”), or because it is a means to strengthen religion and faith, as in the case of Subject 8, who wrote that “I want to convert to Islam and I think Arabic is the most beautiful written and spoken language,” or because of the participants’ national or ethnic origins (such as the case of Subject 7, who stated “family background”). Two participants also mentioned other sociopolitical reasons—Subject 13 stated that he was learning Arabic “because (he) want(ed) to better understand the world view of native Arabic speakers,” while Subject 9 wanted “to understand for (himself) the headlines about the Middle East.”

The final two participants gave a new reason for learning Arabic. Subject 5 was an IEP instructor and wrote that she was learning Arabic “to help (her) in teaching English to (her)

Arabic-speaking students.” Subject 8 was also an IEP instructor and noted that she was learning Arabic to “understand issues Arabic speakers face learning English.”

4.1.2. Results of the case study interviews

These interviews were conducted because they presented new reasons/ orientations for learning Arabic. The interviews were conducted solely with the IEP faculty, which included two instructors and two administrative staff members. The analysis of the interviews has resulted in three reasons for learning the Arabic language.

“To facilitate teaching English for Arabic ESL students”

The IEP instructors mentioned that they were teaching low-level native Arabic speakers learning English, and that they faced numerous problems trying to explain to them the structure of English, especially because their students used to make language transfer mistakes. For this reason, the instructors mentioned that they needed to learn Arabic to understand the structure, as well as to understand why their students made such mistakes as “dropping the auxiliary ‘be’, pluralizing the adjectives, and adverbs” (Jan 26, 2012).

The instructors also mentioned that knowing the structure of Arabic will help them to explain English language structure by comparing and contrasting to that of Arabic, where they both mentioned that this is a helpful technique in teaching English; an ESL instructor explained:

I can give them insights into why they have a problem if they are confused or I will say in Spanish you do this but in English we do this.... In Arabic I have been able to help the lower levels, and they have been able to help me a little bit, by

saying: “Ok, well in Arabic you do it this way, and in English we do it this way” and they go “ahhhhh..” and it gives them some understanding. Yeah. It helps them. (Jan 26, 2012)

“Doing research”

Both of the instructors mentioned that they were working on a presentation for the ITBE conference (Illinois TESOL Bilingual Education). One of the instructors commented that the presentation research was “on how to teach lower-level Arabic speakers in an IEP (Intensive English Program) who are expected to function in a highly academic environment” (Jan 26, 2012). Both of the instructors mentioned that they conducted some of their research while they were taking the Arabic class, and that it gave them an understanding of some of the concepts they were working on.

“To be a lost person in a language class”

The IEP faculty mentioned that they were taking the Arabic class for several reasons; however, they all agreed that they wanted to learn a different language than the Indo-European languages they already know (e.g. English and Spanish). An IEP staff member considered it “a nice break from the other classes” (Dec 16, 2011). Two of the IEP faculty mentioned that they wanted to be language students because they wanted to remember how hard it is to learn a language and “to be a beginning lost person in a language class and remember what it feels like to sit there and have the teacher going ‘blah, blah, blah, blah, blaaah, blah, blah’” (Jan 26, 2012).

The other IEP representative, a staff member, mentioned that she was learning the language to give the Arabic ESL students positive reinforcement, by showing them that she is interested in their language and culture as well:

...they (the ESL students) really have enjoyed.... I think they feel like I am making an effort to learn their language and know more about the culture. And, also, I think they feel a little bit more vindicated because they say ‘ok, you now know how hard it is to learn a language! And you know my situation as I am learning English!’

The IEP staff member also mentioned that other members from the Intensive English Program wanted to take the class as well, but because of the class timing (being in the middle of the day), they could not.

4.2. Results of mid-semester motivation/class assessment

During the class assessment, which took place mid-semester, the students were asked to express their opinions regarding a set of statements (Appendix D), which reflect some of the common opinions about language classes in general. The students expressed their opinions on a scale composed of three options: *Agree, No Opinion, and Disagree*. The obtained results are summarized in table 4.6.

For statement 1, 70.58% of the students (N=17) seemed to agree with using the recommended materials for the class, which include both the required textbook and the recommended helpful materials (such as the writing book and the “Madinah” website). 70.58%

of the students agreed to statement 2 and admitted spending quiet time to prepare for the Arabic class; this finding reflects that the students were still interested in learning Arabic, even though 17.50% disagreed to the same statement.

Table 4.6

Results of Class Assessment

Statements	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
Use of recommended materials	70.58%	5.88%	23.52%
Quiet time to prepare	70.58%	11.76%	17.65%
Like the class	100%	0	0
Slow class pace	41.17%	29.41%	29.41%
Assigned reading/drills	76.47%	11.76%	11.76%
More class activities	47.05%	47.05%	5.88%

Interestingly, with a 100% score, all the students agreed with statement (3); the students seemed to like the Arabic class at the time the class assessment took place. For statement (4), although 42% of the students (N= 17) agreed that the class was moving at a slow pace, 29% of them disagreed, while 29% had no opinion about this point; the results reflected that the students were trying to cope with the class requirements and that they wanted to know more about the Arabic language in a small period of time. In terms of statement (5), 77% of the students found the class reading and drills helpful for their learning, with 12% of the students disagreeing to this same fact; the findings reflected that the students were motivated to learn Arabic, which suggests that the class materials were a helpful means to sustain the students' motivation. For statement (6), 47% of the students believed that having more class activities and drills would be of benefit, and 47% had no opinion; the findings regarding this statement revealed that the students were willing to do more work to learn Arabic, and therefore their motivation was still stable with

regard to learning Arabic. The findings are supported by Figure 4.6, which represents the distribution of agreement of the students about all of the statements.

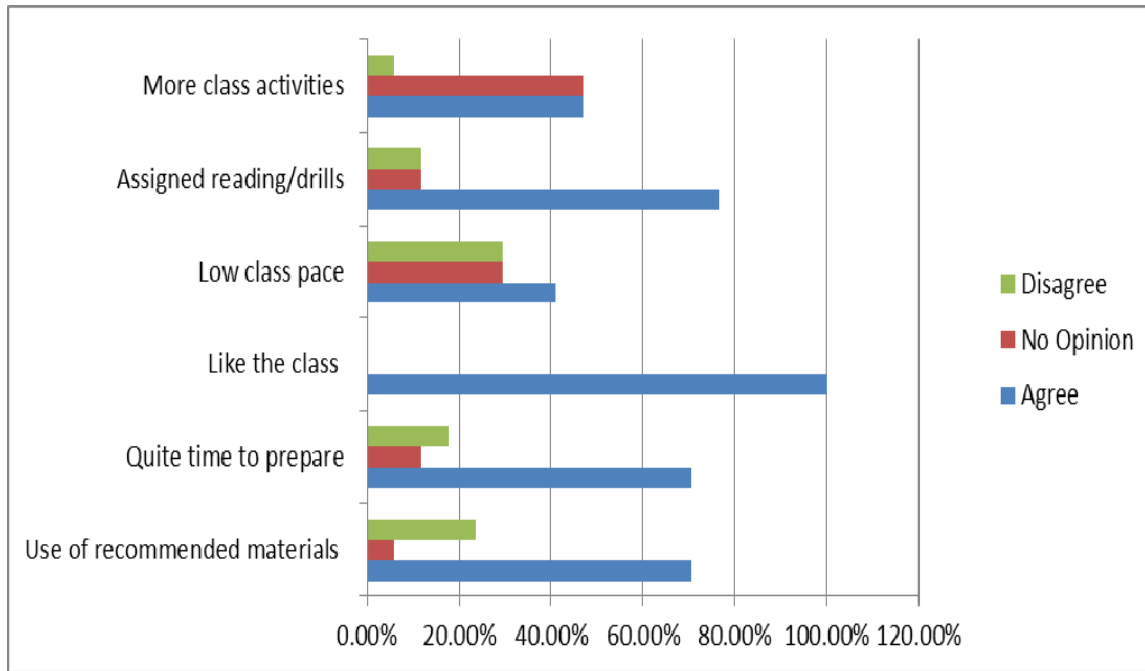


Figure 4.6: Distribution of students’ opinions towards the Arabic class

The class assessment sheet had also a space for students’ additional comments or suggestions. This led to some interesting suggestions that showed the students’ growing interest in Arabic. The students’ suggestions and comments included a request for more in-class practice, as well as for outside practice. The students were keen for more practice regarding pronunciation and vocabulary-building drills; some of the comments included “more in class activities that focus on vocabulary and pronunciation,” “a little more oral work with phrases and vocabulary,” “I would like more opportunities to learn to speak, more class repetition,” “start conversations, putting the phrases and vocabulary into proper context,” and “I think that doing a lot of outside classwork is essential for this class.”

Although the class was aimed at a beginner's level, the suggestions revealed that the students wanted more-advanced lessons and practices; some stated that "I would like to know more about the structure of the language early on," and "we should spend more time learning dictation... Dictation is the toughest part."

Some of the students' comments revealed their need for Arabic as a means of communication with Arabic native speakers: "For me, learning conversational words and phrases are the most important thing I want to learn"; "I would like more opportunities to learn to speak"; "I am looking forward to conversation practice"; and "guest speaker would be fun."

4.3. Results of the learners' reflections/survey (B)

Survey (B) worked as an exit survey, and aimed to be a follow-up for determining if the students had achieved their goals and if the class objectives were met. The survey was comprised of two sections, one a personal assessment and the other a class assessment. Both of these sections included four questions; only eight students from the original 13 participants provided their answers.

4.3.1. Results of personal assessment

The results of this section showed that 87.5% of the participants (N=8) agreed to having achieved their goals behind taking the Arabic language class. The orientations of the students did not change at all during the semester. Their goals fell under three categories of orientation:

Personal growth

This category represents the learners' attempts to learn for the sake of knowledge itself and to enrich themselves. Participants reported that their goals were to "learn a little bit more

about the Arabic culture and learn a little bit more about how the language functions”; another reported that she was learning Arabic to “chat about culture with native speakers.” Another participant was interested in “learning a non-Latin language and less common language.” The answers of the participants show an interest in acquiring global knowledge through communicating with Arabic speakers, both virtually and in real life.

Social contact

Interestingly, 75% of the participants in the exit survey (N=8) had reasons to learn Arabic for conversing and communicating with Arabic native speakers; some comments included: “I wish to learn Arabic well enough to converse at some level with native speakers so that I may learn from them,” “learn the Arabic alphabet and be able to start a conversation,” and “I hoped to learn the basics of Arabic to enable me to become proficient enough...to speak with my friends from Saudi (Arabia).” Some participants provided answers that reflected a desire for complete integrativeness with Arabic native speakers; one hoped “to become fluent enough in Arabic to hold conversation with a native speaker.”

Academic achievement

Almost 38% of the participants (N=8) were initially approaching Arabic for non-traditional academic reasons, i.e. not as a school requirement. These participants included the Intensive English Program administrative staff and instructors; this group represented a new complete orientation for learning Arabic, where an IEP staffer hoped for “better communication with students who speak Arabic” and an IEP instructor wanted to “develop the ability to communicate at a basic level in Arabic.” The instructors also stated that they were learning

Arabic “to gain an understanding of the structure/grammar of the Arabic language.” This group felt that they had partially achieved their goals because they needed more to learn about the grammar of the language; however, they gained a better concept about the needed amount of effort to learn a foreign language, with one stating that “I underestimated the time/energy required in learning to read/write a new writing system.”

The answers of the participants to question (3), about their preparation for class and the amount of time they invested, indicated that they spent quite a lot of time preparing. They all prepared for the classes and they all spent between ½ hour to 4 hours per week doing so; however, there was only one participant, an IEP instructor, who spent 4 to 8 hours, and noted that this amount depended on the amount of the homework assignments and that she usually spent several hours over the weekend.

The answers to Question 4 revealed that 87.5% of the participants (N=8) decided to take the advanced Arabic class to continue learning Arabic because they wanted to become fluent speakers and further their understanding of the language (as well as of the culture).

4.3.2. Results of class assessment

This section was intended to work as an assessment of the class objectives and materials, and to see if those materials helped in sustaining the orientations of the students and helped to turn them into motivation.

In terms of Question 1, regarding the objectives of the students, which they were supposed to achieve through a semester of basic Arabic language class, the answers of the participants were grouped under three themes:

1. Learning the basics about Arabic: Some participants had the same goals as the class objectives, which involved gaining an introduction to the Arabic writing system, sounds and some basic vocabulary of daily use. Some participants stated that their objectives were “to learn the letters of Arabic,” “Acquire a basic understanding of the language and how to read and write Arabic,” and “to be able to confidently write Arabic script.”

2. The need to converse in Arabic: Some participants, especially the IEP faculty, mentioned that their objectives were to converse in Arabic with their students, to “be able to communicate with low-level ESL students who speak Arabic,” “to learn the sound system, how to converse in basic Arabic,” and to “learn conversational Arabic.” The participants displayed a great eagerness to learn more about commonly-spoken phrases and have more interaction in the class.

3. The need to learn about the grammatical structure of Arabic: The IEP faculty extensively mentioned their need to learn and know more about the Arabic grammar, for the sake of understanding the mistakes their Arabic-speaking learners make (i.e. to understand the transfer mistakes the learners make). The IEP faculty had as their goals “Understand basic grammar, verb tenses, and word order,” “to converse in basic Arabic and to learn the basic grammar.”

Interestingly, 87.5% of those who completed the second survey (N=8) agreed that they achieved their objectives, excepting one of the IEP instructors (who argued that she did not learn to speak and understand Arabic basic conversation enough); however, she was one of the students who wanted to take the advanced class in spring so that she could fulfill that objective.

In answering question (2), the participants expressed their opinions about the textbook and the recommended reading. Fifty percent of the students reflected their discomfort with the textbook and the way it was written, noting that “the explanations and the vocabulary sections in

the book were very weak,” “the text was not balanced. It spent too much time on nonsense words that were too long for us to comprehend,” and “would have been more interested in more vocabulary in more cohesive units i.e. ‘travelling,’ ‘people,’ ‘around the house.’” However, these participants agreed that the listening sections with the associated DVD were beneficial.

In fact, all the participants (N=8) agreed that the DVD was the best part of their learning experience. “Listening and drills were the best,” as one participant noted, especially the listening drills within the textbook, of which a participant stated that “I liked the listening exercises that accompanied the book.”

The follow-up assessment showed that the students used materials other than just the textbook. Fifty percent of the participants (N=8) noted that they used Google Translate whenever they needed it, while 37% admitted to the use of conversation partners, or to consulting with native speakers (“as long as a native speaker can fill in where it is inadequate”) and a IEP faculty member stated “all of the Arabic speakers that I have access to.” The two IEP instructors also mentioned purchasing supplemental books for vocabulary and grammar, as well as dictionaries.

The last question in this section aimed to generate students’ evaluations of the whole experience they had in class, and determine if they had any further suggestions. Nearly 88% of the participants (N=8) agreed to enjoying the class and the experience of learning one of the “less-commonly taught languages.” The suggestions provided by the participants varied between making the class more communicative and having more drills out of the textbook. In general, the participants felt that they needed more oral practice, and they asked for more conversation drills (e.g. role playing) and more repetition of vocabulary.

4.4. Summary of the chapter

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative data obtained for this study revealed that the US participants showed interest in Arabic because of personal growth reasons; they wanted to know more about the Arabic cultures and saw the language as a tool to have a better understanding of the world; however, they were not interested at all in knowing about Arabic literature or art via the language. The students wanted to use Arabic whenever they are travelling in an Arabic country, and showed slight interest in knowing about Islam as a religion. The students approached Arabic for professional reasons because they were slightly interested in using it to get a good job but not one at security agencies like the US military or FBI, even though such positions pay a lot of money; at the same time, they showed no intention to go and study abroad in an Arab country.

The students were very much into Arabic for socializing purposes. They wanted to be able to converse with Arabic speakers both in the US and abroad, and some of them mentioned using it electronically while chatting. They also showed a slight interest in understanding the political and the social situation in the Arab countries, as well as how this will affect the world; they felt that Arabic is an important language in world economics, and a key in understanding both world politics and the problems the Arab world faces, especially considering that the study was conducted during the period of “the Arab Spring”; however, they had no interest in learning Arabic because of the events of 9/11.

The qualitative results have shown that the students had no intent to learn Arabic for academic achievement purposes, e.g. as a requirement to complete a degree, or because the class was less demanding than other language classes. Nonetheless, the new orientations which were

supplied by the IEP faculty displayed an interest in Arabic for a different type of dual-function orientations: academic achievement and professional achievement.

The IEP instructors served as examples of Americans learning Arabic to improve their teaching skills and teaching outcomes with Arabic ESL students in the US, as well as doing research to identify further techniques for in-class practice and explanations using the L1 in foreign language classes. Another reason IEP instructors studied Arabic was to understand how hard it is to be a language student learning a language in a purely academic intensive environment.

The learners' reflections indicated that the majority of them were willing to take the advanced Arabic class in the spring semester, as well as other possible Arabic classes in the future. They also invested a lot of time preparing for the class so that they could achieve their personal goals and meet the class objectives. Even though the results showed that the participants (eight out of the original 13) were still interested in learning Arabic for academic, social contact, or personal development reasons, the results indicated that the students' initial orientations had grown to be final stage motivations.

The results also yielded some insights regarding the class materials and the main focus of the students. They suggested that the students were neutral towards the textbook, and that they wanted more conversational practice, with considerable interest in basic spoken Arabic as a start, especially day-to-day conversation phrases. The participants (mainly the IEP faculty) also showed an early interest in the language structure, as well as in having more in-class repetition and drills. The participants stated that they referred to extra materials besides the textbook, especially Google Translate, bilingual dictionaries, and grammar books.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the different reasons American students choose to learn the Arabic language. It also examined whether or not the students keep hold of these reasons/orientation and be more motivated to learn the language throughout the learning process. The study also aimed to assess the materials used for teaching Arabic in this particular class, and to see how helpful these were in convincing the students to follow through with their learning goals and their motivations for learning the language. For these reasons, a longitudinal study was carried out in the form of action research to capture the orientations of the students as early as possible during the first weeks of the Arabic class, and to follow their progress during the semester, to discover how willing they were to carry on learning Arabic.

The previous chapter provided the obtained results for the study. This chapter provides the answers for the study questions in chapter 2 and offers a more in-depth analysis. This chapter starts with answers for the questions, with a summary of the study results and their relation to the previously-conducted research in the same topic, and then a conclusion. The chapter ends with the study limitations and possible implications for future research.

5.1. Discussion

5.1.1. Answer to research question (1)

Question 1: What are the initial reasons or orientations of U.S. students for learning Arabic as a foreign language in a beginner-level course?

Interest in the Arabic language has seen a great leap during the last decade. The latest MLA study conducted in 2006 has shown that enrollment in Arabic language classes has seen an increase of 126.5% over the 2002 enrollment. This increase correlates with the President Bush's initiative to encourage Americans in general to study at least one of the critical-need foreign languages, such as Farsi, Hindi, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic.

Students' aims in learning Arabic included several reasons; the study participants' reasons were grouped under five themes. First, in terms of personal growth, the participants showed a great interest in learning Arabic because they wanted to learn more about Arabic culture as a means of understanding the world better and having the ability to communicate when traveling in Arab-speaking countries. Not surprisingly, this is still a primary reason for many language students, which corroborates Belmecheri's and Hummel's findings (1998), in which the participants saw the language as a tool that would help them when travelling. Interestingly, even though the participants reported a strong interest in knowing more about Arabic culture, they did not approach Arabic for the sake of appreciating Arabic art and literature (which falls under the knowledge part of Belmecheri and Hummel's (1998) study). This may be because the participants were not interested in the arts in general, and/or because the students were neither art students nor Arabic literature majors (a major in this subject is not currently offered at the subject university).

The participants showed almost no interest in knowing about Islam because they were not descendants of an Arabic Muslim country, although Taha (2007) and Sehlaoui (2008) noted that the majority of Americans born to Arab parents are urged to learn Arabic to preserve their heritage and to conduct Islamic practices in a proper manner. The only similar instance I had in

this particular class was that of an American student who had a Syrian father; the student wanted to learn Arabic for the sake of communicating with his family in Syria.

Surprisingly, the participants' results showed that the students were not strongly interested in learning Arabic for specific professional reasons, such as joining security agencies and non-profit organizations even though they are paying high salaries for translators and interpreters who speak Arabic as a foreign language (Taha, 2007). In their own studies, Husseinali (2005) and Taha (2007) had the same results; they have reported that the Arabic language learners in their studies are aware that the language will be an asset to secure good job positions in the future, but they are either oblivious about such jobs or they are not interested in jobs where they will be using it as working language. The participants were not in any way willing to join security agencies, nor to travel to study abroad in an Arabic-speaking country; some of them mentioned their wish to study Arabic in intensive programs in Arabic-speaking countries, but they were more attracted to the idea of going abroad. On the other hand, the IEP faculty in this study showed a great interest to learn Arabic for professional reasons to meet their job duties, such as communicating with Saudi ESL students and making their English learning experience much easier by contrasting to the students' first language (Arabic).

Remarkably, the students were oriented for learning Arabic to socialize and be in contact with Arabic speakers since the majority of them have Arabic-speaking (mostly Saudi) friends and students in the IEP classes.

These findings reflect those of Husseinali (2005, 2006), Belmecheri and Hummel (1998) in which they have identified friendship as a major orientation behind learning English in a Francophone high school. Belmecheri and Hummel have labeled this a socio-cultural orientation, in which the target language is a foreign language rather than a second language within the

community; this case applies to the participants of this study because they had the choice of communicating with their Arabic-speaking friends as individuals in the United States, rather than being forced to use the Arabic language in a native-speaking community.

The sociopolitical understanding orientations were a new addition to this study, especially given that some of the aims behind the 2006 “critical-need languages” initiative were that Arabic is the official language in the growing economy of Arab countries, which makes it important for international trade, commerce, economy and diplomacy as well. Taha (2007) also mentioned the language as a tool for fostering relationships and global understanding to secure peace. The results of this study yielded surprising findings; the entrance survey data reported a slight interest in Arabic for socio-political reasons; however, I believe this due to the participants’ total disagreement with the idea of learning Arabic because of the 9/11 events, with a mean of 1.77 out of 6--the total mean for sociopolitical reasons in general was 3.69 out of 6. The fact that Americans are not learning Arabic merely because of the events of 9/11 had already been established in studies conducted just a few years after those events took place, including Husseinali (2005, 2006) and Taha (2007). The participants of this study showed a reasonable interest in learning Arabic for understanding the development of the world economy, understanding Middle East politics, and gaining a better understanding of the problems the Arab world faces. These findings corroborate Husseinali’s (2006), where 40% of his study participants agreed to learn Arabic for learning about the global economy and over 75% agreed to wanting greater understanding of Middle East politics, while over 50% agreed to an interest in knowing about the problems that Arabs face. From class discussions about culture, the students in this study showed an interest in learning more about issues the Arab world faces, especially of note

because the class occurred during a major political shift in the North African/ Middle Eastern region (“The Arab Uprising/Spring”).

The most interesting part about this study involved academic achievement as motivation. Unlike previous studies conducted about orientations for learning languages in general, and Arabic specifically, Belmecheri and Hummel (1998), Husseinali (2005, 2006), Norris-Holt (2001) and Taha (2007) found that learning the language was often for the sake of meeting a degree requirement by taking at least one required foreign language class. The participants of this study disagreed completely with the idea that they might be learning Arabic to complete their degree requirements; they also reported that they did not think that the class was less demanding than the other foreign language classes the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the university offers, such as Spanish, German or French. The analysis of this study’s data required grouping these orientations as traditional academic reasons; the special case study of the IEP faculty resulted in new orientations, such as learning the Arabic language to facilitate teaching ESL Arabic speakers, having greater understanding when researching new techniques for teaching English using the L1 of ESL Arabic speakers, and finding out how difficult it might be for their students to learn a different language in a purely academic environment.

These new orientations reflect a new trend in both Arabic learning and English language teaching. There has been a significant increase in the number of Arab students in the United States which, according to the “*Open Doors Report*” (IIE, 2012), has reached approximately 723,277 international Arab students enrolled in higher education in American institutions during the school year 2010-2011. The IEP faculty presents an example for many other teachers of English as Second Language (ESL) in different institutions around the US who have to deal with

low-level ESL Arabic speakers (especially in the last five years) with the increasing number of Arabic scholars from Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

5.1.2. Answer to research question (2)

Question 2: Will these orientations develop to become a sustained motivation to learn Arabic throughout the course of the semester? If so, do these sustained motivations fall in the instrumental/integrative dichotomy of motivation? Or are there other types, such as social motivation?

Dörnyei (2003) introduced the “process-oriented approach to L2 motivation research.” This process assesses the language learners’ motivation through a three-process model. The pre-actional stage took place when the study participants filled out the first survey providing their reasons/orientations for studying the Arabic language. The actional stage assessed if the students’ orientations throughout the learning process were still maintained throughout; this took the form of a class assessment conducted mid-semester. The postactional stage also labeled “motivation retrospection” where the participants reflected on their own learning processes, evaluated themselves and checked if they have achieved their goals and what they would do in the future regarding learning the language and how they would use it.

The findings of this study indicate that only a small part of participants have maintained their primary reasons for learning Arabic. The class assessment, which took place both mid-semester and at the end of the semester, as well as the personal assessment that the participants have filed, showed that the participants have developed a final stage motivation in which they achieved four out of five major orientations: personal growth, professional achievement, social contact and academic achievement.

First, almost all of the participants (seven out of eight) agreed to take more advanced Arabic classes in the future, and they have asserted achieving their personal goals which collocated with the class objectives for knowing the Arabic writing and sound systems. Second, they also asserted that they were still interested in knowing more about the language in terms of its associated cultures, in socializing and communicating with native Arabic speakers in the US, and in academic achievement in the form of learning more about the Arabic language structure to facilitate teaching English. These findings correlate perfectly with the definition provided by Gardner and Tremblay (1994), who defined motivation as a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goals of learning with a positive attitude towards learning the language.

However, the participants in this study did not retain their sociopolitical reasons for learning Arabic; none of the participants recalled it being among their reasons to learn Arabic when filling out survey (B). This could be attributed to the loss of 5 participants out of the original 13, as the survey was distributed during the final weeks of school (participants were asked to return it to the mailbox of the assistant), and because the students focused on learning the language structure first, then proceeded to learn more about the world associated with it.

The participants' initial orientations turned into a full motivation by the postactional stage (Dörnyei 2003). The final motivations in this study do fall under the integrative-instrumental dichotomy established by Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Gardner (1985). However, the study revealed that it is hard to assign a motivation to only one side of the dichotomy. There is a fine line between instrumentality and integrativeness, where the motivation of the students differs at some points and converges at others.

In this study, the IEP faculty was approaching the learning of Arabic for both professional and academic achievement: they were learning Arabic for academic reasons because

they were trying to come up with new methods of using native language of the students in their class facilitate their own teaching and the students' learning; at the same time, it was for job-related purposes, as they were trying to achieve their duties by teaching English to low-level ESL Arabic learners.

The integrative motivation was established by the IEP faculty, who admitted to a desire to acquire knowledge to integrate with the ESL students and to understand how difficult it is to acquire a foreign language in an immersive academic-oriented community, as well as learning about the culture associated with the Arabic language to better understand the Arabic speakers studying ESL. Integrativeness has to do as well with communicating and building relationships with individual Arabic speakers; the participants confirmed this throughout the whole process of data collection.

The instrumental motivation was realized by the IEP faculty in using Arabic as a tool to facilitate the teaching of English to the same ESL group of students, as well as a means of understanding while conducting research in developing techniques for teaching the English language. The IEP instructors took the class to develop a means of academic achievement which has always been considered instrumental (Belmecheri and Hummel, 1998; Norris-Holt, 2004). Thus, the motivation of the IEP faculty is classified as instrumental and integrative simultaneously; Figure 5.1 illustrates the job of the IEP faculty being both professional (to complete the requirements of their job) and personal (to learn more about their ESL learners' culture and language). They are academic, by researching for new methods and techniques to teach English to low-level native Arabic speakers during their personal time.

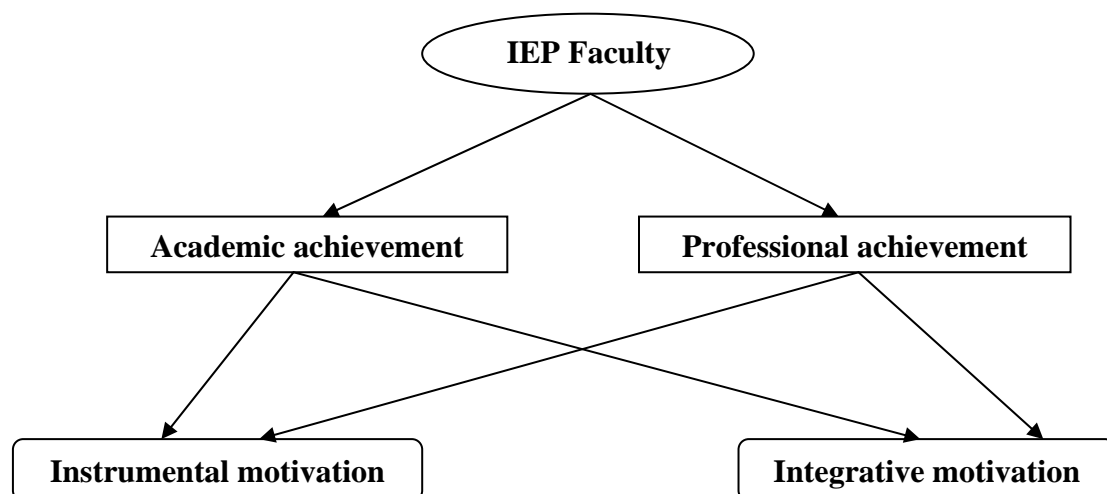


Figure 5.1: IEP faculty integrative-instrumental motivation

In addition, a third motivation clearly emerged in this study: the need to socialize with individual Arabic native speakers in a non-native Arabic-speaking community. Dörnyei (1994) came up with the concept of social motivation, seeing language as a channel for social organizing embedded in the culture of the community where it is used. However, in this study, the American students referred to their willingness to socialize with their Arabic-speaking friends as individuals; gaining more friendship connections both in real life and on-line via chat rooms and not for the sake of accommodating Arabic-speaking communication.

5.1.3. Answer for research question (3)

Question 3: Do the materials presented during the class help to sustain the learners' motivation? Why or why not? What are other materials and experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, that affect learners' motivation?

The results of this study revealed that half of the students were not satisfied with the written content of the book, especially the lesson description; however, they all reflected a level of comfort regarding the listening activities and the DVD accompanied with the textbook.

The textbook was the primarily material in this class for getting the students acquainted with the Arabic language sound and writing systems. I recommended extra materials in the form of YouTube videos with such subjects as the days of the week, the colors, and the alphabets. In addition, I recommended a writing textbook so that the students would practice writing Arabic letters; I chose this textbook specifically because it yielded difficulty for its cursive handwriting. The participants' discomfort with the Arabic textbook was in agreement with the findings of Sehlaoui (2005) and his special study cases with the two US students Donia and Kate. Both of the students showed discomfort with the textbook used in that class, due to the complexity of its explanation of grammar rules; however, they were satisfied with the conversational and speaking parts of the book.

The students did not only show discomfort towards the reading materials because they found them confusing, but because they were most oriented to learn about the speaking aspect of the language. The participants orientations' from the beginning of the study reflected their willingness to communicate in different situations, such as traveling to Arab countries, talking to Arab friends, and socializing in general, and the fact that the students did not show an interest for taking Arabic for professional reasons (e.g. getting jobs where Arabic is required).

The participants reported using Google Translate as a major tool outside the classroom context, which reflected their ways to compensate their writing ability and vocabulary building. The IEP faculty admitted to buying bilingual dictionaries and grammar books as well, because of their need to carry out the research they were to present at the ITBE conference. Moreover, this

was an attempt by them to understand the structure of the Arabic language at an early stage, so that they could achieve quick results with their teaching strategies.

5.2. Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to explore the orientations of US students to learn the Arabic language at a public mid-western university. The results obtained from this study showed that the students were attracted to learn Arabic for personal development reasons such as understanding a different culture, understanding the world, and traveling to an Arabic-speaking country; however, they were not interested in using Arabic for any of their future careers. Unlike in previous studies, the students wanted to learn Arabic for new academic reasons, adding to the old traditional ones such as the language being a degree requirement; they wanted to learn Arabic because it provides a means of helping the IEP teachers and instructors to facilitate their teaching of English as a second language.

The American students at the university were more communication-oriented in their learning, in that they have shown great interest in conversing with Arabic speakers and building friendships with them. More importantly, they have shown an interest in understanding the political and economic situation in the Arab world in an attempt to understand the global socio-political situation. Although the participants were highly interested in the sociopolitical environment of the Arab world and were expecting Arabic to be the tool to understand it, they did not develop those orientations to a final stage motivation.

This study has reinforced the direction of expanding the motivation in language learning scope and further develops the classic integrative-instrumental dichotomy while adding the

social motivation. The American students in the class showed considerable interest in learning Arabic to socialize and build new relationships with individual native Arabic speakers.

The participants' development of the orientations for learning Arabic into sustained motivation was reinforced with the use of the class materials, mainly the textbook. The use of the textbook, and the motivation of the students, made it clear that the American students are concerned mostly with the communicative aspects of the language.

5.3. Limitations for the study and future implications

This study encountered some limitations because the data collection process was a longitudinal one throughout a semester period. First, the study was conducted in an Arabic class of 17 students; thus, the sample of 13 participants who voluntarily decided to be part of the study was not really representative from the beginning. In addition, the study was longitudinal in terms of collecting the data to follow up the orientation changes where there was a risk of losing participants, which happened by the end of the semester. Five participants did not turn in the exit survey, which may have affected the findings (especially in terms of sociopolitical orientations). The results show that the division of final motivation between instrumentality and integrativeness are hard to define, especially given that personal orientations cannot be built for only one reason to achieve like the case of the IEP faculty.

The study has laid some basic ground for further studies, especially in terms of the social motivation aspect for learning a language as well as for sociopolitical reasons. The IEP faculty members came to represent a sample of English instructors who may be facing the same issues when explaining English-language rules native-Arabic speakers in ESL classes in the US. This specific group must be studied further as a unique category of Arabic students.

Finally, the study came to the conclusion that the students were more interested in the spoken aspects of the language, which will be helpful for focusing the classroom goals of future Arabic instructors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey (A)

Dear Student,

This survey is the first part of a research for my Master thesis investigation under the theme “Foreign Language Learning Settings: The Case of Arabic in the USA”.

I really appreciate your participation, and please remember that there is no right or wrong answer as I am interested in your opinions. Please take your time to answer all the questions.

Again thanks for your corporation.

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I. General Data:

1. Name:

2. Age : — years old

3. Sex: — Male — Female

4. Check ethnic membership below:

— Caucasian, — Arab, — African American, — Asian, — Hispanic,

— Other (specify)

5. What is your major? _____

6. What level/ Year? — Freshman; — Sophomore; —Senior — Junior;

— Graduate

7. Have you ever studied Arabic before? — Yes — No

8. The languages you can

Speak _____

Understand _____

Read _____

Write _____

Following are a number of statements with which some agree and others disagree. There are **no right or wrong answers** since many people have different opinions and experiences.

II. Circle the choice that you think it suits you best:

I am taking Arabic:

1. So I will be able to understand and appreciate Arabic art and literature

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

2. So I will be able to meet and converse with more and varied people

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

3. Because I want to learn more about the Arabic cultures and understand the world better

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

4. Because of interest in Islam as a world religion

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

5. Because I feel Arabic is an important language in the economic development of the world

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

6. Because I feel Arabic will help me better understand the middle east politics

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

7. Because I want to join the military, the FBI or other security agencies

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

8. Because of the events of 9/11

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

9. Because it will help me better understand the problems that Arabs face

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

10. Because I think it will be useful getting me a good job

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

11. Because I want to be able to use Arabic with Arabic-speaking friends

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

12. Because I want to be able to use Arabic when I travel to an Arab country

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

13. Because I need to study a foreign language as a requirement for my degree

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

14. Because I feel the class is less demanding than the other courses

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

15. Because I plan to study abroad

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

16. Other: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly Agree

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

Survey (B)

Full Name:

Part one: Personal assessment

Please, choose the answer that describes best your choice:

1- What are/were your goals before taking this class?

Goals: are long term aims we hope attaining by taking the class; however, they are not always attained.

2- Do you think you have achieved your goals from the class?

Yes

No

- Explain?

3- Did you prepare before each class? Circle one of the choices.

Yes

No

Most classes

1-2 times a week

Few classes

- How much time did you spend?hours.

4- Will you take the offered advanced Arabic class or any other class in the future?

Yes

No

- Why?

Part Two: Class Assessment

Please, choose the answer that describes best your choice:

1- What were/ are your objectives before taking the class?

Objectives: are concrete attainments that can be achieved by following a certain number of steps.

- Do you think the class objectives were achieved?

Yes

No

- If answered No, Why?

2- Did you like the textbook and the recommended reading?

Yes

No

- What did you like most? What did you like least?

3- What are other materials you have used and think will be helpful for Arabic language learners?

4- How would you evaluate your whole experience in the class? Do you have any suggestions?

APPENDIX C

Elementary Arabic: 480A/100A Mid-semester evaluations

Please answer the following questions as openly as possible.

1) What are the most important/helpful aspects of this class?

2) What are the least important/helpful aspects of this class?

3) Based on the numbers next to the statements on the PPT slides, place each number under the appropriate column below.

Agree	No Opinion	Disagree

- Please include any additional comments or suggestions below.

APPENDIX D

Mid-term evaluation

1- I use the recommended materials to learn more about the Arabic language.

2- I spend quite much time to prepare for the class.

3- I like the class so far!

4- The class learning pace is slow.

5- I like the class assigned readings and drills.

6- I would like to have several class activities.

7-

8-

APPENDIX E

One to one interviews:

- Why did you want to learn Arabic from the beginning? Is it a choice or did you felt forced to do so?
- Do you want to take the next class? Why?
- How do you feel about Arabic?
- Do you still want to learn Arabic for the same reasons?
- What do you want to learn from Arabic exactly?
- What kind of issues Arabic speakers learning English are facing and you get to understand them through Arabic?

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Major Professor: Dr. Paul McPherron