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## **EFL LEARNERS MOVING TO AN ESL CONTEXT: MOTIVATING AND DEMOTIVATING FACTORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG IRAQIS**

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### **Abstract**

As English language learners move from their home culture to a new context where the need for English use becomes intensively enhanced, a number of sociocultural and educational factors come into play governing English learners' motivation, practice, and perception – all of which suddenly become subject to change and re-evaluation. The article is shaped from a case study of three Iraqi families in Australia describing the development and change in their learning motivation over time. With increasing numbers of immigrants and international students arriving in Australia during the last few years, it is important to understand factors influencing their learning and integration in a new society, which takes learners' English communication demand and learning difficulty to a new dimension beyond their usual EFL context.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data from the immigrants and findings show that both integrative and instrumental orientations were combined in the process of learning and using English in the host country. Interestingly, Iraqi learners of English not only have developed positive attitudes towards English and its target group but also faced a number of new challenges and dilemmas. Within this picture both motivating and demotivating factors influential to English learning are highlighted in the discussion.

**Key Words:** motivation, demotivation, EFL Iraqi communities, Australia

การย้ายค่าการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบภาษาต่างประเทศ (EFL) ไปยังบริบทภาษาอังกฤษแบบภาษาที่สอง (ESL):

ปัจจัยเรื่องแรงจูงใจและการลดแรงจูงใจในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของชาวอิรัก

บทคัดย่อ

เมื่อผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษย้ายจากวัฒนธรรมบ้านตนไปยังถิ่นฐานใหม่ที่จำเป็นต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษมากยิ่งขึ้น ปัจจัยหลายอย่างทางสังคมวัฒนธรรมและการศึกษาจะเข้ามามีบทบาทต่อแรงจูงใจของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษ การใช้ภาษาอังกฤษและการรับรู้เรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ จะถูกเปลี่ยนแปลงและมีการประเมินทันที บทความนี้มาจากกรณีศึกษาของครอบครัวชาวอิรักสามครอบครัวในประเทศออสเตรเลียและจะอธิบายถึงการพัฒนาและการเปลี่ยนแปลงในเรื่องแรงจูงใจในการเรียนรู้ของพวกเขาในช่วงเวลาหนึ่ง เนื่องจากการเพิ่มขึ้นของผู้อพยพและนักศึกษาต่างชาติที่เดินทางไปประเทศออสเตรเลียในเวลาไม่กี่ปีที่ผ่านมาความเข้าใจปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการเรียนรู้และบูรณาการของชาวอิรักในสังคมใหม่จึงเป็นสิ่งสำคัญซึ่งเพิ่มความต้องการในการสื่อสารสำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษและความยากลำบากในการเรียนในมิติใหม่นอกเหนือ บริบทการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ (EFL) ตามปกติ การสัมผัสภายในถึงโครงสร้างถูกนำมาใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากผู้อพยพและผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าทั้งการเรียนแบบบูรณาการและเพื่อเป็นเครื่องมือถูกนำมารวมกันในกระบวนการเรียนรู้และใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศออสเตรเลีย เป็นที่น่าสนใจที่ผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษชาวอิรักไม่เพียง แต่ได้มีการพัฒนาทัศนคติที่ดีต่อภาษาอังกฤษและชาวออสเตรเลีย แต่ยังต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายใหม่ๆ และอุปสรรคต่างๆ การอภิปรายนี้จะเน้นปัจจัยในการกระตุ้นแรงจูงใจและลดแรงจูงใจที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

## Background

English language acquisition are exposed to an array of contextual factors including the educational setting itself and the cultural package learners brought with them to the learning scene, both of which decide the learning success. The Iraqi communities in Australia find themselves a unique ESL learning context where these factors together with many social influences related to policies, religion, gender, and relocation issues. All of these factors govern how Iraqi ESL learners develop their motivation to cope with the learning process. The ways in which their motivation is shaped by these factors deserve scholarly concern and investigation, which has become the topic of this article.

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We shall first look at the context which shows how Iraqi arrived in Australia in recent years. In April 2008, Australia announced a new visa policy offering the permanent resettlement of up to 600 Iraqi locally engaged employees and their direct family members who were at risk, because they had worked with the Australian government in Iraq (DIAC, annual report 2007-08). These 600 visas are in addition to the annual humanitarian program and women at risk visa. During 2008-2009, more than 450 people have arrived in Australia under this visa policy and the remaining visa places were rolled over to 2010-II (DIAC, 2008-09). Since then, a large number of them have settled in Victoria and joined English classes at the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) language centers in this state (AMES, 2009). It was this group that has become the focus of our research in which we investigated their ESL learning motivation and factors that might affect it over the past several years. Being the newly arrived group the Iraqi's experiences in and motivation towards English learning began to develop in complex ways, showing the interaction between their culture, levels of education, social values, age, and gender with the new society they are moving into.

The reason why we chose to look at this group's motivation above all else is because this construct represents the starting and refreshing point for all kinds of learning new information. It has been scholarly acknowledged that motivation plays a vital role in second language achievement (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 1994, 2003, 2010; Ellis, 1994, Gardner, 1985, 2001a, 2007; Oxford, 1994). Gardner (2007, p. 15), for example, argues that motivation "plays a role in various ways in the process of learning a second language" to a degree that the more highly motivated learners achieve better than the less motivated ones (p. 16). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2010), further, perceive motivation as a part of the learners' thought processes that has a remarkable influence in his/her success or failure in the L2 learning (p. 13). With this in mind, the present study attempts to explore the sociocultural and educational factors that motivate or de-motivate newly arrived Iraqi ESL learners in Australia based two major questions: what sociocultural and educational factors have motivated and demotivated Iraqi ESL learners? Has their motivation changed over time and what has caused this change?

## The need for motivation in the Australian context

To motivate a new group of immigrants in adapting new ways of learning and communication to study can be a challenging undertaking considering the shift of locations, cultures, climates, interests, personalities, and learning habits. When you first steps into the classroom in a new context, members of the class may begin to observe your appearance, behaviour and the type of person you are. Before peers begin to accept you, there may be some level of resistance with regards to role, cooperation, behaviour and learning styles. Teachers' responsibility is to get her students quickly accepted, develop a sort of cohesion among class members so that they support each other, and tap into everyone's potential. Once you fulfill these tasks there should a great deal of interpersonal activity and students will be devoted to completing the tasks they have been assigned. In many cases, however, problems may not be resolved. Student lethargy and underachievement norms in the classroom once undesirably established may go on forever, which then becomes basic hindrances to effective teaching and learning. Motivating students is central to educational effectiveness as it helps enhance individual confidence (Gardner, 2008), becomes "the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei 2008, p. 55), and "influence[s] the rate at which second language material is learnt" (Gardner, Lalonde, and Morcust, 1984, p. 225). To motivate learners is to provide them with incentive to move them to action so that they would want to study, do home work, participate, come to class on time, and so on.

Since anxious students are unlikely to develop motivation to learn, it is important that learning occurs within a supportive atmosphere. Learner motivation will reach its peak in a safe classroom climate in which everyone can express opinions and feel that they do not run the risk of being ridiculed. The host country's attitude and behaviour toward immigrants serve as a powerful tool with a motivational influence on them. In the classroom, it has been largely recognized among L2 researchers (e.g. Dörnyei, 2006, 1998, 1994; Gardner, 2008, 2001; Littlejohn, 2008) that the teacher rapport with the students can attract students to engage in tasks and learn more L2. By respecting students' culture on a personal level, teachers can build mutual trust that could lead to impart learner enthusiasm and interest in the subject matter.

In the English speaking countries such as Australia successful integration within the language target community is recognized as a strong motivator in the immigrants' English learning. Waxman (2000), for example, conducted a study to examine the role of English language proficiency on the adjustment of recently arrived refugees from Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq in Australia and found that these immigrants learn English as they believe that it is crucial for their successful social and economic adjustment in the Australian community. Similar findings were reported by Woodlock (2008) who researched the factors impacting the Iraqi Muslim settlement in a rural town (Cobram) in Victoria. The researcher concluded that English learning opportunities represent an important factor in immigrants' successful settlement.

Second language motivation can be viewed in the duality of the social context and the educational context. The social dimension of motivation has been experimentally investigated by many L2 researchers who proposed a number of models to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivation within the social milieu. Gardner (2001), for example, argues that second language motivation is influenced by a number of social related variables such as integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes toward the language community, and language aptitude. To provide an overview of and connection to what academic discourse in motivation has contributed to this topic, three models of motivation in second language learning will be briefly discussed, namely the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985, 2001), L2 process model (Dörnyei & Ottos, 1998), and Investment theory (Norton, 2001).

Gardner (1985) believes that since L2 motivation is goal-oriented, in order to understand the learners' language motivation it is essential to investigate their initial goals and desires in learning the language. Gardner and his associates developed a socio-educational mode which divided motivation into integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is the core construct in this theory and is formed of three classes of variables including integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation. In later research, Gardner (2001) refers to Integrativeness as "Openness or Openness with Cultural Identification" (p. 15). Integrative motivation refers to learner's desire to identify with the target language group and even to be a member of the target L2 community or culture. Instrumental Motivation on the other hand, refers to more

practical reasons behind learning the second language, for example: getting a better job, passing exams, qualifying for university entrance. Gardner (1985-2004) and his associates developed a self-report questionnaire, namely the Attitude/Motivation/Test/Battery (AMTB) to measure five attributes associated with second language motivation, which are: motivation, integrativeness, integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, and attitudes toward the Learning Situation. The questionnaire used in this study was based on these attributes.

In the early 1990s, a remarkable shift in understanding language motivation happened in which classroom activities and factors affecting motivation within the educational system have been taken into consideration. Researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt (1991) and Dörnyei (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006) in this dimension focus on motivational factors related to second language classroom and the situated learning of L2, for example: teachers, classroom activities, class atmosphere, course contents. Dörnyei (2006) argues that the social paradigm does not constitute the complete picture and to achieve a fuller understanding of L2 motivation, a range of other motivational aspects related to the educational context needs also to be considered. He (2003) further states that in a classroom setting, L2 achievement and motivation are highly correlated, which means that the highly L2 motivated learner is likely to be the highly achiever in the L2 learning.

The work of Dörnyei and his colleagues draws attention to another aspect of L2 motivation. That is, “its dynamic character and temporal variation” (Dörnyei, 2006, p.51). Dörnyei (2006) argues that motivation is not a static construct but rather a changeable system that shows continuous fluctuation over time. Dörnyei and Ottos (1998), conceptualise the motivational process in a theoretical framework “process model” which proposes three stages for motivation changes: the pre-actional stage, the actional stage, and the post actional stage. According to this model, the L2 learner may experience different types of motivation at each of these stages during his L2 learning process. Many L2 motivation researchers (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994, 2001, 2003, 2006; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2010; Gardner, 2008, 2001, 1985; Littlejohn, 2008) agree that the increased exposure to the target language as well as the extensive interaction with its speaking group and/or teachers in both social and

educational contexts will increase the learners' motivation and push them for more learning of the L2. Consequently, immigrating to an English speaking country such as Australia will increase to a larger degree the learners' English language exposure and also increase their interaction with the English speaking individuals.

Norton (1995) reconceptualised the concept of motivation in second language learning by problematising the social identity of the second language learner. She claims that current SLA researchers do not present a complete picture of motivation as they “have struggled to conceptualise the relationship between the language learner and the social context” (p. 9) in which L2 learning takes place. She furthermore argues that SLA theorists do not explicitly show how power relations in the social context affect interaction between the language learner and the target language group. Instead, she presents the notion of “Investment” (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 312) as a better conception to understand the relationship between the second language learner and the target language. According to Norton (1995), Investment in the second language may involve accessing symbolic resources (e.g. language, education) or material resources (e.g. capital goods, money). In this definition, Norton distinguishes between Gardner’s concept of Instrumental Motivation and the investment conception she postulates, as confusion was often made between these two concepts because of the functional reasons in L2 learning in both concepts. She (2008, p. 50) furthermore adds that when a language learner reads or writes a text, both the comprehension and construction of the text is mediated by the learner’s investment in the activity and the learner’s sociocultural identity.

By and large, these rich venues of literature on motivation have laid the foundation for this research project to shape questionnaire and interview tools in well-informed ways. So far the gap in motivation research shows that hardly any studies have been conducted to investigate Iraqi immigrants' English learning motivation in Australia and the fluctuation of their motivation over time. Given that Iraqi community is growing rapidly in Melbourne, this research theme should become essential. The present study attempts to fill this gap by providing empirical data obtained from interviewing twelve members representing three Recently Arrived Iraqi Immigrants and examined the social as well as the educational factors that influence their English motivation. It also examined the changes in their

English motivation during two years, which is the period they have been in Australia at the time of the interviews.

### **Research method**

This research is a qualitative case study with numeric representations from questionnaire data. The combination of numeric and qualitative data helps explore in some depth Iraqis' motivation towards English learning as they moved to Australia and the general practices of this process as well as to give the participants the opportunity to freely express their experiences and attitudes towards learning English. The study was conducted with three Recently Arrived Iraqi Immigrant families in Melbourne as most of the newly arrived Iraqis are now settling in this city because of the growing Iraqi community as well as the availability of the services – particularly migrants' English classes (AMES, 2010).

Data was collected directly from the respondents through using a questionnaire adapted from Gardner (1985) and interviews at one allocated time. As the research involves interviewing fathers, mothers, girls and boys within the same family, confidentiality are taken into consideration to avoid bias. Public libraries in the residence area of the participants were chosen for the interviews. At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire including 18 questions regarding English learning motivation. Three motivational attributes were measured in the questionnaire namely attitudes towards English, integrative orientation, and instrumental orientation. The same participant then was interviewed in an open-ended manner based on his/her answers to the questionnaire items. Both the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted in Arabic then translated into English.

### **The participants**

The research was conducted with twelve members of three Iraqi families who live in Melbourne and who were recently offered permanent residency in Australia. All the participants came as humanitarian visa holders to Australia within the last two years because of the unsecured situation in Iraq and joined English classes shortly after their arrival at AMES language centers, language schools or TAFE colleges. Some of them are still in their school age while others, particularly the mothers have left classes to take care



of houses and children. From each family, two parents, one child and one teenager were chosen. The teenagers included one girl and two boys. Most of those Iraqis came to Australia with limited English language skills. However, many of the fathers are university graduates and have had English formal learning in Iraq. Some of the mothers are also university graduates or diploma holders and have gained some formal English learning as well. The family context was chosen because it provides the researcher with a unique variety of participant ages and genders.

### **Iraqi ESL learners' attitude and motivation**

The data from both the questionnaire and the interviews reveal that moving from the EFL to ESL context most of the researched Iraqi learners developed positive attitudes towards English and its Australian speakers. This includes all the participating family members, regardless of their age or gender. In their answers to the questionnaire items, 11/12 participants answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the item "I really enjoy learning English". Similarly, 12/12 participants answered "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to the item "Learning English is a waste of time". Interview data also show that most of the participants learn English because of integrative motivators such as communicating successfully in the Australian community, wanting to get more Australian English speaking friends and knowing more about Australian culture. These findings are consistent with Gardner's notion of integrativeness or "openness to cultural identification," as he has lately renamed (Gardner, 2007, P. 15). Gardner (2001) makes a clear distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation where he argues that integrative motivation plays a determining role in mastering a L2 in a setting where the learners have direct contact with the target language group whilst instrumental motivation remains less significant. Researchers such as Dörnyei (2010) and Lamb (2004), however, criticise Gardner's concept of integrativeness on the ground that in this globalization era integrating with a uniformed cultural group when learning to use the English language makes the purpose of learning too narrow. Lamb (2004, p. 13) for example, argues that "integrative and instrumental orientation are difficult to distinguish as separate concepts."

Here the question arises regarding Iraqis' learning motivation: is it only the integrativeness that motivates these learners to acquire and use English in Australia? Although findings from this study indicate that integrative motives

are certainly significant in this context, data also reveal the role played by instrumentality in ESL learning. Some of the participants emphasise that they learn English to land jobs in Australia; others mentioned that they wish to master English for successful study in mainstream schools. On the one hand, even though the data from this study partly supports Gardner's contention in the value of integrative motivator as a powerful predictor of learners achievement in English learning, on the other hand they provide strong support to Dörnyei (2010) and Lamb's (2004) argument that integrative and instrumental motives can hardly be separated.

### **The social factors that influence English learning**

Findings from this study reveal that social factors e.g. successful communicating, making friends, knowing Australian culture, getting good jobs and future study are highly correlated and have an interrelated effect in Iraqis' ESL learning in Australia. This offers strong support to the above mentioned views on the difficulty of distinguishing between integrative and instrumental orientation. Almost all the participants express a strong desire in integrating to the Australian community such as making new friends and communicating well with the community. Nsreen (33, mother) shared her view: "I live in Australia and meet Australians every day, some of them became good friends of mine. It is very important to understand English as well as their habits and customs in order to behave appropriately amongst them." Interestingly, these findings apply not only to the adult learners; the researched children also showed similar interests in their English learning in the new Australian community that they recently lived in. One teenager, (Hazim, 16) noted: "I have a lot of Australian friends in my school. We usually go together to the sport club to play soccer. I want to have very good English to talk with them freely." The same participants in addition showed strong instrumentality in their answers to some utility-oriented questions. Ahmed reflected: "English is important for getting good jobs; I am now studying interpreting course at RMIT University to work as interpreter". Nsreen also supports this idea she quoted "I need good English to finish my study at Dandenong TAFE and find teaching work". Similar findings were reported by Waxman's (2000) which contents that Iraqi immigrants to some extent learn English to enhance their professional future in Australia.

The combination between integrativeness and instrumentality in the Iraqis' attitude toward ESL study in Australia does not go along the same line with Gardner's integrative oriented learners, which again demonstrate the fact that no second language motivation theory is applicable in all contexts and to all L2 learners. Moreover the participants in the present study are highly educated, which might not be the case of most of Gardner's ESL learners in Canada. The reality that most of the adult male Iraqis and some female Iraqis who have recently arrived in Australia are university graduates explains the strong instrumentality inclination they have in learning English for successful occupation and study alongside their integrative attitudes towards the Australian community.

### **The educational factors that influence English learning**

Within the educational setting, teachers represent the most significant agent in motivating Iraqi ESL learners by providing encouragement, opportunities for language practice, richness of communicative classroom tasks, all of which make the learning process both useful and inspiring. Fatima (44, mother) reported "The (AMES) teachers are helpful; they try their best to make our learning as interesting as possible by using variety of activities, providing the classroom with fun and enjoyment and teaching us many interesting things from the real life in Australia." This is consistent with the findings of SLA researchers such as Bragger and Danahy (1983), Littlejohn (2008), and Gardner (2001b) who argue that teachers' motivating strategies, variety of activities, personality and rapport with learners are significant motivating resources in L2 teaching and learning.

The role played by classmates is a second educational factor that serves as an important motivating tool among Iraqi ESL learners in Australia. Most research participants state explicitly that their classmates provide them with numerous supports in their English learning, which come in different ways. Kareem (46, father) explained: "At the AMES we talk in English, correct each other's mistakes, and sometimes help each other in our classroom work." Muna (18 daughter) reflected: "We talk to each other in English most of the time. Sometimes we make errors, but it is ok to do so because we can correct each other." It seems that the participants make constant effort in learning to use English in their daily life, demonstrating the awareness of utilising every learning opportunity even among peers of similar linguistic background.

Teaching resources, in addition, plays a third factor in the motivating process. McKay (2003) argues that using materials that are derived from the target culture is very useful and effective in learning a second language. Dörnyei (1994, 2006) and Gardner (2007) also assert the importance of the teaching resources in motivating the L2 learners. According to participants in this study, the resources that their teachers at the language schools use include newspapers, administration forms, computer programs, stories, among others, all of which have motivating values as they are derived from and reflect the Australian life and culture. Sajad (10, son) mentioned how his teachers employed “lots of pictures, puzzles, spelling games and stories” in their English classes, which are attractive and joyful learning materials to young learners.

### **Demotivating factors in English learning**

Despite positive attitudes towards Australia and its speakers, three sociocultural and educational factors continue to remain as demotivators among Iraqi learners in the study. First of all, basic illiteracy in both the first and second languages is found to be an important social factor in demotivating participants from learning and using English in Australia. Two participants stated that they felt reluctant in attending English classes nor could they learn much English as they have a hard time coping with reading and writing skills. Salma (46, mother) reported that she did not go to school in Iraq and did not get any formal learning there and her illiteracy prevented her from acquiring English in Australia. It is worth noting that millions of Iraqis and particularly women were illiterate in the last few centuries due to poverty and lack of education opportunities (Qubain, 1979). Similarly, Kareem (46, father) who had only a few years of formal learning in Arabic and no formal learning in English stated that it is very challenging for him now to commit to school due to his abandonment of formal education in Iraq long time ago. Although English enables him to understand and communicate with Australians, after 40 years outside of schooling systems, it has become a real challenge for him to cope with the everyday demand of schoolwork. In a word, literacy represents a strong learning demotivator as it severely restricts confidence in pursuing the learning process in productive ways.

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A second significant demotivator in English learning is sociocultural constraints such as domestic duties and mixed gender classes. This is mostly linked to women rather than their husbands as most of the participants came to Australia as families with children of which the women are the main carers in the home. Rida and Milton (2001), and De Courcy (2007) argue that Muslim women generally have low presence in ESL programs particularly in evening classes due to many religious and sociocultural barriers such as home duties, children, financial obligations and mixed-gender classes. As a matter of fact, all the participant mothers in this study did not complete or even attend regularly the free classes that were offered to them. In some cases, private tutoring has become an alternative way to remedy this dilemma. Salma (46, mother) for example, with five children at home to take care of had to seek a volunteer teacher who came to her house and provided English lessons.

A third demotivating factor has to do with Iraqi women's role which again resulted in the lack of communication opportunities with Australian and members of the international communities. Socioculturally, all the researched Iraqi immigrants due to their Arabic Muslim background maintain limited interaction with members of other cultures or religions. Back home in Iraq, they used to live in extended families within their own tribes bound by close social relationship. When these families made decisions to move to Melbourne their resettlement continued to aim at being connected to other families within their tribe. This reality explains the reason why Iraqi women invariably chose to remain in the domestic sphere for household chores, taking care of children, and even for learning practices rather than attending classes with others. Nasreen (33, mother) furthermore stated that even if she wished to study in evening classes, she could not actually do so also because most of the students were male and it is culturally inappropriate for her to study in the evening with unknown male class members.

### The change in motivation

Until the 1990s, L2 motivation was discussed as if it was a fixed construct. However, researchers such as Dörnyei (2006, 2003, 1994), Dörnyei & Ottos (1998) draw attention to the changing nature of L2 motivation over time. Findings from this study provide strong support to these researchers' contention. They show that the RAILs' English motivation has changed rapidly over the last two years, since their arrival in Australia. According to interview data, three factors causing this change include relocation to an ESL context, opportunities for L2 communication, and the influence from new teaching methods.

The EFL learning conditions did not allow sufficient exposure to English language use in their daily life. The need of English was confined to inside of classroom. Although, most of the fathers had the opportunity to work with the Australian Army, their families were not evolved. In Australia, the situation reversed when English is the only means of both educational and social correspondence. Falah (46, father) explained the reason why he wanted to learn English more than before: "The only thing I can think about is my daily need for English. Every day I need more English as I now have more friends and neighbors and I want to keep in touch with them". The need for English in their work and study for communicating with doctors, retailers, government officials, bus drivers, and so on has increased their motivation.

The need for resettlement in a new country, for staying in touch with new circles of friends and acquaintances as well as other increasing needs have all contributed to the development of learning motivation among these immigrants within the first few years of their arrival. Hazim (16, son) for instance, stated that when he first studied English at his language school, he had no "Aussie friends" and a limited number of "friends from the other gender" whilst now he has made plenty of them as well as has increased communication skills in English and within the local culture. As far as education is concerned, instructional quality, teachers' constant encouragement, class rapport, and variety of activities all play a crucial role in changing the Iraqi learners' motivation over time.

### The role of the host community

An equally important factor in learners' motivational dynamicity is the role of the host community in integrating immigrants in Australia. Norton (1995) has pointed out that the attitude and acceptance of the host community has a considerable effect on L2 learner. Gardner (2007) further argues that learning L2 involves identification into the target group. As the study suggests, the Iraqi learners have a great desire to learn and use English to obtain acceptance in the Australia community. Data drawn from interviews show that immigrants receive warm welcome from the Australian community, thanks to which they have support from teachers, neighbors and friends. All of these help increase their English learning motivation.

Data showed that the Iraqi women participants in this study are the most disadvantaged group with regards to English learning. Not only do they have fewer opportunities to access English classes due to some sociocultural constraints, but they also experience difficulties in coping with the learning processes to their literacy. Despite this, the female participants did express their desire to learn to communicate in the target language out of the immediate need for talking to family doctors, shop keepers, bus drivers, and to help their children with homework.

These results are consistent with Norton's (1995) contention that, when arriving in a new community, immigrant women face a specific discourse in which they may feel underequipped if unable to speak the target community language. This can be seen clearly that despite the restrictions they have the women participants of this study spent a remarkable effort to learn English despite the restrictions they have for their daily needs to be understood by the Australian community, which serve as a strong motivator in their English learning process.

### Concluding remarks

The study has found that several social and educational factors directly affect Iraqis' L2 learning motivation. The findings show that integrative and instrumental motives are highly correlated, both of which motivate learners towards English learning and communication. Further, most of the participants in this study seemed to have a strong sense of becoming part of the host community. This understanding goes along the line of Norton's notion of learning investment as immigrants strive to get accepted in the new

community they join in. It is also constant with many L2 motivation researchers' contentions such as Gardner (2007), Norton (2000), and Dornyei (2010). While the present study supports the balance between intrinsic and instrumental motivation, Gardner (2001) in his socio-educational model, argues that integrative motivation is a determiner in L2 learning whilst instrumental motivation has less effect. The study speaks about a different reality than the one conducted by Norton (1995) which presents Canadian community as having a negative effect on L2 learners in the sense that this research presents the Australian society as helpful encouragement to the L2 learners. It is arguable that not every L2 motivation theory is applicable in all contexts and with all kinds of communities.

The study also reveals the significant finding that Iraqi women are among the most disadvantaged group in regard to English learning in Australia due to sociocultural constraints as well as poor past experience in English. For this reason it would be very helpful and encouraging if the language schools dedicate more English classes, especially basic literacy classes, to these women in addition to their formal classes. The Iraqi community in Melbourne can participate in helping them improve their English such as organizing basic literacy classes to teach English to these women. Their families can also help them in the home by teaching them new words, practising English with them or even encouraging them to join English classes to learn the language.

It is hoped that the present study will help ESL policy makers and curriculum developers to plan teaching courses that take into consideration the social as well as the educational factors that directly affect immigrants' second language achievement in order to encourage the motivating factors and deal with the demotivating ones. Such endeavour may facilitate these immigrants' English learning and smooth their adjustment in the Australian community as well. Hence, language policy makers, teachers as well as ESL program coordinators need to use more authentic materials that teach these learners more about Australian culture and workplace in which they, according to the findings, show interest in. They also need to enhance the oral help in English that learners obtain from their friends, family members, teachers and classmates as it is very encouraging to them.



Language educators need to show students that their study matters to the host country and let them see how much the country cares about their improvement. One should be ready to recognize every single attempt made by students toward improving their competence in order to provide encouragement and further guidance where possible. It is important to show that one is concerned with learners' progress and, moving from the role of a teacher to the role of a 'good human being', show how the teacher cares for them as real people. For example, having reproached certain students for failing to do homework does not stop you from greeting and smile at them at times. Ways to demonstrate your acceptance of students include remembering their names, showing interests in their hobbies, recognizing their individual effort, including their ideas during classroom communication, and knowing something unique and positive about individuals.

Teachers should have sufficiently high expectation for how much students can achieve, because lowering your anticipation can only make students live down to it. This would require the teacher to try out different strategies to discover students' true potential rather than merely look at what is observable and underestimate their ability. In addition to this, a sense of togetherness will have a motivational effect on learners. Fragmented groups with lack of cooperativeness can easily become ineffective, thus reducing the individual members' commitment to learn.

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