The Role of Attitudes and Motivation in Language Learning: A Social Psychological Study of Indian Students of Arabic

THESIS

Abstract

This research investigates the roles of Indian students' attitudes and motivation in their relationships to Arabic language learning. A major purpose of this study is to examine and demonstrate whether there is a possible relationship between achievement in Arabic and attitudinal/motivational variables among Indian Muslim students who were majoring in Arabic at the faculty of Arts, Aligarh Muslim University.

Students' attitudes and motivation are examined within Gardner's revised (2005) socio-educational model of language learning. Data have been collected from students. A modified questionnaire of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) is used to measure factors on motivation and attitudes toward Arabic Language learning and their effects on achievement of students. These five factors are as follows: 1) Integrativeness,
2) Attitude toward the Learning Situation, 3) Motivation, 4) Language Anxiety, and 5) Instrumentality.

The instrument (AMTB) represented in 74 items is administered to 50 postgraduate students who were doing M.A. in Arabic. Students’ examinations scores (overall grade) for two semesters are used as a measurement of their achievement in Arabic.

In the statistical analysis, the researcher used descriptive analysis, correlation and stepwise multiple regression analysis. The correlation analysis is conducted to identify the relationship between achievement in Arabic and the attitudinal motivational variables. Stepwise multiple regression analysis is conducted to examine how the attitudinal/motivational variables predict the achievement of students.

The results demonstrate that the mean correlation between achievement and motivation (r=.55) the higher than
those between language anxiety (r=-.43), instrumental orientation (r=.29) and attitudes toward learning situation (r=.19). The finding reinforces the important of students, motivation and attitudes in studying Arabic.

The major findings were:

- Motivation, integrativeness, and instrumentality were significantly correlate with achievement in Arabic, while language anxiety was found negatively correlated to achievement.
- Motivation was found as significantly the most predictor of achievement than other variables. This finding lend further support of Gardner's model of motivation and suggests that motivation is the most powerful influence on Indian Muslim students achievement in Arabic.
- Students possessed high anxiety about the Arabic language and their anxiety found negatively correlate to achievement.
The findings of the present study revealed evidence that the AMTB can be a positive tool to measure attitudinal/motivational variables of Indian Muslim learners of Arabic.

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is divided into two sections. In the first section the introduction, purpose of the study, problem statement, objectives, significance of the study and the hypotheses of the study are provided, stated and investigated. The second section highlights the historical background of Arabic language. It presents the origin of Arabic, Arabic as a religious language, Arabic as a world language. The situation of Arabic in India, Arabic at Islamic traditional school (Madrasa) education, Arabic in higher education and Arabic in the publication and Media are reviewed and discussed.

Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework for the research study. It reviews the relevant literature on attitudes and motivation. The chapter consists of the social
psychological approach on language learning, the individual differences in L2/FL learning, Gardner's socio-educational model of language learning with the variables, other perspectives on motivation and language learning, the studies conducted on attitude and motivation in particular sociocultural contexts and languages.

Chapter three describes the methodology used in the research study including the participants, instruments, pilot study of the modified questionnaire – Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), items analysis, and validation of the modified AMTB, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Chapter four presents the results and discussions of the study. The researcher has used the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) and has presented the results both in tables and in texts. In the statistical analysis the researcher determines the mean, standard deviation and correlation. The correlation and multiple regression analyses are used in determining the relationship between achievement in Arabic as
dependent variable (or criterion variable) and attitudinal motivational variables as independent variables (or predictor variables) as assessed by AMTB.

Chapter five presents a summary, conclusions, limitations, of the study as well as recommendations for further research.