

# **Analysing the Motivation of Iraqi Students for Joining Departments of English**

**تحليل حافز الطلاب العراقيين للانضمام إلى أقسام اللغة الانكليزية**

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#### 1. Introduction

Learning English was assumed to be the main problem in Iraqi schools. Therefore, the highest percentage of failure in the Central Exams for all levels, primary, intermediate and secondary schools, was in English.

English is set to learn in Iraq as a foreign language; starting from the fifth and sixth year of the primary schools. Then pupils have to learn it for another three years in the intermediate schools followed by two years in the secondary schools, now three years in the preparatory schools, whether they wish to learn it or not.

This compulsory study makes the majority of students who are unwilling to learn English, unable to do well in class. Many students lost their eagerness in learning this foreign language since they did not find it fruitful and interesting. Being over-burdened with heaps of words and phrases caused a state of reluctance and disinterest for learning English.

Previously, most teachers of English adopted the Audio-lingual Method or the Direct Method which focused on forms and accuracy of the students' performance. Thus, many teachers were used to drilling the students with continuous grammatical exercises especially at the primary school level. Their sole aim was to prepare learners through the primary, intermediate and secondary schools for the Central Exams.

Even nowadays, despite exposing the teachers to training in the communicative approach, many of them still avoid practising this approach as the oral communication makes up only ten percent of the exam score on the English test. This implies that they are more

interested in training students to read, write, and master the grammar component of English well in order to get high scores in the Central Exams.

Thus, there was no balance between this aim and the preparation for life – longlanguage skills once the exams are over. Therefore, there was no maintenance of interest in English learning as important for their immediate needs other than to pass the exams. The result is that most of the students are not satisfied with their abilities in English after studying it for eight years in their schools.

It is thought that learning a foreign language requires learner's interest since learning is a very emotional process. Feelings of fear, anxiety and anger are factors that negatively affect learning, in addition to stress which has a harmful effect on the physical level.

Students are not reluctant to learn a foreign language if they are interested in it or have the confidence to learn it well. They can be motivated to learn things that are important and meaningful to them. The difficult and abstract declarative knowledge in schools makes them demotivated learners. They find learning in school uninteresting or irrelevant to their daily life. Consequently, they show lack of attention, passivity, and negative attitudes.

Therefore, the issue of motivation in EFL settings is very important. Rost (2002: 1), electronic version, points out that " without student motivation, there is no pulse, there is no life in the class."

Teachers have to realize that all learning activities are achieved through students' motivation. Biggs (1991: 83) asserts this view by declaring that "life would be marvelous for teachers if all students wanted to learn."

Teachers of English have to consider motivation as the essence of language teaching since learning a language demands a mutual cooperation between the teacher and the learner. Therefore, motivation is viewed as "a matter of concern for the teacher as it is for the learner; it depends as much on the attitudes of the teacher as on the attitudes of the students." (Rogers, 1996: 66).

Making lessons interesting and attractive is of great help for students to learn the language successfully if they are motivated in classes. Cock (1996: 99) has emphasized that:

High motivation is one factor that causes the successful

learning; successful learning, however, may cause high motivation. The latter process of creating successful learning which can spur high motivation may be under the teacher's control, if not the former. The choice of teaching materials and the information content of lessons, for example, should correspond to the motivation of the students.

## 2. The Relation Between Motivation and Learning a Second Language

It is widely accepted among language teachers that motivation is an influential factor in language learning. High motivation leads to successful learning. Gas & Selinker (2001: 349) declare that "it makes sense that individuals who are motivated will learn another language faster and to a great degree", adding that numerous studies have provided statistical evidence that indicates "motivation is a predictor of language – learning success."

This view is asserted by Masgoret *et al* (2001: 281) who point out that attitudes and motivation are "key factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning in the classroom."

Motivation is usually defined as psychological trait leading people to achieve some goal. In language learning, the goal is either mastery of the language or achievement of a lesser aim. Attempts have been made to explain the following points:

1. what people who are motivated do to achieve their goals
2. how they view the task
3. how they are distinguished from people not so motivated
4. what external agencies like a teacher, course materials, instructional organization can do to promote motivation
5. whether motivation can be analysed into different kinds.

(Johnson & Helen Johnson, 1999: 220)

Motivation is often considered as the key learner variable because without it, nothing will be achieved. By employing certain methods, learners' motivation can be changed into a positive direction i.e. motivation can be promoted consciously.

It has been perceived that motivation to learn a second language differs from learning any other school subject, owing to the fact that second language is not only a communication code, but it is the

representative of the second language culture where it is spoken i.e. learning a second language entails learning a second culture. Williams (1994: 77) states:

The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an

alternation in self – image, the adoption of new social and cultural

behaviours and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner.

The existence of such strong sociocultural component has created either negative feelings or favourable attitudes by learners towards a language community, which initiated research of second language motivation at the end of 1950s in Canada by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, whose social psychological approach is still one of the most influential guideline in the study of second language motivation.

Another important aspect about second language motivation that it is not stable and static. It is a dynamic process. Dornyei (2001) ,as cited in (Schmitt, 2002, p.173), declares that motivation undergoes a cycle with three distinct phases:

1. Motivation needs to be generated to lead to the selection of the goal or task to be pursued. This motivational dimension is referred to as "choice motivation."
2. The generated motivation has to be actively maintained and protected while the particular action lasts. This motivational dimension is referred to as 'executive motivation' or 'volition'. It is suitable for learning in classroom settings as students face many distracting influences that hinder them from completing the task.
3. 'Motivational retrospection' is the third phase which follows the completion of the action; concerning learners' 'retrospective evaluation' of how things went. Learners' past experiences will determine the type of activities they will be motivated to do in the future.



A number of theories have been proposed during this century but, as cited in the **Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics**(1999: 221), they fall essentially into two kinds: mechanistic and cognitive. The mechanistic type focused on the notion of need reduction such as learning for getting benefits that reduced a need whether primary like having food to satisfy hunger or secondary like information to satisfy curiosity. Human needs range from subsistence needs to Maslow's hierarchy of safety > love > self – esteem > self – actualization.

According to complex human learning, many recent cognitive analyses of motivation have emphasized the subjective evaluation of the probability of success regarding the level of aspiration and the attributions of causality of success. The attribution theory discusses that

attributions of causality of responsibility decide future action owing to three dimensions as follows:

locus of control	self vs.others
intentionality	ability vs. effort
stability	stable vs. unstable

It is worth to say that many theorists and researchers have emphasized that it is important to recognize the construct of motivation as a multi – factorial one, not as a single entity. Oxford & Shearin (1994) have analysed twelve motivational theories or models included those taken from socio – psychology, cognitive development, and socio – cultural psychology. They identified six factors that impact motivation in language learning, cited in a paper presented at The Millennium MICELT 2000, 3<sup>rd</sup> Malaysia International Conference for English Language Teaching, by Hussin et al. The six factors are as follows:

1. Attitudes which imply sentiments toward the learning community and the target language
2. Beliefs about self; involving experiences about one's attitudes to succeed, self – efficacy, and anxiety

3. Goals perceiving clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning.
4. Involvement showing the extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process
5. Environmental support indicating the extent of teacher and peer support, and the integration of cultural and outside – of – class support into learning experience
6. Personal attributes involving aptitude, age, sex, and previous language learning experience.

### 3. The Concept of Motivation in Psychology

Motivation has been defined differently in agreement with the development of learning and theories of motivation in psychology. Traditionally, motivation was related to terms of volition, will, instinct, drive or need; representing psychological processes.

Kumar (2004: 134-5) points out that the word 'motivation' has been derived from the Latin word 'mover' which means to put into action or to move. In other words, it is the process of putting the organism into physiological or psychological action which enables man to fulfill his needs and desires. Many words refer to motivation such as: "wants, striving, desire, need, motive, goal, aspiration, drive, wish, aim, ambition, etc.. (ibid: 133).

Nearly, a similar insight is recognized by Brown (1994: 152) who states that "motivation can be defined as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action."

Thus, most of the traditional concepts of motivation have linked it with some inner force. Yet; all theories and tendencies of looking at psychological processes were declined with the advent of behaviorist psychology. Behaviorists emphasized that motivation should be studied in behavioral terms. Pintrich & Schunk (1996: 4) state that motivation was "a continual level of behavioral responses to stimuli caused by some reinforcement."

Then, two theories related to behaviorism (drive and arousal theories) linked motivation with the concepts of drive and arousal. Consequently, motivation was defined as an intensity of behaviour.

In the late 1950s and in the 1960s, theories of psychology developed to broaden the limited views of the behaviorist theories to explain learning and motivation. Researchers began to study motivation from a cognitive perspective. Analysis of the cognitive

psychology theories developed in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Motivation was conceived to be a process influenced by people's thoughts and beliefs.

Gardner (1985: 50) asserts this view by stating that " motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal and favorable attitudes toward the activity."

It is worth to know that the original impetus in second language motivation has evolved from the social psychology since learning the language of another community is related to the learner's dispositions towards the speech community. Lambert (1963) has proposed a "social psychological model"; emphasizing cognitive factors such as language aptitudes and intelligences as well as affective factors like attitudes and motivation. In this model, Lambert argues that the extent to which an individual successfully acquires a second language will depend on the learner's ethnocentric tendencies, attitudes towards the other community, orientation towards language learning, and motivation.

#### **4. The Concept of Motivation in the TESOL Field**

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is a field that contains contributions of multiple disciplines to build up its theoretical and practical foundations.

The close relationship between learning and motivation is asserted by many experts in psychology; affirming that motivation affects learning. Brown (1994: 114) declares that "motivation is a key to learning another language." Littlewood (1984: 53) emphasizes this view by stating that " motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres."

Thus, learning may be impossible without motivation. Teachers of English have to generate motivation to learners since "skills to motivate learners are crucial for language teachers." (Dornyei, 2001, p.1).

According to the importance of motivation in the learning process, it is better to know its components. Motivation comprises three levels: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. These three levels correspond with the three basic constituents of the second language learning process i.e. the target language, the language learner, and the language learning environment. They also reflect the three different aspects of language: the social dimension, the personal

dimension, and the educational subject matter dimension. (Clement et al., 1994) as cited in Kumar (2004: 3).

Dornyei (2001: 19) has clarified the three levels of motivation by stating that the language level refers to aspects of L2 culture and community, and their intellectual and pragmatic values and benefits for the learner. The learner level involves the personal characteristics brought by learners to the learning process such as self – confidence. The third level, learning situation level comprises three components. First, course \_specific motivational components related to the syllabus ,the method, the instructional materials, and the learning tasks. Second, the teacher – specific motivational components which deal with the teacher'sbehaviour, personality, and teaching style. The third component is the group \_specific motivational components such as goal orientations, norm and reward system, group cohesiveness, and classroom structure. Dornyei refers to this framework of motivation as an educational approach to second language motivation since his model puts much emphasis on motivation in the classroom.

Researchers such as Oxford & Shearin (1994), Grookes & Schmidt (1991), started to call for a broadening of the TESOL research agenda to include the contemporary cognitive approaches to motivation developed both in psychology and in education .Consequently ,the new achievement motivation theories with the most recent socio – constructive theories have started to be incorporated in the TESOL field.

Therefore, motivation has turned to be a complex multidimensional construct influenced by internal and external factors. It is "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal(s)." (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.120)

Since 1972, there were two related concepts of motivation in TESOL: instrumental and integrative. Gardner and Lambert have presented these two types. A learner, with an instrumental motivation, wants to learn second language to fulfil a particular objective such as gaining a certain type of qualification, employment prospects or a higher degree, etc..., whereas a learner, integratively motivated ,has a genuine interest in the second language community. He wants to learn the second language to communicate with the speakers of that language to understand their culture.

Simultaneously, in psychology field, Deci (1972) has proposed two related concepts of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Learners who

are interested in learning tasks and outcomes for their own sake are motivated intrinsically, whereas learners with extrinsic motivation, achieve the same tasks only to gain rewards.

Comparing these concepts with those in the TESOL field, they are much related to each other. This indicates the close relationship between the field of psychology and the TESOL field.

## 5.Types of Motivation

Learning a second language may have multiple reasons for learners. Sometimes they learn a language because they want to acquire, use, and communicate with those who speak the language, or perhaps they want to live in their society and be familiar with their culture. Yet; there are other learners who want to go through higher studies, pass a test, get a job or move to English – speaking countries. Owing to these various reasons, motivation has been classified by researchers into more than one type.

A general accepted view, by all researchers, is that motivated learners will achieve greater success in learning a foreign language; being more active in the learning process in spite of the differences in their motivation types,

As mentioned before, the notions of instrumental and integrative motivation have been introduced by Lambert and Gardner in 1970. They point out that instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes such as employment, travel or exam purposes, etc..., whereas integrative motivation indicates a desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. Lambert (1974: 98) points out that integrative motivation refers to "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group." The instrumental motivation refers to "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language."

Integrative motivation involves learners who are psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour which characterize members of the foreign language community. Consequently, such learners will have an internal and more enduring motivation for language study. Moreover, they will achieve greater competence in the foreign language. Brown (2002: 75) highlights the learner's orientation for learning the second language by stating:

Motivation refers to the intensity of one's impetus to learn. An integrative orientation simply means the learner is pursuing a second language for social and/or cultural purposes, and within that purpose, a learner could be driven by a high level of motivation or a low level. Likewise, in an instrumental orientation, learners are studying a language in order to further a career or academic goal. The intensity or motivation of a learner to attain that goal could be high or low.

In the TESOL field, as mentioned before, Deci and Ryan have created the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation theory. According to their view, intrinsic motivation refers to motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do, whereas extrinsically motivated behaviours are actions done to achieve instrumental aims such as rewards or avoiding a punishment.

In other words ,extrinsic motivation implies the learner's desire for achievement for an external reward such as to pass exams or to get a job, whereas intrinsic motivation is defined by Bandura (1977: 107)as "the desire to perform or take part in activities without such external inducement or reward."

Many studies by researchers such as Deci& Ryan (1992:29) assert that an intrinsically motivated language learner is more likely to achieve mastery in a foreign language and perform better in activities. In other words,intrinsic motivation is considered a key component to develop a certain level of proficiency in that language.

Some researchers declare that it is not always easy to distinguish between the types of motivation since there are other reasons for learners to learn that language, which are unrelated to either of the two motivational orientations. For example, they have to study it by pressure from their parents, peers, teachers, etc..Deci (1980: 30-1) clarifies the issue of distinction between the two types by stating:

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is frequently made on the basis of whether there is an externally mediated reward or

constraint present in the situation. When people receive a reward such as money, or praise, or avoidance of punishment for doing an activity, they are considered to be extrinsically motivated. If there is no apparent external reward, they are said to be intrinsically motivated. In the latter case, the reward is supposed to be in the activity itself.

It is obvious that integrative motivation correlates closely with intrinsic motivation, whereas instrumental motivation correlates with extrinsic motivation. This correlation issues because both of integrative and intrinsic types are associated with the learner's orientation towards the foreign language and culture with a desire to integrate into that culture. In contrast, instrumental and extrinsic types are related to learners who have a specific purpose for learning a foreign language such as qualifying for a job or achieving higher social status without any need or desire to integrate into a new culture.

## 6. The Test

The participants were (47), first year students at the Department of English at the University of Kerbala, being also the first group to join this new department. They had been educated in an Arabic speaking environment. Each student had received 7–8 years of English instruction at schools before joining the university. None of the participants had lived abroad or taken extra English classes. All the students agreed willingly to complete the questionnaire.

Before handing the questionnaire to the students, the purpose was explained carefully. They were told that the questionnaire could be completed anonymously and their honesty in answering would be appreciated. They were given as much time as needed to complete the questionnaire without conferring with classmates. Students were encouraged to ask the researcher, being the class instructor, to help in understanding certain points.

A sample of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix I. It is adapted from (integrative / instrumental section of test) in appendix of Gardner, R. (1985), **Social Psychology and Second Language Learning**, Arnold, London. Likert scale ( modified 7 point to 5 scale point) is used; ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.



The questionnaire contains eight statements with which some people agree and others disagree. Students were asked to indicate their opinions by circling the number of the option they choose, indicating the extent to which they disagree or agree with that statement. The odd – numbered answers are integrative motivation whereas the even – numbered ones are instrumental. The variables assessed in the questionnaire are divided into two orientations. The first is the integrative orientation in which the scale includes four items to investigate how much the learners learn English with a genuine interest to assimilate with the foreign language, culture, community, their way of life, literature, etc..., showing their integrativeness towards the foreign language. The second is the instrumental orientation where the scale contains four items. The respondents are asked to measure their utilitarian reasons for learning English.

## 7. Test Analysis

The test shows that there is no lack of motivation in learning a foreign language. Yet, the type of learners motivation for certain tasks differs. Item (1) shows that (39) students, (83%) like to study English to allow them to be at ease with the speakers of that language for integrative reasons, whereas (8) students, (17%) only agree with this item for instrumental reasons.

Concerning item (2), (27) students i.e. (57%) think that studying English is important for their future career, motivated integratively, whereas (20) students, (43%) are motivated instrumentally to think so.

As for item (3), (30) students i.e. (64%) believe that studying English is important to let them meet and communicate with more and different people, motivated by integrative reasons. On the other hand, (17) students, (36%) are motivated instrumentally.

Item (4) shows that (26) students, (55%) think that studying English makes them much known people because of integrative motivation, whereas (21) students, (45%) are motivated instrumentally to get such prestige.

As for item (5), (31) students i.e. (66%) study English to be familiar with English and literature motivated integratively. In contrast, (16) students, (34%) have this aim for instrumental reasons.

Item (6) shows that (36) students, (77%) study English to get a good job, motivated integratively, whereas (11) students, (23%) think so because of instrumental motivation.



As for item (7), (22) students, (47%) study English to be able to participate freely in the activities of other cultural groups. They wish to perform this task for integrative reasons, whereas (25) students, (53%) have instrumental motives for doing this task.

The last item (8) indicates that students will get more respect if they know English. (17) students, (36%) study English for integrative motives, whereas (30) students, (64%) are motivated instrumentally for achieving this goal.

The results show clearly that the majority of students are motivated integratively to study English, whereas other students are motivated instrumentally. This test shows also that students are motivated by both two types of motivation : integrative and instrumental motivation. This asserts that there is no lack of motivation among our students. The results

are shown in the following table:

No.of Items	No.of students motivated integratively	%	No.of students motivated instrumentally	%	Total No. of students
1	39	83	8	17	47
2	27	57	20	43	47
3	30	64	17	36	47
4	26	55	21	45	47
5	31	66	16	34	47
6	36	77	11	23	47
7	22	47	25	53	47
8	17	36	30	64	47

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the test expose ,as mentioned before, that the testees are both instrumentally and integratively motivated, which contradicts the idea of being oriented only instrumentally. Also it has

been shown that students are motivated for integrative purposes more than for instrumental

ones, in addition to the fact that both types of motivation are interrelated.

These results entail some implications for pedagogical process. Teachers of English have to sustain motivation in learners since it is the key factor for the learning process, taken into consideration that the conditions of successful language learning are lacking such as not having enough opportunities for interaction with native speakers besides not having enough proficient models in our educational institutions. Teachers, syllabus designers, and educational authorities have to co-operate to find new ways for improving the quality of teaching and learning English. Developing programs such as foreign exchange programs with other universities, 'homestay' programs in English speaking countries, or other different activities can help students to improve their proficiency in English.

Instructors may also exploit learners' intrinsic and positive attitudes towards English language and culture on one side with the native language and culture on the other. The ideal prospect by the learner is to have a combination of both types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

A proper integration of the two types will lead to productive outcomes.

Instructors have to help students to decide their goals for studying English and incorporate them into their long-term goals.

## 9. Suggestions

1. Conducting further studies on other educational levels such as post-graduate learners.
2. Tackling other aspects on the same level ( first - year/college students) such as attitudes, perspectives, etc....
3. Having other studies which give more insights to the linguistic achievement of motivation.

## Abstract

The great increase in the number of English language learners in comparison to previous years led the researcher to analyse the motivation of the first year students of the Department of English/Morning study/College of Education/University of Kerbala.

The researcher tackles briefly the status of learning English in Iraq, and then explains the concept of motivation in psychology as well as in the TESOL field in addition to the relation between motivation and learning a second/foreign language.

The students were given a Motivation Test adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (1985) to know whether they are instrumentally or integratively oriented towards English language learning.

The results reveal that there is no lack of motivation among our students. They are motivated both instrumentally and integratively, but

their motivation for integrative purposes is more than of instrumental ones. Some recommendations and suggestions are presented in this research as well.

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## Appendix 1

### Quick Motivation Test

(adapted from Gardner 1985, full modern version on <http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/englishamtb.pdf>)

1. Studying English can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English.

Strongly	Moderate	Slightly	Neutr	Slightly	Moderate	Strongly
y	ly	y	al	y	ly	y
Disagr	Disagree	Disagr		Agree	Agree	Agree
ee	2	ee	4	5	6	7
1		3				

2. Studying English can be important to me only because I'll need it for my future career.

Strongly	Moderate	Slightly	Neutr	Slightly	Moderate	Strongly
y	ly	y	al	y	ly	y
Disagr	Disagree	Disagr		Agree	Agree	Agree
ee	2	ee	4	5	6	7
1		3				

3. Studying English can be important to me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.

Strongly	Moderate	Slightly	Neutr	Slightly	Moderate	Strongly
y	ly	y	al	y	ly	y
Disagr	Disagree	Disagr		Agree	Agree	Agree
ee	2	ee	4	5	6	7
1		3				

4. Studying English can be important to me because it will make me



a more knowledgeable person.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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5. Studying English can be important to me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate English art and literature.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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6. Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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7. Studying English can be important to me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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8. Studying English can be important to me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of a foreign language.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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**Source:** integrative/instrumental section of test in appendix of Gardner, R. (1985) *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning*, Arnold, London, adapted for use in UK. Odd-numbered answers are integrative motivation, even-numbered instrumental.