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## **Motivation, Attitude and Effort towards Learning English: The Case of Mutah University Jordanian Male and Female Students**

**Abstract.** Our study aims to investigate the level and type of motivation as well as the level of proficiency. In this respect, our hypothesis is that female learners of L2 are better achievers than male learners of L2. The study will also investigate the relationship between 'motivation, attitude and effort' and 'gender' on one hand, and the relationship between 'motivation, attitude the attitude effort' and 'proficiency' on the other. In addition to quantitative data collection methods (questionnaires and tests), qualitative data collection methods will also be used (interviews) to explore these relationships.

**Rezümé.** A tanulmány célja a motiváció szintjének és típusának, valamint a nyelvtudás szintjének vizsgálata. Kiinduló kutatási hipotézisünk az, hogy az L2 (másodnyelv) női tanulói jobban teljesítenek, mint az L2 férfi tanulói. A tanulmány egyrészt megvizsgálja a „motiváció, a hozzáállás és az erőfeszítés”, valamint a (társadalmi) „nem” (gender) közötti kapcsolatokat, másrészt a „motiváció, a hozzáállás és az erőfeszítés” és a „járasság” közötti összefüggést. A mennyiségi adatgyűjtési módszerek (kérdőívek és tesztek) mellett kvalitatív adatgyűjtési módszereket (interjúk) is alkalmaz a kutatás e kapcsolatokat és összefüggéseket feltárására.

**Резюме.** Наша стаття має на меті дослідити рівень і тип мотивації, а також рівень кваліфікації людей, які вивчають другу мову. Наша гіпотеза полягає в тому, що жінки, які вивчають L2, є успішнішими, ніж чоловіки, що також вивчають L2. Дослідження також простежує взаємозв'язок між «мотивацією, ставленням та зусиллям» та «статтю», з одного боку, та взаємозв'язок між «мотивацією, ставленням та зусиллям» і «знанням» з іншого боку. При зборі даних, окрім кількісних методів (анкети та тести), будуть використовуватися також і якісні методи збору даних (інтерв'ю) для вивчення цих відносин та взаємозв'язків.

### ***Introduction***

Non-linguistic domains of language learning such as motivation, effort, beliefs and attitudes towards learning a second language are difficult to assess. Gardner refers to the complex nature of the concept of motivation as being abstract, difficult to define, difficult to assess and the fact that motivation refers to many things in meaning (Gardner, 2007).

Many studies conducted in Jordan demonstrate high levels of instrumental motivation being dominant among the students (Al-Shourafa, 2012; Tahaine, & Daana, 2013). The results of these studies also show slight but not significant differences between males and females in both types of motivation (instrumental and integrative).

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The abstract nature of the concept of motivation, as pointed out by Gardner (Gardner, 2007), adds complications to the research in terms of relating the concept of motivation to other concepts such as effort. However, considering the main purpose of our research, effort will be investigated independently in order to study its effect on proficiency and to study its relationship to motivation and attitude. The research tool used to investigate motivation is Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 2004) as well as a motivation questionnaire of Dörnyei (You and Dörnyei, 2016; You, Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2016).

### ***Literature review and background on the educational context in Jordan***

Saville-Troike (Saville-Troike & Muriel, 2006) discusses many social factors that might have an impact on the learners' success in ESL context. These factors are: gender, age, ethnic identity and social class. Even though these factors interact with each other in a complex way to influence the individuals' success in ESL context, yet there are other factors involved as well. Such as the learning strategies, the teaching strategies, the learning resources, the classroom environment, etc. All these factors are relevant to success in ESL context.

Many studies on the students' level of proficiency in Jordan demonstrate low levels of proficiency in English among these students (Ngangbam, 2016; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Oqlah & Al-Ghazo, 2013). The assumption that these students are not motivated enough and have a negative attitude towards learning a second language seems to be the case since studies on non-linguistic domains (i.e. motivation and attitude) (Ababneh, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, & Al-Omari, 2015; Al-Shourafa, 2012; Tahaine & Daana, 2013) show that these domains play an important role in language learning. Following Gardner's model (2004), these studies show that there are high levels of "instrumental" motivation. The results of these studies also show that there are slight differences between males and females, but these differences are not significant though.

### ***Participants***

The participants of our research will be students from Mutah university (Jordan). However, one downfall in our research is the relatively small size sample. If this is the case, then it would be more convenient to involve students from other universities in Jordan and have a cross-sectional study comparing students of other universities to Mutah university students bearing in mind the idea of incorporating all of the above concepts and constructs involved in the research on these students.

### ***Hypothesis***

The study aims to investigate the level and type of motivation as well as the level of proficiency among male and female students. The research also aims to investigate the learning effort, its effect on proficiency and its relationship to motivation

and attitude. In this respect, our hypothesis is that female learners of L2 are better achievers than male learners of L2 incorporating more motivational orientations and expending more effort than male learners. The study will investigate the relationship between 'motivation, attitude, effort' and 'gender' on the one hand, and the relationship between 'motivation, attitude, effort' and 'proficiency' on the other. In addition to quantitative data collection methods (questionnaires and tests), qualitative data collection methods will also be used (interviews) to investigate the newly introduced concept (effort) in operationalization terms (i.e. the way effort will be operationalized for measuring purposes).

### ***Constructs and operationalization of the constructs***

The constructs of our research involve: motivation, attitude, effort, proficiency. The new contribution of our research involves the concept of effort operationalized by means of four measures: 1- Attendance (records of attendance). 2- Participation in the classroom. 3- The amount of time dedicated for studying. 4- The amount of exposure to L2 outside the school curricula (how students practice L2 outside the school environment). Regarding motivation and attitude, however, they are measured by questionnaires of Gardner's and Dörnyei's. Proficiency is measured by means of standardized tests.

### ***Methodology and research tools***

Motivation / Attitude are measured with the use of questionnaires adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and a questionnaire adapted from Dörnyei's process model. The questionnaires investigate the level (Low/High) and type (Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Integrative or Instrumental) of motivation. They also investigate attitude to see if the learners have a positive or negative attitude towards learning L2.

Effort is the new concept introduced in our research incorporating (mostly) a new subjective method of data collection to see the level of effort that these students expend to fulfil their learning needs. Effort will be measured by the means discussed in the previous section. Later, the effect of effort on proficiency will be investigated. The effect of motivation / attitude on effort will also be investigated to see if there is a significant relationship between motivation / attitude and effort.

Proficiency is measured by means of standardized tests to investigate the learners' level of proficiency.

### **Research questions**

- 1- What is the effect of gender on motivation, attitude, effort and proficiency?
- 2- What is the effect of age on motivation, attitude, effort and proficiency?
- 3- What is the effect of the students' social class on motivation, attitude, effort and proficiency?

- 4- What is the effect of the students' ethnic background on motivation, attitude, effort and proficiency?
- 5- What is the relationship between motivation/attitude and proficiency?
- 6- What is the relationship between effort and proficiency?
- 7- What is the relationship between motivation/attitude and effort?

### ***The Proposed procedure***

The students will be given a standardized test to determine their level of proficiency, then they will be given questionnaires to determine the level and type of motivation. Finally, they will be asked subjective questions in an interview about the level of effort that they expend to fulfill their learning needs. However, one aspect of effort measurements will be done by means of attendance records. The students will also be given a background questionnaire to provide further details for the sake of this research such as information about their social class, ethnic identity, gender, age and their academic level (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year students) with more emphasis on the aspect of gender as the hypothesis proposes the superiority of female students over male students in terms of achievement. The information of the background questionnaire will be exported to SPSS and used to compare the motivational orientation, proficiency and effort of these students on the basis of these factors (social class, ethnic identity, gender, age and the academic level). Later on, the data will be exported to SPSS to examine and investigate the effect of motivation on effort (in this case, motivation would be the independent variable and effort would be the dependent variable). Then, the effect of effort on proficiency would be investigated (in this case, effort will be the independent variable and proficiency would be the dependent variable). The SPSS analysis that will be used to investigate the differences among these students is the "Independent Sample T-test".

Regarding effort, it will be investigated independently at first by having the four aspects of measurements discussed earlier collected and analyzed in percentage for each aspect. Then, the overall result would be the average of these four aspects. Once this analysis is done, the overall result will be included in the SPSS along with the other variables for investigating what has been discussed earlier.

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