

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I.i. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is an attempt to investigate relationships across key variables in terms of second language learning. The focus is on attitudes, motivation and learning strategies of students of Arab origin.

During the past ten years, there has been a steady influx of students from the Middle East and Far Eastern countries at Indian universities. With the increase in demand for higher education in Jordan students had to seek admission to universities elsewhere. For these students Indian universities were amongst the most suitable options, in maintaining the optimum balance of economy and quality.

The experience of adjustment, both academic and social, that students undergo during their stay in India forms the context for this study. Building relationships both on and off campus is crucial in order "to survive socially, if not physically, skill in more than one language is a necessity" (Gardner, 1985:2). Arab students in India find themselves thrown into an environment in which English is the main medium of academic instruction as well as of social interaction.

The study is based on the assumption that the process of adjustment in the ESL setting has many facets. Adjustment includes the shaping of attitudes towards the language and its speakers, i.e., to the Indian variety of English vis-a-vis British English. Development of learning strategies and communicative competence also form an integral part of this process.

Motivation plays a central role in the learners' process of adjustment and accommodation. Littlewood (1989) claims that it "determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres" (53). Gardner and Lambert (1972) also state that "learning requires the interplay of four essential components: motivation (the wanting aspect), perception (the noticing aspect), responding (the doing aspect), and reward or reinforcement (the receiving aspect)" (134).

Politzer (1965) points out that, "the successful language learner is essentially the pupil who devised a successful self-teaching method" (18). Arab (Jordanian) students in India share the same experiences. They try to cope with the challenges of the new environment and the challenges of using the English language, it being the only medium of communication and academic instruction.

Do Arab students in India exploit available resources and contacts to strengthen their communicative competence in English?

How do they perceive the English language and its speakers - native and non-native? These are two of the main questions for which this study endeavors to provide answers. According to Joan Rubin (1975), the features that define the good language learner are aptitude, motivation and opportunity. These variables appear to play a significant role in second language learning, and therefore provide an useful frame of reference for this study.

I.ii. EDUCATIONAL SCENE IN JORDAN

The law of Education No. 16 of 1964 refers to the value of knowledge of a foreign language. One of the objectives in this law is to equip the pupil at the compulsory stage with knowledge of one foreign language which will assist him/her in later stages of education, or in his/her life generally.

(Culture and Education Law No. 6)

Educational innovations and development represent a feature of interaction and dynamism in the educational system. Such a phenomenon can be observed in Jordan in the field of educational technology special education and vocational instruction.

Educational policy provides the framework through which a state manages not only its educational system but also achieves

cultural, socio-economic and other objectives. In Jordan the current policy of education includes the following objectives :

- directing the educational system to respond better to social and individual need;
- emphasizing the importance of political education in the system through practicing democracy, human rights, and participation;
- providing opportunities to realize lifelong education;
- orienting the educational process to affect positively the analytical, scientific and experimental approach as well as to foster human value , Islamic and Arabic heritage;
- extending modes of education to include programmes of special education;
- emphasizing the concept of global experience to include vocational and technological experiences; and
- consolidating the scientific method in educational planning, development, evaluation, research and follow up practices.

I.iii. THE POLICY OF ELT IN JORDAN

The teaching of English in state schools in Jordan, starts in the fifth grade (fifth elementary class), at the age of eleven to twelve years, for boys and girls in urban and rural areas alike. The United Nations Relief and Welfare Administration (UNRWA) which runs 174 schools, follows the same system, and so do most of the national private schools.

Major finding in this present study is that, students are perceptive of the host culture. Students do adjust their own system of learning English to the conditions of the host environment. They adapt to the reality of being responsible for their learning. In addition, they establish for themselves a social adaptive system by which they can integrate with the host community. At the same time they remain focussed on learning the English language for academic attainment. .

Motivation in language learning has very often involved two types of motivation "Integrative" and "Instrumental". When these are translated into action they are termed as integrative and instrumental orientation (Gardner 1985). They involve the desire to attain the goal of learning the language, positive attitudes toward learning the language and effortful behaviour. The findings of the present study indicated high degrees at integrative and instrumental motivation. Students have shown positive attitudes toward learning the language and high degrees of motivational intensity which is in many ways, a desire to attain the goal of learning the language. Effortful behaviour, is indicated by the high frequency of learning strategy use.

Given the fact that attitudes and motivation are forms of acquired behaviour, or even create them in the learners. As a first step, towards this, teachers must be made aware of these terms and

of rules through mimicry-memorization. The new course, i.e. PETRA, on the other hand, is based on the communicative approach and is mainly concerned with making learners actively involved in the learning process by making it relevant to their needs and interests.

The communicative approach, which is the basis of PETRA, makes language more vital in the life of the student when he/she uses it efficiently. This can be seen through the situations in the lessons in which language is to be used. From the outset, PETRA starts with giving students the opportunity to use the language for a variety of purposes.

In spite of the changes and innovations in material and teaching approaches, students are still at a disadvantage with reference to their access to the language. Students have limited contact and exposure to the English language- approximately eight hours of classroom activities a week. They also have limited opportunities for using English outside the classroom. As a result, it is assumed that their attitudes and motivation is unlikely to lead to higher attainment in the English language. English for the Arab students remains a foreign language, and attaining it beyond the requirements of the school curriculum is a matter of the students' personal perseverance and motivation.

Arab students travelling to India, come to experience English as the vehicle of daily communication. Students are faced with the challenge of depending on the English language for social and academic purposes. In the new situation, opportunities for using the language have increased tremendously and new needs for the English language are realised. The new challenges and opportunities are due to the differences between EFL and ESL contexts. The differences pertain mainly to the domains in which EFL and ESL can be used.

I. iv. SECOND VS. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

Research in second-language acquisition highlights the need to identify the most significant and potentially predictive factors for success in second -language learning (among different learner groups). Some of the studies focus on immigrant population undergoing a process of acculturation into a new community (Lalleman 1987; Nayak et al. 1990; Vann and Abraham 1990; Dornyei 1990; Oxford and Park-oh 1993), while others deal with language acquisition among socio-culturally different groups within the same society (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Gardner 1985; Chamot and Kupper 1989; Oxford and Niykos 1989; Shohamy 1992). An important aspect of research in second-language learning is on motivation and the study of second-language learning in second and foreign language environments.

A second language is one that is learned on a location where that language is typically used as the main vehicle of everyday communication by most people. The learner of the second language is surrounded by stimulation, both visual and auditory in the target language, and thus, has many motivational and instructional advantages. A foreign language is one that is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as a medium of ordinary communication. Foreign-language learners are surrounded by their own native language and have to go out of their way to find situations and input in the target language. These students typically receive input in the new language only in the classroom by rather artificial means, no matter how talented and skilled the teacher is.

Kachru (1985) distinguishes between three language situations, which he views as concentric circles: the "inner" circle, the "outer" or "extended" circle, and the "expanding" circle. The circles represent the patterns of acquisitions and functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages. If we focus on the uses of English in the three different situations, we find that both the ENL (English as a Native Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language) situations involve the use of English for communication between members of the same group or speech community. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) situations on the other hand stand apart on account of the fact that English is used chiefly for communication with members of other groups and other

speech communities. English in the ENL setting would generally be used for communication between two or more native speakers, whereas in the ESL setting it would generally be used for communication between two or more non-native speakers. In contrast, English in EFL setting is chiefly used for communication between native and non-native speakers. The ENL and ESL situations are characterized by the use of English to convey socio-semantic information, whereas in the EFL situation English is used as a device to bridge a communication gap.

Quirk (1985), defines EFL contexts as those in which English is required for "external" purposes, i.e. for contact with people in other countries. In both ENL and ESL contexts, English is a part of the speaker's culture, whether intrinsically, as in the ENL context, or by a process of acculturation, as in the ESL context. English in an EFL context represents an alternative mode of communication, independent of the speaker's socio-cultural affiliation. Arab students have studied English as a foreign language in which the communicative situations were theoretical parts of the syllabus. Unlike the situation in India where students have the experience of real situations for communication. In addition, the new situations are real and express genuine needs that must be satisfied. Needs may vary in nature, they may be instrumental for utilitarian purposes, or integrative for establishing rapport and affinity with the host culture and its people.

The question of whether motivations differ between learners of second and foreign languages is very important and has been repeatedly raised in recent years (Crookes et al. 1989, Dornyei 1990). Dornyei (1990) suggests that integrative motivation might be far less relevant for foreign language learners than for those learning a second language. According to Dornyei, foreign language learners rarely have sufficient experience with the target language community to have clearly articulated attitudes toward that community and they are, therefore, not committed to integrating with that group. Dornyei concludes that instrumental goals contribute significantly to motivation for foreign language learners. He also states that integrative reasons are, for foreign language learners, less specific to a particular target culture and are determined more by attitudes and beliefs about foreign language and culture in general.

In an ESL country, such as India, the English language is available for the second language learner both within and beyond the classroom. In contrast in many EFL countries like Jordan the target language (English) is hardly available outside the classroom except through some means of mass media like newspapers and T.V. channels. But we can still argue that even the EFL situation in which there are no speakers of English, learners still do have each other. Gardner (1985) points out that "once students enter into an informal context, their level of intelligence and aptitude will

determine how much language material is learned, but since their effects are contingent upon students entering the situation they play secondary roles" (148). Gardner focuses on the link between motivation and learning in both formal and informal contexts. In informal contexts emphasis is on opting in or out of opportunities for language learning, which is largely governed by motivation. Whereas in formal instructions many factors may exert pressure, like attendance being forced on the learner. However, in both contexts (formal and informal) the basic motivational issues are the same, like whether the learner takes advantage of the opportunities for learning?, whether he/she persists at what is basically a difficult activity ?, and what factors facilitate such persistence?

Although SLA (Second Language Acquisition) contexts are varied, they are clearly distinct from another type of language-learning milieu, generally termed as FLL (Foreign Language Learning). The FLL context involves a community in which one or two languages are taught in school for several years as an academic subject. Many students, generally speaking, develop proficiency in them. As Littlewood (1984) points out that in learning an international language the aim is not so much to get into contact with the native speaking community of the target language, as much as to communicate with other people who have also learned it as a foreign language. In Arab countries English is taught as a school subject or on an adult level for purposes of giving the student a

foreign language competence which she / he may use in one of several the ways - to read literature, to read technical works, to listen to the radio, to understand dialogue in the movies, to use the language for communication, possibly with transient English or Amercian persons. In comparison, in India in the ESL environment, the main purpose for learning English is to be able to take part in internal as well as international interaction where English is commonly used.

Arab students travel to Western ENL countries such as America, U.K. and also to Eastern ESL countries such as India. However, we can not assume that the students' adjustment process and attitudes will be the same in both the ENL and ESL situations. Social and cultural values of the West are quite distinct from the values of both the Arab students and the Indian people. As a result, Arab students are expected to face a greater degree of difficulty in adjusting to the Western culture and its people. Arab students travelling to countries of similar culture and social values such as India are expected to adjust more easily. Cultural similarities play a very important role in the process of integration and perception of the host culture. Arab students in India find many similarities which provide a congenial environment for deeper and faster integration.

I.v. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

The use of English in India is generated by socio-cultural factors, involving identity and values associated with the English language. The relationship between language and indigenous patterns of life and culture is manifested by the extended function that English has acquired in the ESL context in India. In addition to the earlier uses - such as business, government administration, education and communication with people from other countries - English now serves as a link between speakers of different Indian languages. It is one of the chief languages of the media and hence, plays a significant role in terms of cohesiveness among the different Indian communities.

The second language setting rarely allows one to make a clear cut distinction between utilitarian purposes on the one hand, and socio-cultural purposes on the other (instrumental versus integrative motivation). The process of integration of language and culture naturally results in the communication of social identity and social values. Choices involved in this process are related to prestige, power, affiliation, and social status.

Second language learning in the native culture varies in the severity of acculturation experienced by the learner, and the motivations of the learners. Kachru (1976) notes that learning

English in India, by Indian learners, really does not involve taking on a new culture. According to Kachru the "Indianization" of English has led to a situation where English has few if any British cultural attributes. In such cases the learning of English does not necessarily pose a serious cultural conflict for the Indian learner. In spite of the similarities between Indian and Arab culture and values, for the Arab students Indian culture remains foreign. Given the fact that Arab students come from an Arabic monolingual society, for them learning English in India involves a potential risk of cultural conflict. Hence the second language (English) becomes the sole medium of communication, on which the learner is dependent for academic, as well as, social survival.

It has been found in earlier research that there is a shift in the attitudes of the Indian speaker of English by way of acceptance towards the Indian variety of English. The Indian speaker has somewhat recently learnt not only to attach certain value to English, but also to the Indian variety of English. These changing attitudes on the part of the non-native speaker are related to the function that English serves in the Indian context. Exclusive use of English, not only in academics / administration but also in the media and for social mobility, has resulted in favourable attitudes to the Indian variety of English. Studies conducted by Vanikar, Dalal, and Desai (1984) and by Phadnis (1986) suggest that Indian learners express a need to learn English for various purposes and reveal favourable

attitudes to English, as well as a desire to associate themselves with English-speaking Indians. Indian speakers of English have started using English more freely and for wider range of purposes. Therefore, it is being looked at as necessary tool for daily communication "when it is used as a second language. English is not necessarily the vehicle of distinctly British or American cultural values; it may well be the means of expressing those of the country where it has been adopted" (Krishnaswamy and Aziz 1978:95). Arab students in such an environment have greater opportunity for using English for both social and academic purposes. The ESL setting in India provides a more congenial environment for learning English.

I. vi. CULTURAL CONTACT AND ACCULTURATION

In India, English has the status of an official language. It is used as a medium of instruction in almost all the Indian universities. Indian students therefore, use English very frequently in and out of class, with their friends, teachers, family and classmates. Unlike Arab students, for the Indian students English occupies a legitimate place in their society. It helps them function socially and academically. Similarly, Arab students in India need to fulfill their newly realised needs in the Indian ESL environment. Arab students experience of the English language was confined to the language classroom. It was limited in terms of exposure and contact. In contrast, in India Arab students are dependent on English for

academic and social survival. As a result many related learner variables gain new dimensions. Some of these variables pertain to: students' perception of English and its speakers: their type of motivation (integrative and/or instrumental): and the way Arab students approach the learning of English by using effective learning strategies for manipulating new opportunities for contact.

Social interactions within the community play a significant role in perceptions of foreign students. For Arab students the new medium of interaction (English), and relatively new social norms influence the way they perceive both themselves and the target language community. As Shah (1978) puts it "Even if one were not to adopt a totally behaviouristic approach, there is no denying the fact man's perception of himself and of others, his understanding of the manner in which he should conduct himself and his expectations of how others should behave towards him are greatly influenced by the formal and informal processes of socialization" (P.72). Second language learning in another culture (Arab students learning English in India) clearly involves the deepest form of acculturation. The learner must survive within a strange culture, as well as, learn a language on which he is dependant for communication. In contrast, second language learning in the native culture (Indian students learning English in India) varies in the severity of acculturation experienced by the learner. Cultural experiences depend upon the

country, the cultural and socio-political status of the language, and the motivation of the learner.

Cultural experiences do appear to affect perception and subsequent learning in two ways. First, they promote the goal of perceptual versatility and. Second, they promote second language acquisition. Living, working or studying in a foreign environment is bound to have a far deeper effect than one or two hours a day of classroom instruction. Arab students learning English as a foreign language in their own culture, may view the English language as a representative of Western culture. On the other hand, experiencing English in India as a representative of Indian life style and culture can lead to a change of attitudes and perception of the English language. In addition, favourable attitudes of the Indian people towards Arab students exert a positive impact on the learning and living experiences of these students. Thus, being treated as welcome guests and seekers of knowledge, Arab and Indian students perceive one another as equals, as Eastern people sharing many cultural and social values.

The framework for the present study is derived from factors suggested by Schumann (1978). These factors include attitudes of Target Language group(TL) and Second Language (L2) learners. The positive presence of these factors creates what Schumann describes as a "good" language learning situation. Unlike Arab

students, Indian students do not necessarily have to experience the influence of these factors. Indian students have the variety of Indian English, which they can perceive as their own. They can learn English without having to involve their cultural mindset very deeply in their learning process. Hence, they learn Indian English in their own culture within the bounds of their own social surroundings.

I. vii. ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN CROSSCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The system of communication in a social group is both its means of communication, as well as, its means to preserve its culture. It is this dual role of language, which an outsider to the language culture encounters. While it is possible to master the linguistic features of the communicative system, the implicit meanings are parts of everyday life in the community. It is only through a reflexive experience of recording the experiences and encounters in the life of the community that access to its underlying meaning is gained.

Often, those affected by the crosscultural educational experience become vividly aware of their own nationality and culture "perception of one's own nationality witnesses perception of the nationality of others" (Robinson 1985:123). Language is not simply a formal system of sounds, words and syntactical structures; language

extends to the domain of human interaction, which for its own part follows certain rules. Every native speaker assimilates individual social experiences characteristic of his own culture. Kachru notes that for the Indian student, learning English in India does not involve taking on a new culture since one is acquiring Indian English in India. For Arab students the Indian culture is a foreign culture with which they have to integrate academically and socially. Kachru concludes that this process will depend upon the country and the socio-political and cultural status of the language being learnt.

It is assumed that education abroad will equip the learners with useful skills not available in the home country. The expertise learnt abroad will be devoted towards the economic and social development of the home country. For acquiring this knowledge and skill, they must remain culturally integrated with their own country and culture. In the new surrounding, the Arab student finds a society with a different culture, customs, habits, and values. This new environment is demanding in terms of adaptation to academics as well as life styles.

Unlike the situation in Arab EFL environment, the English language plays a very important part in the life of the Indian student. It is constantly present within both the social and professional domains. English is the medium of instruction in many Indian universities, thus it is very frequently used with teachers and fellow

students. A large number of Indian students' rate English as the language they know the best, and use most frequently. English in India is used as a link language between people of different regional linguistic backgrounds. It is also used with government officials, business people, with family members and friends, etc. In contrast, in the Arab EFL context, English is associated mainly with academic and educational goals and does not extend to the social domain. Hence, they live in an Arabic monolingual culture. Unlike Indian students, Arab students use English primarily, and less frequently, with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Arab students learn English as a foreign language in the home country. They learn it for anticipated and not immediate communicative needs. These needs may not become immediate unless they take up a profession that requires knowledge of English, or travel to English speaking countries. By travelling to India, Arab students realize the immediate need for English for several purposes. In the new ESL Indian situation English is, for both Indian and Arab students, the medium of daily academic and social interaction.

I. viii. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AS ACCULTURATION

The primary motive for learning a language is that it provides a means of communication. When a person perceives a clear communicative need for a language he / she is more likely to be drawn towards learning that language. A major factor in accounting for varying success in second language learning is the extent to which learning is motivated by real communicative needs. According to Littlewood (1984) these needs may be of two kinds. First, functional needs - these refer to the desire to convey messages without misunderstanding, to carry out transactions efficiently. Second, social needs - these refer to the desire to use language which is socially acceptable in order to integrate with the second language community. These two communicative needs are referred to by Gardner (1972, 1985) as integrative and instrumental. The two needs may overlap or be used by the same learner in two different contexts in learning two different languages. It is important to note that, these two types of needs are not permanent. On the contrary, they are interchangeable and subject to change or adjustment by the learner according to the learning context, or according to the language being learnt.

The concept of integration leads us to the process of acculturation. Acculturation is defined by Schumann (1978) as "The

social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group "(P.29). He also states that "any learner can be placed on a continuum that ranges from social and psychological proximity with speakers of the target language, and the learner will acquire the second language only to the degree that he acculturates" (29). There are two types of acculturation. The first involving social integration and sufficient contact with the second language group. The second involving psychological openness in which the learner looks at the second language group as a reference group whose way of life the he/she wants to adopt.

According to Schumann (1976), the social factors that affect the process of acculturation are social dominance and social distance. The two groups involved in acculturation (the second language learning group and the target language group) may be related in two different ways. First, by the factor of social dominance, a group that is dominant (politically, socially, technically, economically, culturally) will tend not to learn the language of the dominated group. Second, the social distance caused by the subordination of the two groups will decrease the likelihood of the dominant group learning the language of the dominated group. Therefore, Schumann predicts that second language acquisition is enhanced when the group to which the language learner belongs is equal to the target language group.

Schumann argues that the greater the social distance between two cultures the greater the difficulty the learner will have in learning the second language. Conversely, the smaller the social distance (the greater the social solidarity between two cultures) the better will be the language learning situation. When a learner encounters a new culture, his acculturation process will be a factor in how he perceives his own culture in relation to the culture of the target language community, and vice versa. Social distance as suggested by Acton(1952) is that, it is not particularly relevant regarding what the actual social distance is between cultures, so much as in what the learner perceives to be his own reality.

Sharing of favourable attitudes between both the language learning group and target language group is a crucial factor in the acculturation process, and subsequently in second language learning. Indian and Arab cultures share many similarities that can help the Arab students identify with many aspects of the Indian host culture. Arab students as well, travel to Western English speaking countries such as America and U.K. Western countries may fit into what Schumann describes as "bad" language learning situation. In such situations, social distance is thought to be caused by many cultural and social differences, which can result in an incongruent "bad" language learning situation. In contrast, the favourable attitudes of the Indian people, and cultural similarities between Arab

and Indian cultures provide a congenial "good" language learning situation.

I. ix. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims at examining the correlations among the following variables with many components in relation to the students' profile.

The variables examined in the study are :

1. Attitudes

- a) Attitudes towards native and non-native speakers of English
- b) Attitudes towards learning in an ESL environment
- c) Attitudes towards learning the English language

2. Motivation

- a) Motivational intensity
- b) Integrative motivation
- c) Instrumental motivation

3. Learning Strategies

- a) Cognitive strategies
- b) Metacognitive strategies
- c) Social strategies
- d) Affective strategies
- e) Compensation strategies

4. Communicative competence

Components of the student's profile are:

1. Length of stay in India
2. Field of study (Science, Humanities)
3. Age

In a study of Arab students' strategies for learning English in India many psychological and social variables emerge. Psychological factors pertain to attitudes toward the target language and its community and towards the social setting. Social variables relate to the similarities and differences of both, the host culture and the culture of the language learning group. Second language learning can be enhanced by favourable attitudes, especially when these attitudes are shared with the host community. In such cases, social distance and social dominance have little effect to exert, if any. Hence, the two cultures involved in the learning process perceive one another in a non-threatening environment. As a result, social variables activate social contact, and there is a felt need to integrate and identify with host culture.

Integrating with the host culture does not rule out the original aim of learning the second language for educational aspirations. The availability of a congenial environment "good language learning situation" makes language learning more efficient. The barriers that

are generally imposed by a totally insulated culture are non-existent. While pursuing educational objectives social contact and integration can also be maintained. For realizing success in these two objectives, students need to develop strategies for coping with the demands and needs of the learning situation. This approach may primarily be devised by the learners themselves to suit their own individual needs. Fulfilling these needs requires learning strategies which are generated by the learners to survive socially and academically. Learning strategies therefore, are mainly employed to manipulate available opportunities in both the social and academic environments. Deeper acculturation provides wider, frequent and varied exposure to the language and language context. Learners are provided with more opportunities for testing their self-devised learning strategies and for postulating their acculturation process towards social and academic fulfillment.