

# The Motivational Orientations of Undergraduate Students to Learn Arabic in a Dubai Private University\*

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to provide insight into the expatriate students' motivations and attitudes toward Arabic Language learning at a private university in Dubai. This is a qualitative case study that utilized a cross-sectional descriptive approach and is underpinned by Gardner and Lambert's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Motivation, wherein the motivational orientation is bifurcated into instrumental and integrative orientations. The study sample consisted of 24 undergraduate students enrolled in Arabic language courses. As there is a drastic lack of motivation literature in the field of Arabic Language Learning and adult learning within the context of higher education in the emirate of Dubai, UAE, this research strives to become a substantial addition to this under-researched topic and unique context. This study highlights the motivations of expatriate students by providing a rich description of the learners' profile and contributes to research on motivation as it concerns the learning of languages other than English (LOTE) and ultimately aims to contribute to social change (transformation) by encouraging an interest in researching the teaching and learning of Arabic in Dubai context. The study revealed that integrative motivations appear to be more pervasive than instrumental ones. This means that universities need to promote the importance of learning Arabic through authentic teaching, immersive experiences, cultural activities, and events, instead of the instrumental 'end goal' of the degree program. Research limitations arise from the limited sample size, focus on the learner's vantage point, and the use of one instrument to collect data (a questionnaire).

**Index Terms**—Arabic Language, Dubai, learner profile, motivational orientation, University students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the official language in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, expatriates living and working in Dubai emirate comprise 92% of its total population (Dubai Statistics Center, 2020). This Dubaian multicultural milieu which is comprised of many nationalities, led to the dominance of English as the Lingua Franca (Randall & Samimi, 2010). Since Emirati locals are considered a minority in their homeland, the demographic imbalance engendered a deep concern towards Emirati cultural identity especially the loss of mother tongue, Arabic Language (henceforth AL). However, the UAE strives to offer the best learning opportunities to all students whether at school level or higher education (Eppard & Baroudi, 2020). At the national level, initiatives were announced to improve and preserve the status of AL such as making it a compulsory subject for non-Arabs in all UAE schools (Randall & Samimi, 2010) and offering AL courses at universities such as Zayed University (Hedaiat, 2004). Though most expatriates living in Dubai communicate in English, some adult expatriates opt for learning AL formally through tertiary education and language institutes (Piller, 2017), and informally through private tuition and tutoring (Razem, 2020a, 2020b). Based on this context, this study aims to shed light on the learners' profile and understand the motivations of expatriate university students to learn AL, while exploring their attitudes towards the learning of Arabic at a private university in Dubai.

This case study seeks to answer the Key Research Question (KRQ): What are the motivational orientations of expatriate university students to learn AL in a private university in Dubai?

Sub-research questions that will help unpack the KRQ include the following:

1. Are student motivational orientations integrative, instrumental, or both, what other factors interplay to create or steer learners' motivation?
2. Also, do Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) and Non-Heritage Language Learners (NHLLs) as well as Arabic Heritage Language Learners (AHLLs) and Muslim Heritage Language Learners (MHLLs) differ in their orientations? If so, how and why?
3. In what ways can students be encouraged to embark on the journey of learning AL in their universities?

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## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. Conceptual Framework

The key concepts that relate to this study comprise of motivation and orientation, attitude, heritage and non-heritage learners.

#### (a). Motivation and Orientation

Traditionally, theories of motivation had contesting viewpoints on how to define and measure motivation. For instance, motivation is defined as “a state of self that moves a person to carry out certain activities to achieve the desired goal” (Solichin et al., 2021, p. 948). Motivation has been considered from different vantage points: the learner, the learning process, the nature of the language, the teacher, and the learning context. It has also been approached from several theoretical frameworks: behavioural, cognitive, and constructivist (Brown, 2007). Throughout this paper, the vantage point of the learner will be the focus of this study. Moreover, within the field of Second Language (L2), scholars have recognized two major dichotomies in motivation. On one hand, motivation was perceived as the result of internal or external factors, hence distinguishing between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In comparison to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation is considered the most important type of motivation that relates to students’ persistence and grit in learning (Schunk et al., 2014). Intrinsically motivated language learning is the one sustained out of interest and enjoyment as it satisfies the innate psychological need for competence and autonomy.

On the other hand, one views the propensity toward language learning in terms of *goals*. People vary not only in their level of motivation but also in the orientation of their motivation. In other words, *motivational orientation* “concerns the underlying *attitudes* and *goals* that give rise to action—that is, it concerns the why of actions” (Ryan & Deci 2000, p. 54). Hence, language learning is either *integrative*, which echoes a sincere interest in the second language culture and a desire to identify and communicate with members of that community, or *instrumental*, which encompasses economic, career, educational, or even religious gains (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Nonetheless, some researchers in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) expanded the scope of motivational orientations to include other variables and perspectives within a constructivist paradigm as it emphasizes social context as much as individual personal choices (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). For example, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2021) reconceptualized the integrative motivation and linked it to ‘self-concept’ theory which in turn broadened its scope to include identifying with the global community instead of an ethnolinguistic one. In other words, “motivation is something that can be global, situational, or task-oriented” (Brown, 2007, p.87).

#### (b). Attitude

Several SLA studies have discussed the difference between motivation and *attitude* (Brown, 2007; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Stern, 1991). Brown defines *attitude* as “the learners’ overall perceptions of the speakers of the target language and their culture” (2007, p. 85). Stern (1991) on the other hand, adds to it the attitudes towards learning languages in general and the target language itself. For this paper and as means to capture a deeper depiction of motivational orientations, *Attitude* would mean a combination of both Stern's (1991) and Brown's (2007) constructs, in which attitude includes the perceptions towards learning languages in general, learning the target language in specific, the speakers of the target language, and the target language culture.

#### (c). Heritage and Non-Heritage Learners

In the case of AL learners’ profiles, scholars in this field identified an essential nominal definition by classifying learners according to their background into three distinct groups: Learners of Arab descent, non-Arab Muslim learners, and learners of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds other than the first two groups (Husseinali, 2006). According to Husseinali (2006), the first two are commonly collapsed into one type called Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) versus the third group which is referred to as Non-Heritage Language Learners (NHLLs). In other words, HLLs can have one or more affinities to AL whether it be religion, identity, or family, while NHLLs have no cultural or personal affiliations to AL. The importance of such definition and identification of HLLs arise from their distinct needs and different factors that interplay as ultimately the motivation that drives students to learn AL will vary.

### B. Theoretical Framework

From a behavioural paradigm, motivation is regarded as the result of rewards and reinforcement, hence a behaviourist would define motivation as the expectation of reinforcement. In contrast, a cognitive framework considers rewards and reinforcement to be powerful concepts yet contends that this definition is only a part of the whole picture since the sources and the power of motivation differ (Brown, 2007).

Nevertheless, with further emphasis on social context and individual personal choice, the *constructivist framework* emerges as the most recent approach. In their seminal research on the role of motivation and attitude in L2 learning, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) studies distinguish between two types of motivational orientations: instrumental and integrative. Although the breakthrough of Gardner and Lambert's model in motivation research is well acknowledged, it was critiqued by certain researchers (Dörnyei, 1998; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Most criticisms questioned the dichotomous classification of the integrative and instrumental orientations, as well as their definitions.

Different researchers and participants perceived the terms in diverse and sometimes opposing ways. Therefore, the position of this study coincides with the conceptualization that motivation is “a process that starts with orientation, increases with goal setting and goal achievement, results in learner satisfaction, and finally leads to higher L2 achievement” (Zabarah, 2015, p. 109). Hence, the theoretical framework that this paper adopts links to Brown's (2007) assertion that “each person is motivated differently and will therefore act on his or her environment in ways that are unique” (p. 87). Subsequently, motivation to learn a second or foreign language can be intrinsically or extrinsically driven (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and integratively or instrumentally propelled, as illustrated in Figure 1.

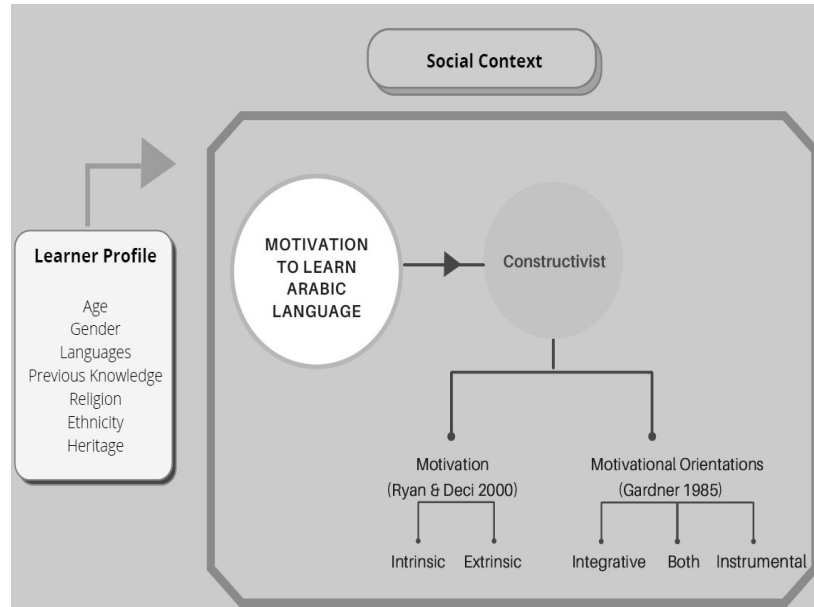


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

### C. Literature Review

In reviewing the pertinent literature, quantitative and qualitative studies were cited. The relevant and current literature identified two main motivational orientations that play a crucial role in a learner's decision to learn AL: instrumental and integrative. These orientations were studied along with the L2/FL historical and socio-political learning context in empirical studies conducted in the USA, Malaysia, Jordan, India, KSA, Nigeria, and UAE. This resonates with a social-constructivist approach that places further emphasis on social, cultural, and political milieus. For example, learning AL for political and security reasons or patriotism (instrumentality reasons) in the USA has shown an exponential increase after the events of September 11, 2001. Thus, knowing Arabic became more valuable from the point of view of a future job (Belnap, 2006). Moreover, learning AL for religious reasons (which is generally considered both an instrumental and integrative orientation) by Muslim HLLs was highlighted in countries such as: India, Malaysia, and Nigeria (Abu Bakar et al., 2010; Al-Mekhlafi, 2010; Aladdin, 2010; Ajape et al., 2015). Additionally, learning AL in a safe study-abroad country was underlined in Jordan- where both instrumental and integrative orientations are cited (Dajani, 2006; Dajani et al., 2014).

Many key variables emerge from the literature that have a pivotal role in steering the learners' interest in AL. The AL learners' profile resembles one crucial factor that affects motivational orientations. A large number of empirical studies have acknowledged and bifurcated learners into AHLLs, MHLLs or HLLs, and NHLs which was aforementioned in the conceptual framework (Abu Bakar et al., 2010; Ajape et al., 2015; Aladdin, 2010, 2014; Belnap, 2006; Weger-Guntharp & Winke, 2006; Zabarah, 2015). In her study, Zabarah (2015) stressed that HLLs and NHLs have different skills, needs, and reasons to study the language, thus addressing the needs of HLLs as opposed to NHLs in the class will allow for reaching higher proficiency levels. Although research on Arabic as a heritage language is considered fairly limited compared to other languages such as Spanish and Chinese (Husseinali, 2012), the findings of the studies have shown significant differences between HLLs versus NHLs on instrumental and identification orientations. In other words, NHLs were mostly instrumentally driven, HLLs were highly integratively motivated (Abu Bakar et al., 2010; Belnap, 2006; Husseinali, 2006; Weger-Guntharp & Winke, 2006). This links to the sub-research question: *do HLLs and NHLs as well as AHLLs and MHLLs differ in their orientations? If so, how and why?* and provides evidence from the literature that HLLs/NHLLs do differ as they mostly have divergent motivational orientations.

Moreover, few studies have explored the link between the learners' perception of the difficulty of AL and their motivation to learn it (Ajape et al., 2015; Aladdin, 2010; Belnap, 2006; Husseinali, 2006; Nichols, 2010). Responses to surveys indicated that the majority of Arabic learners feel that Arabic is a difficult language to learn (Aladdin, 2010;

Belnap, 2006). Dajani et al. (2014) explained that “Some sounds used in the Arabic language might be difficult to learn for non-native speakers, and the duality in the Arabic language makes it difficult to learn since there are a lot of differences between classical and colloquial” (p. 923).

Furthermore, one of the most interesting findings of this review was highlighted in Brosh's (2013) study as an emerging motivation that springs from learners' perception of belonging to a global community as a result of globalization and advancement in technology. Therefore, learning Arabic, which is the fifth most commonly spoken language in the world (University of Wisconsin, n.d.), made learners feel like global citizens. This adds to the breadth of integrativeness in the motivation literature to include the desire to belong to the world community and links to the ‘Self-concept’ theory as Dornyei and Ushioda (2021) theorized an individual's self-concept which articulates that wishing to establish a greater identity motivates learners to learn foreign languages. According to Brosh (2013), this “comes from inner self processes rather than identification with a specific reference group” (p. 34).

The literature also reveals that learners demonstrated a high interest in Arabic for employment reasons, travel and world culture orientation, political reasons, and even religious purposes, which seems to be commonly articulated for this particular L2 (Ajape et al., 2015; Al-Musnad, 2018; Husseinali, 2006; Weger-Guntharp & Winke, 2006). Several studies asserted that Arabic is important not only because it is the language of Arab countries, but also because it is the language of Islam.

Therefore, it is evident that no single reason exists for a learner's language choice, but rather a combination of factors that reflects the complexity and dynamic nature of motivation as a concept. Although the vast majority of the research papers used a quantitative approach through ‘surveys’ that were derived and adapted from the theories mentioned above to capture certain features of motivational orientations (Al-Musnad, 2018; Aladdin, 2010, 2014; Brosh, 2013; Husseinali, 2006, 2012; Silverman, 2013; Weger-Guntharp & Winke, 2006; Yusri et al., 2011; Zabarah, 2015), few scholars approached the RQs at hand in a qualitative approach based on a narrative methodology such as open-ended questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and field notes (Aladdin, 2014; Nichols & College, 2014; Rashed, 2013). Of those that did follow a qualitative methodology, two of the studies had small numbers of participants. An American and Emirati study had as few as just three participants (Husseinali, 2006; Rashed, 2013) while quantitative studies had over a hundred (Abu Bakar et al., 2010; Ajape et al., 2015; Al-Musnad, 2018; Brosh, 2013; Taha, 2007; Weger-Guntharp & Winke, 2006; Yusri et al., 2011). The critical implication of mostly using quantitative methods leads to the conclusion that more qualitative studies are needed to provide in-depth explorations of motivations and corroborate earlier studies and their findings.

Researching this topic unravelled a drastic lack of motivation literature in the intersection of Arabic (ASL/AFL) and adult learning within the context of Dubai-UAE, albeit one qualitative Emirati study conducted on three adult expatriate learners (Rashed, 2013). Though AL is the official language in the UAE, the Dubai context reveals a unique phenomenon in which AL seems unnecessary to learn. Calafato and Tang (2019) contend that “they (students) do not really see a strong reason to study it” (p. 10). AL is also generally considered ‘super-hard’ for native English speakers (Foreign Service Institute, n.d.). This can be due to its diglossic nature and its linguistic distance from Indo-European languages (Deyoung, 1999). Many Dubai expatriates -regardless of their first language- are content to communicate in English only, whereas relatively few venture to learn Arabic, which raises an interesting question on the reasons that drive adult expatriates to pursue this journey (Calafato & Tang, 2019). Whether it be for enhancing employment opportunities in an Arab country or learning about Emirati culture, passing a university requirement, or better understanding religious texts in Islam, this study will explore the motivations of expatriate undergraduate students within the scope of a Dubai-based private university.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study considers the participants' thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes and examines socially constructed meanings; hence, it applies the interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2012; Ezzzy, 2013).

#### A. Context and Site

The site is a private university based in Dubai which was founded in 2008. The degree programs offered are mostly STEM-based as the majority of the undergraduate programs are that of Engineering and Computer Science, along with several degrees in Business. The AL courses offered consist of Beginning Arabic I, Beginning Arabic II and Intermediate Arabic I. To be eligible to take such courses students are required to complete a language pledge form in which they declare that they are not a native speaker of the language. While there is no requirement to take AL, it can fulfill the requirements of a ‘concentration’ or an optional Minor at this university. The researchers worked closely with the AL faculty member to conduct the questionnaire and obtain the relevant data for this study. The needed ethical approvals from the researchers' side and the university site were granted to conduct this study.

#### B. Participants

This study applied a purposeful sampling technique and recruited undergraduate expatriate learners who were enrolled in Beginning Arabic 1 (a total of 9 students) and Beginning Arabic 2 (a total of 18 students). The total number

of enrolled students was 28. However, only 24 participants signed the informed consent form and answered the questionnaire, rendering a response percentage of 86%.

### C. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument employed in this study was a semi-structured questionnaire that was divided into two sections. The rationale behind using the semi-structured questionnaire is to unravel the subjective reasons behind learning AL and unfold the learners' profile.

#### Semi-structured Questionnaire

The researchers devised the questionnaire on Google Forms and sent the virtual link to the faculty member teaching Arabic 1 and Arabic 2 courses. Students were encouraged to participate and complete their responses in English as they are all proficient in English language. The estimated time of filling out the whole questionnaire was around 20 minutes.

The first section of the questionnaire (Appendix B) started with preliminary demographical questions that aimed to explore any emerging trends across the learner profile: age, sex, nationality, languages, nationality, number of years living in Dubai, heritage affiliation to being of Arab origin or Muslim. The second section consisted of a set of semi-structured questions that emerged from the literature review and were underpinned by the theoretical framework. These questions were related to:

- The previous language learning experience of AL.
- Reasons to learn AL at university.
- The benefits of learning AL.
- Attitude towards learning languages in general.
- Intrinsic motivation to learn AL related to enjoyment and interest.
- Attitude towards Arab people.
- Attitude towards Arabic culture.
- Perceived difficulty of learning AL.
- Reasons to learn Arabic in Dubai.
- Recommendations from university students to encourage other students to learn AL in Dubai.

The questionnaire was sent to students at the beginning of Fall Term 2020 and was open for two weeks.

### D. Piloting the Instrument

The draft questionnaire was piloted and two colleagues responded with their feedback and comments to test its effectiveness and provide their diverse views and opinions to enhance it (Travers, 2013). The questionnaire was modified accordingly.

### E. Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the questionnaire, this study implemented content analysis as a data analysis strategy and interpretation method.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study have been divided into several sections to first describe the profile of those participating in the study, followed by their perceptions of AL, and finally, the answers to the sub-research questions.

### A. Learner Profile

Based on the findings, 83% of participants were between the ages of 20-22 years old, while 8.4% were between the ages of 18-19, and 8.3% were 24 years old. Additionally, there were slightly more male participants (58.3%) than females (41.7%). These findings of age and gender align with what would be expected of an undergraduate student cohort. The slightly higher male representation may be because the university in question has more STEM-based program offerings, which tend to traditionally be viewed as male-dominated fields.

In line with the literature, it was also important to understand the students' heritage affiliation to AL to better understand their motivational orientations. Thus, students were asked to declare if they were of Arab origin as well as their religious affiliation as either Muslim or non-Muslim (see Figure 2 below). Of the 24 participants, 79.2% were non-Arab, 16.7% were of Arab origin, and 4.2% preferred not to answer the question. Moreover, 70.8% were Muslim, 25% were non-Muslim and 4.2% preferred not to answer. While the significantly higher non-Arab population and Muslim representation are to be expected in an AL classroom of a Muslim country, it is interesting to note that 16.7% of these students were of Arab origin but are passport holders of a Western country. This in turn would mean that these students are culturally Arab with little-to-no knowledge of their own heritage language.

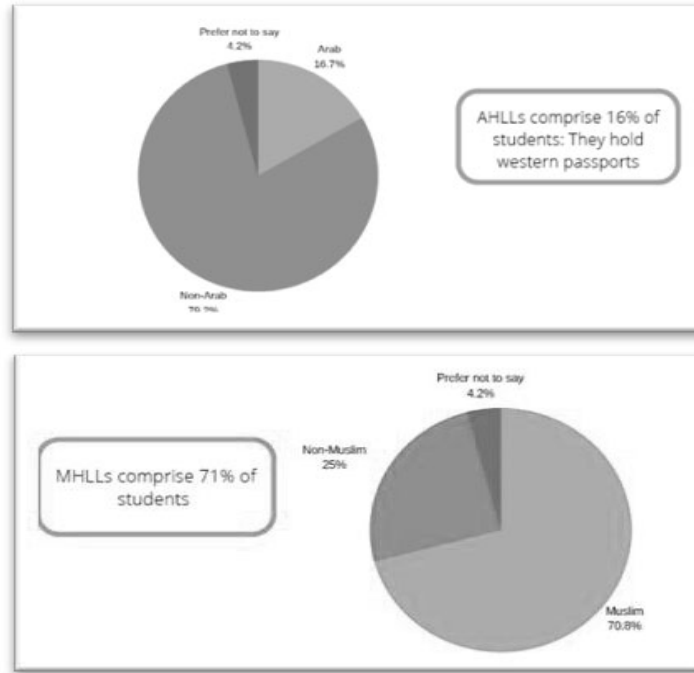


Figure 2: Heritage Affiliation to Language and Ethnicity

In order to better understand the language and cultural backgrounds of the participants (as even those who declared an Arabic origin were Western passport holders), students were asked to declare their nationalities. The top three nationalities were Indian (50%), American (12.5%), and Pakistani (12.5%), however, over seven nationalities were declared among the 24 participants (Figure 3). Students were also asked to declare the languages that they speak. 100% of the participating cohort identified themselves as speakers of English, in addition to fourteen other languages. Some of these languages were even reported by 25% (or more) of participating students, specifically Hindi, Arabic, and Urdu (Figure 3). Such results are representative of the diverse nature of Dubai as well as the reality that exists in the UAE of English being a Lingua Franca. Since it may seem surprising that over 25% of the population would declare being an Arabic speaker in an AFL classroom, this prompted our next question regarding years of studying in the UAE.

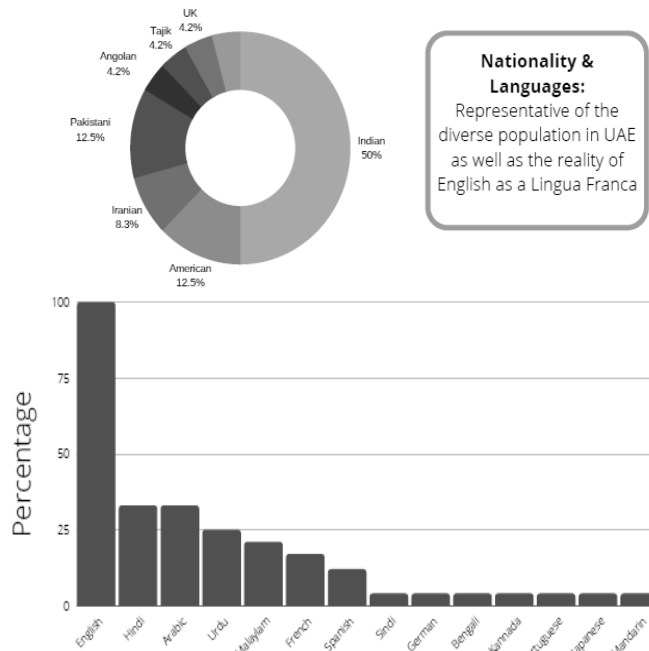


Figure 3: Nationality and Languages of Participants

The final question that contributed to the learner profile involved the participants' years living in the UAE as well as their length of studying Arabic (Figure 4). The years living in the UAE link to over 25% of the respondents that claim to have knowledge of AL, as Arabic is a compulsory subject in UAE schools. Hence, the above results in turn align with the 70% of students who have been living in the UAE for at least the past 6 years, comprising some of their years in K-12 education. There was an additional 20.8% of participants who reported living in the UAE for anywhere between 1-5 years, and a surprising 8.3% of the population who reported 0 years of living in the UAE (something that has become a possibility thanks to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic). In both instances, this could mean that students were never required to formally study AL or had minimal contact with the language in a formal setting, which further results corroborated that 25% of students reported between 0-3 years of formal study of AL. Another 25% of the population reported between 6-12 years of AL instruction and an astonishing 20.8% responded that they have formally studied the language for more than 13 years. While this may seem like a significant amount of time studying a foreign language, it can be assumed that these educational experiences with AL did not prove sufficient and hence prompted the enrolment in the courses in question.

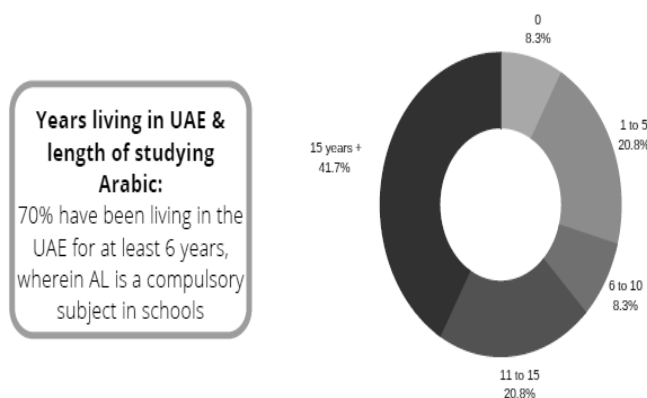


Figure 4: Years Living in the UAE

While the above helps in better understanding the profile of those who participated in the study, the next step was to ascertain participants' notions regarding the level of difficulty that the AL presents and their perceptions of the language and culture therein. Such data would later prove useful in interpreting the motivational orientations at play.

#### B. Learner Perceptions of Arabic Language

To better understand student perceptions towards AL, participants were asked a series of questions on the perceived level of difficulty of the language as well as mental associations.

When students were asked about the perceived difficulty of AL learning, 53.8% mentioned it was a difficult language to learn, 19.2% were undecided and nearly 27% claimed that it was not difficult. The latter response would correlate with the findings shown above where approximately 29% of the population has lived in the UAE for six or more years, wherein AL would have formed part of their compulsory secondary education. However, it was of interest to the researchers to find out the reasons why 73% of the population either felt that AL was difficult or was undecided. Hence, the following reasons were most cited (in order of highest occurrence): (1) nature of the language based on student perception of writing, pronunciation, and grammar, (2) difficulties encountered as an NHLL, and (3) comparing AL to other languages such as English, (4) learning skills and teaching skills, and (5) interest and will to learn. While the vast majority of these reasons can be inherently attributed to the language itself, it is important to note reasons 2, 4, and 5 which have to do with external factors such as learner profile, learner aptitude, and instructor engagement, as well as sustained motivation.

It was also important to understand student associations with the AL to gauge if the language was positively perceived. This was confirmed by the responses when students were asked 'What comes to mind when you think of AL and Arabic people?' The most common responses are included in word clouds below in Figure 5 and demonstrate a theme of a unique and close-knit culture (many students also cited various cultural symbols) with people who are philanthropic in nature.

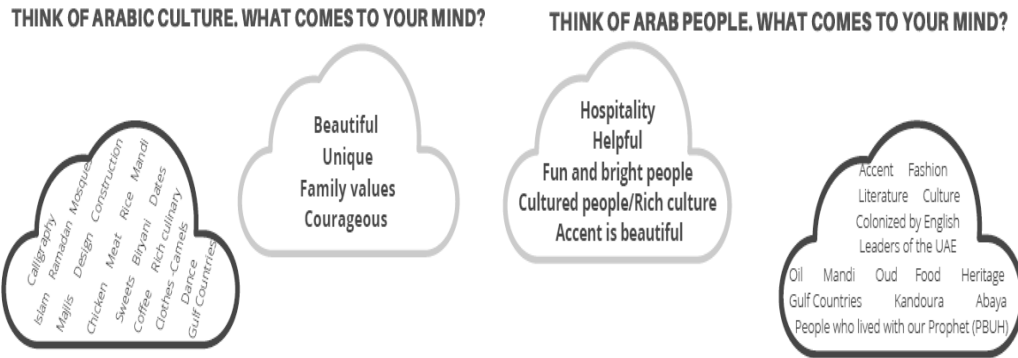


Figure 5: Perceptions of Arabic Culture and Arab People

Such responses tend toward the likelihood of an integrative motivational orientation among the population studied, as it can be assumed that when students positively perceive a target language (the yellow clouds), they are more likely to want to further their studies in efforts to more closely connect and more efficiently communicate with native speakers of that language. However, to examine the exact motivational orientations that were present among the surveyed population, the following sections will examine relevant survey results while answering the three sub-research questions of the present study.

**Sub-Research Question 1 - Are student motivational orientations integrative, instrumental, or both, what other factors interplay to create or steer learners’ motivation?**

In efforts to begin to answer this question, students were asked to complete the following open-ended sentence: ‘I am taking Arabic because...’. Qualitative results were tallied and coded and the most popular responses can be seen in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6: Motivation for Studying AL

As seen in the figure above, the majority of student responses fell under either integrative or intrinsic motivational orientations. Students either wanted to integrate into the target culture given their affinity to Arab origin, the ability to communicate with native speakers, or to more closely affiliate with their religion and/or religious community. Additionally, some of the cultural symbols that were mentioned in Figure 5 were reiterated here as a personal interest, for example, Arabic poetry and literature. Other intrinsic motivational concepts were also mentioned such as personal interest in learning languages and/or the perceived pleasure of learning AL. Integrative and intrinsic motivational orientations were followed by extrinsic and instrumental orientations (in order of popularity) as students cited the reality of living in an Arabic country (extrinsic), as well as the perceived ease of the subject, a university requirement, and the possibility of AL benefiting students in the search for a job.

These results mirror those ascertained when students were asked to answer the question: ‘Why learn AL in Dubai?’ (Figure 7). Over half of the respondents (51.2%) mentioned reasons that mapped to an integrative motivational orientation, 20.7% linked to extrinsic factors, 15.9% aligned with instrumental reasons, and 12.2% could be interpreted as both integrative and instrumental.



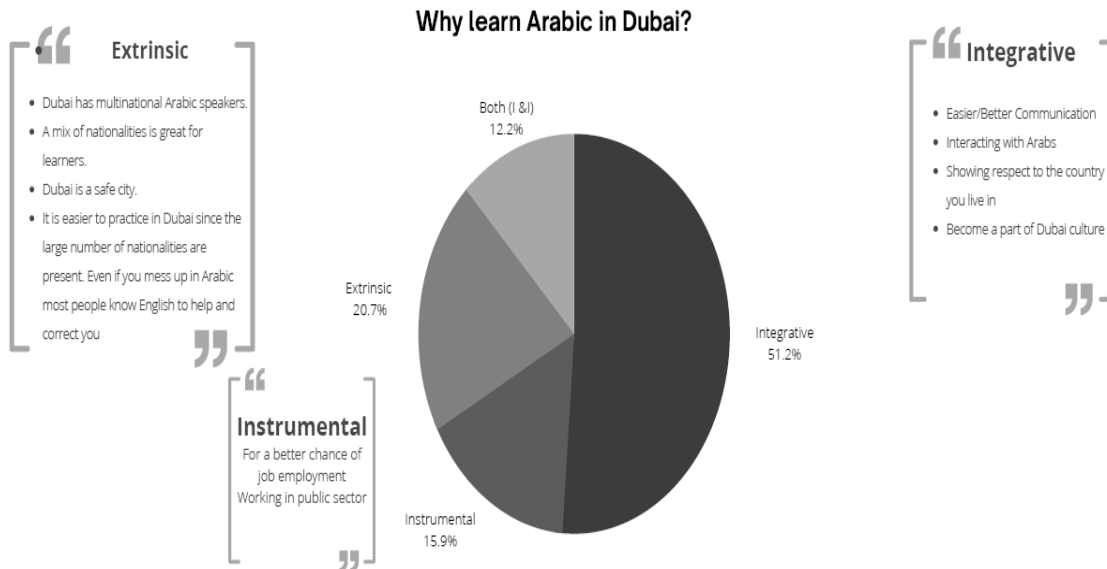


Figure 7: Reasons for Learning AL in Dubai as Classified by Motivational Orientations

Hence, the order of representation of motivational orientations in terms of popularity appears to be consistent throughout, where integrative motivational orientations have the strongest presence.

**Sub-Research Question 2 - Do HLLs and NHLLs as well as AHLLs and MHLLs differ in their orientations? If so, how?**

Responses to this question showed no differences among HLLs and NHLLs in terms of attitudinal constructs which diverges with the previous literature. Instead, 100% of the respondents agreed that AL is useful for communication (as well as learning any FL) and enjoyable. More specifically, when asked why AL is useful, over 16% of students once again referenced notions that align with an integrative motivational orientation (such as communication) followed by that of instrumental motivation, where over 12% cited employment. Adding together other responses that also link to an integrative stance, such as religious reasons and being of Arab origin, the integrative motivational orientation once again well surpasses that of instrumental with a total of approximately 25% of the responses (Figure 8).

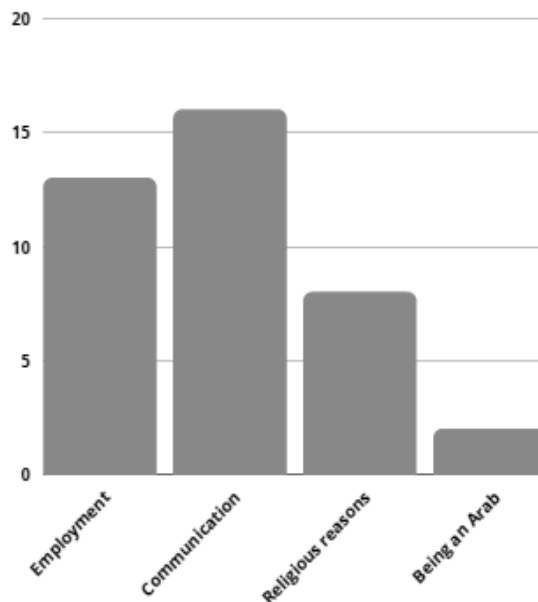


Figure 8: Why is Learning AL Useful?

Interestingly, when asked why learning AL is enjoyable, the most commonly recorded responses linked to extrinsic motivation; such as ease, the fun/interesting nature of the language, as well as the uniqueness/beauty of the language. These results were followed by integrative factors such as understanding religious texts and communication.

The above results lead to a potential conclusion that while students enroll in a course for purposes of use (integrative motivation), extrinsic factors are also a primary factor in their sustained enjoyment of the subject. This hence leads us to the final sub-research question of how students can be encouraged to study AL.

### **Sub-Research Question 3 - In what ways can students be encouraged to embark on the journey of learning AL in their universities?**

54% of student recommendations emphasized the need to nurture integrative motivations. Such open-ended responses included: 'Teaching conversational Arabic and a dialect (instead of MSA),' 'To immerse students in the language by creating language and cultural activities and events wherein communicative language and speaking happen more often,' 'Highlight the importance of AL in society,' and 'Creating material that has cross-cultural relevance such as Islamic History or Global Islam.' This was followed by 25% of students who stressed the need to promote the importance of AL in the job market and 21% of students who had no suggestions or wrote vague answers.

The above tends toward the conclusion (once again aligning with the results above) that in efforts to foster motivation, universities and relevant departments need to emphasize integrative means.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above results and discussion, it is clear that the motivational orientations of expatriate learners are primarily integrative, followed by notions that are instrumental in nature. It also appears that inherently integrative concepts are those that assist in formulating more positive attitudes towards the language and sustain learner motivation over time, this may be due to the inherent connection that learners strive to achieve with both AL and native speakers. Both findings point to andragogical implications wherein integrative means should be emphasized and highlighted in the curriculum as a means of fostering motivation to learn AL. Additionally, higher education institutes need to connect with AL learners on an extrinsic level by teaching the language in a way that is accessible to sustain interest and foster language use and practice in and outside the classroom (linking to notions of ease, fun, and interest cited throughout the responses).

The present study posed the main RQ: 'What are the motivational orientations of expatriate university students to learn AL in a major university in Dubai? And how do students perceive their attitude and motivation towards learning AL in Dubai?' While the sub-research questions analysed above contribute to answering this question, some additional conclusions can be drawn. It is evident that motivational orientations are multifaceted and the interplay of contextual factors with individual subjective factors (i.e. learner profile) resulted in favourable attitudes towards AL culture and people, which in turn motivated learning. As previously mentioned, integrative motivations appear to be more pervasive than instrumental ones. This hence means that universities need to promote the importance of learning AL through valuing Arabic as a language of communication, providing authentic learning experiences, and offering language immersive experiences through cultural activities and events, instead of highlighting the instrumental 'end goal' of the degree program and the courses taken therein.

Finally, based on the above results, it should be noted that AL faculty can contribute to increasing the integrative motivation (and hence inherent motivation towards learning AL) through applying the communicative approach, creating opportunities to speak Arabic with native speakers, and introducing a dialect instead of emphasizing MSA only.

### Limitations and Future Areas of Research

While the above findings may prove significant to the specific context being studied, they are not generalizable due to the size and scope of the study. Hence, further investigation is needed involving multiple universities, with a larger number of participants to add a wider spectrum of learners' motivational orientations. Another limitation arises from the fact that this study is based on the learner's vantage point and uses one instrument to collect data; a questionnaire, and hence no triangulation was possible. To dig deeper, taking into account the faculty members' viewpoints would help in the triangulation of not only theoretical frameworks but also vantage points and data sources. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study contribute to understanding the reasons that drive expatriate undergraduate learners to learn AL in Dubai context. It is in the contention of the researchers that the present study affords valuable data as preliminary work for further studies in the field of SLA, motivation, AL, and the UAE context in particular.

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