

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES OF LANGUAGE
LEARNING MOTIVATION: THE CASE OF YEMENI
EFL UNDERGRADUATES AT THE HADRAMOUT
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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UNDERGRADUATES AT THE HADRAMOUT UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

by

RAIS AHMED AL-TIMIMI

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMTB	The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
HUST	Hadramout University for Science & Technology
L2	Second/Foreign Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
SL	Second Language
TL	Target Language
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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**PERSPEKTIF SOSIOEKONOMI MOTIVASI PEMBELAJARAN
BAHASA: KES PELAJAR PRASISWAZAH YEMEN YANG
MEMPELAJARI BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA
ASING DI HADRAMOUT UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE &
TECHNOLOGY**

ABSTRAK

Konsep kesepaduan dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa asing telah dirumus semula secara teoretis dalam bidang penyelidikan motivasi oleh penyelidik seperti Csizér dan Dörnyei (2005). Konsep yang dirumus semula ini mengambil kira tanggapan tentang sendiri yang wajar yang merujuk kepada kemahuan pelajar bahasa untuk mempelajari atau menggunakan bahasa sasaran bagi membentuk satu identiti atau imej sendiri yang selari dengan ciri-ciri sosioekonomi/budaya dalam persekitaran terdekat mereka. Tanggapan ini telah diguna pakai dan secara empirisnya disahkan dalam kajian yang dijalankan dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa asing seperti yang dilaporkan oleh Lifrieri (2005). Fakta ini dan langkanya/kurangnya penyelidikan yang berkaitan dengan isu sendiri yang wajar ini dalam konteks Yemen, menjadi motivasi utama penyelidikan ini yang mengkaji tentang sumber identiti atau imej sendiri yang dibentuk oleh pelajar Yemeni yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing. Kajian ini mengukur kecenderungan pemaduan pelajar Yemen ke dalam kelompok sasaran, khususnya kelompok tempatan. Kelompok sasaran ini kebanyakannya terdiri daripada penutur Yemeni yang menuturkan bahasa Inggeris yang kini bekerja dalam projek petroleum di Wilayah Hadramout dan mereka dianggap berstatus tinggi dari segi sosioekonomi/budaya. Oleh hal yang demikian, kajian ini meneliti kolerasi antara latar belakang sosioekonomi dengan kecenderungan pemaduan dan motivasi sampel untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini mengguna pakai kerangka teoretis,

konseptual dan kontekstual yang berdasarkan kerangka *Integrative Motivation* oleh Gardner (2001a) dan *Status-based Approach to Social Stratification* oleh Bourdieu (1985; 1986; 1989) untuk mengkaji pengaruh faktor sosioekonomi terhadap tahap motivasi pelajar untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggeris. Dalam hal ini, tiga soal selidik survei telah digunakan, yakni AMTB berdasarkan Gardner (1985b), pengkonsepan modal tripihak berdasarkan Bourdieu (1986) dan skala kesan projek minyak berdasarkan Houroumtcho's (2004). Semua soal selidik telah dikemukakan kepada 155 orang pelajar yang merupakan penuntut tahun empat di English Department, College of Arts and Education, Hadramout University of Science and Technology, Yemen. Di samping soal selidik, temu bual separa berstruktur terhadap individu dan kumpulan fokus juga digunakan sebagai metode penyelidikan kualitatif untuk menyokong data yang diperoleh daripada soal selidik. Sejumlah teknik analisis kuantitatif dan kualitatif juga dimanfaatkan untuk menganalisis data kajian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat bukti ketara yang menyokong ramalan tentang peranan modal ekonomi, jangkaan pelajar terhadap projek minyak, modal budaya, dan pekerjaan ibu bapa dalam mempengaruhi kecenderungan pepaduan dan motivasi sampel untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini juga membuktikan bahawa pelajar Yemeni yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing dan tidak beruntung dari segi ekonomi sangat cenderung untuk berpadu dengan kelompok sasaran dan mempamerkan tahap motivasi yang tinggi terhadap manfaat mempelajari bahasa Inggeris. Pendek kata, dapatan kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa pelajar Yemeni yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing dan tidak beruntung dari segi ekonomi mempunyai harapan yang tinggi terhadap projek petroleum di Yemen dalam mencapai cita-cita kini dan kala depan. Dapatan kajian juga mengimplikasikan bahawa penutur bukan jati bahasa sasaran, yakni penutur Yemen

yang menuturkan bahasa Inggris, sekiranya dikaitkan dengan amalan sosioekonomi/budaya yang positif, misalnya proyek petroleum, boleh mempengaruhi pembentukan identitas atau imej sendiri pelajar. Oleh hal yang demikian, pemahaman terhadap pengaruh peranan faktor sosioekonomi terhadap motivasi pelajar Yemen untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris merupakan implikasi penting kajian ini.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION: THE CASE OF YEMENI EFL UNDERGRADUATES AT THE HADRAMOUT UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ABSTRACT

The concept of integrativeness in Foreign Language Learning (FLL) contexts has been theoretically reformulated recently by scholars in the field of motivational research such as Csizér and Dörnyei (2005). The reformulated concept takes into consideration the notion of “possible selves” which refers to the desire of language learners to learn or use the Target Language (TL) to create an identity or self image that is congruous with some socio-economic/cultural traits in their closer environment. The concept of “possible selves” has been adopted and empirically confirmed in studies conducted in various FLL contexts as reported in Lifrieri (2005). This and the research gap with regard to the notion of possible selves in the Yemeni context are the main motivations behind the present study which investigated the sources of desirable identities or self images constructed by Yemeni EFL learners. This was achieved by gauging the integrative tendencies of the Yemeni EFL learners towards the TL group, essentially local group of English speakers. This TL group comprises predominantly Yemeni speakers of English who are currently employed in the petroleum project in the Hadramout Province and thus, considered as highly positioned in the socio-economic/cultural sense. The present study therefore investigated the correlation between socio-economic backgrounds and the sample’s integrative tendencies and motivation to learn English. It utilises a theoretical, conceptual, and contextual framework that is based on Gardner’s (2001a) Integrative Motivation Framework and Bourdieu’s (1985; 1986; 1989) Status-based

Approach to Social Stratification to investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on the motivation levels of the students towards learning English. To this end, three survey questionnaires based on Gardner's (1985b) AMTB, Bourdieu's (1986) tripartite conceptualization of capital, and Houroumtcho's (2004) oil project effect scale, were used. All questionnaires were administered to 155 students enrolled in the fourth-year level of the English Department of the College of Arts and Education, the Hadramout University of Science and Technology, Yemen. Besides questionnaires, individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups were employed as supportive qualitative research methods to further elaborate on the data obtained from the questionnaires. A range of quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques were used to analyse the data of the study. The results of the study provide tangible evidence in support of the predictive roles of economic capital, students' expectation of the oil project, cultural capital, and parental occupations in influencing the sample's integrative tendencies and motivation to learn English. It is evident that economically disadvantaged Yemeni EFL students have strong integrative tendencies towards the TL group, and exhibit high level of motivation towards the benefits of learning English. In sum, the study suggests that the disadvantaged Yemeni EFL learners have optimistic expectations of the oil project in Yemen to attain present and future goals. The findings of the study imply that non-native TL speakers, that is, Yemeni speakers of English associated with socio-economic/cultural practices that are positive, such as the oil project, can influence the construction of the learners' identity or self image. Developing an understanding of the influential roles of the socio-economic factors on the motivation of the Yemeni FL students to learn English is therefore an important implication of the study.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In simple terms, motivation can be defined as a driving force that in many cases, both academic and non-academic, may lead to achievement and success for individuals. In some cases, people may do something just because they were asked to, or to please others, and not because they are motivated. Merely having the desire to do something may not influence motivation. Indeed, having desires and goals does not mean that they will be fulfilled in some way unless the individuals work diligently to achieve them.

Although the term “motivation” may seem straightforward, it is actually ‘one of the most elusive concepts in the whole domain of the social sciences’ (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 2). This is probably due to the fact that motivation is situated at the intersection of psychological, physiological and social realms of human action (Lifrieri, 2005). Undoubtedly, motivation is an important factor in language learning and has been extensively investigated by numerous research pioneers. In the realm of second and/or foreign language (henceforth L2) learning, a motivated student is defined as one who wants to achieve a particular goal, who is willing to work hard to achieve the goal, and who would be satisfied in the process of achieving the goal (Gardner & Smythe, 1981). In this study, the term “L2” refers to both second language (henceforth SL) and foreign language (henceforth FL) when the distinction between them is not of primary importance. In the same way, the terms ESL and EFL are used to refer respectively to English as a second language and English as a foreign language.

From a historical perspective, the study of L2 motivation was brought to our attention around 40 years ago in 1972 by the works of two prominent Canadian psychologists: Wallace Lambert and Robert Gardner. At that time, Gardner and Lambert posited two well-known types of motivation, i.e. integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the desire of the language learner to learn the language so that s/he can become a member of the target language (henceforth TL) community. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, refers to the situation of those learners who want to know the language so that they can have some social and economic benefits such as better jobs, higher salaries, and so on. Since then, the field of L2 motivation has rapidly grown as the importance of motivation in different language learning contexts has been empirically confirmed. In this regard, Dörnyei (2001, p. 1) clearly states that ‘motivational concerns occupy much of our attention as we consider how to encourage lazy students to work harder, how to make language classes more inspiring, how to supplement dull teaching materials, and how different rewards and incentives work’.

It ought to be noted that the role of motivation in all human activities has been recognised for decades; particularly in the field of social psychology and education (Noels, Pelletier, & Vallerand, 2000). More interestingly, researchers seem to be in agreement on how human motivation is construed. In psychology, for instance, Murry (1964, p.7) defines motivation as an ‘internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person’s behavior. It is not observed directly, but inferred from his behavior or simply assumed to exist in order to explain his behavior’. For Pintrich and Schunk (1996, p.4), motivation is ‘the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained’. In the same vein, Brown (1994, p.152) describes

motivation as ‘an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action’.

With regard to L2 learning, Gardner (1985, p.10) defines L2 motivation as ‘the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language’. In this definition, Gardner clearly identifies three elements which are effort, desire, and attitudes that have to work together in order to have positive motivation. He explains that ‘[e]ffort alone will not bring motivation’ (ibid). Gardner (1985, 1988) further argues that when one is conducting an investigation involving a homogenous group of students’ attitudes and motivation towards studying such subjects as mathematics, history, or geography, the cultural variable is not an issue as all these subjects have elements of the students’ own culture. Studying another language, on the other hand, involves studying the culture of the TL group because language learning is not just learning sounds and linguistic codes of the language. The linguistic features are part of the TL culture and representative of the community’s worldview. Thus, a good language learning programme stresses the importance of including the cultural aspect of the TL as an integral part of the curriculum (Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei (1996) expresses his view of the complexity of motivation to learn an L2, which involves psychological and non-psychological factors, by declaring that:

Language is at the same time: (1) a communication coding system that can be taught as a school subject; (2) an integral part of the individual’s identity involved in almost all mental activities (just think of sentence like “This doesn’t sound like me”); and also (3) the most important channel of social organization embedded in the culture of the community where it is used (p.72).

The last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed what Gardner himself has called a ‘motivational renaissance’ (Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a), with new concepts from educational psychology widening the scope of the motivational research agenda, and the emergence of new conceptualizations of motivation itself. It has been increasingly recognised that learner attributes and activity are influenced profoundly by his/her socio-cultural environment. The interplay of cognitive and contextual variables as two sources affecting the motivation of L2 learners has been recently acknowledged and reaffirmed in motivational research. Motivation is found to reside at the interaction of individual and environmental dimensions (Hickey, 1997, McGroarty, 2001). Yet, most of the influential constructs in L2 motivation have come from social psychology and include external factors in the interpretation of intrapersonal processes (Dörnyei, 2001a). A case in point is the Socio-educational Model of Gardner (1985) which effectively weaves the social and personal psychological processes into a more inclusive motivational construct. A detailed explanation of Gardner’s model is given later in the theoretical chapter.

Given the recent emphasis on expanding the traditional social scope of motivational models to include macro-social variables (McGroarty, 1998; 2001; Spolsky, 2000; Clément & Gardner, 2001; Dörnyei, 2001b; Gardner, 2002), the socio-economic backgrounds of the Yemeni students in this study are expected to constitute an interesting subject to explore its possible relationships with students’ motivation to learn English. This is done by exploring the socio-economic sources of the integrative tendencies of the students towards a local TL group. It is hypothesized that the Yemeni EFL students in this study construct images congruent with some socio-cultural practices of the local TL group by understanding the possibility of securing specific aspects linked to that group such as the use of English

which is considered as a prestigious social practice, symbolising membership in higher status groups in the society. This is further explained in Section 1.3 of this chapter.

The learning environment in Yemen is unique as students are aware of the many benefits associated with the use and learning of English (Al-Quyadi, 2000). The introduction of the English language as an official curriculum subject in schools further emphasizes the need for students to achieve higher levels of proficiency (ibid). Whatever the underlying motivation to learn a FL among the sample population of this study, it cannot be disputed that Yemeni students' motivation is characterised as instrumental (Al-Sohbani, 1997). Yemeni students are constantly advised that English is one of the most crucial subjects in the curriculum; and are encouraged to believe that a good command of English will possibly lead to career advancement (Al-Kamali, 2000).

1.2 Background to the Study

This section is divided into two parts. The first part sheds some light on the position of English in today's world as a language of power and prestige. The second part gives an account of the historical and geographical aspects of the context of the study, i.e. Yemen. It also sketches the educational system and the status of English in Yemen followed by a detailed description of the linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds of the country. The problem statement of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations of the study, and the definitions of terms are then presented respectively.

1.2.1 An Overview of the Status and Role of English in Today's World

Since the present study investigates the motivation of a group of Yemeni students who chose English as their major, it is necessary to begin with a brief discussion on the position of English in today's world as a language of power and prestige in relation to the metaphor of capital.

Of the 6000 languages found in the world today, only 11 have achieved the status of international languages because of their perceived economic or diplomatic positions and the importance regularly attached to them, or because they have a big number of native speakers (Wurm, 2001, Comrie, et al., 2003). English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese are regarded as the most prominent languages in the world. Due to colonisation, the area of dominance for these languages is the African continent and some parts of Asia. Depicting the position of colonisers' languages in the post-colonial era, Houroumtcho (2004, p.37) states that '[t]he language question in Africa and Asia follows a typical pattern: a colonial language imposed during the colonization era survives either as the official language or as a link language with a socio-economic power beyond all other languages'. In Asia, some countries that were colonised by the Europeans have managed to use local languages for official business and even for instruction in most cases (ibid). However, with the spread of English, according to Kachru (1983), those languages are having a hard time keeping up with the demand of their speakers who easily revert to English for access to wider technological and scientific knowledge.

Beyond all the apparent explanations, the literacy in language policy suggests that there are reasons why some languages spread easily, dominate others, and are the choice of many learners (Kachru, 1983, 1986; Ricento, 2000). In fact, English is slowly but surely gaining value as a useful 'cash language' (Wolfram, 1999). The

reason for this rise in power for English is not only due to its role as an international language (Hall & Eggington, 2000), but also due to the opportunities it offers for social well-being of locals (Malumba, 1993). This highlights several notable facts about the use of English in the world today: (1) it is tightly bound to the economic market including the market of education, and (2) it is frequently regarded as a language of prestige that always opens doors for those who speak it. These consequential ideas have been expressed, for example by Pennycook (1994, p.14), who suggests that the ‘position [of English] in many educational systems around the world... has become one of the most powerful means of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions’.

The fact that English is a language of power and prestige in the world today has been fully recognized (Pennycook, 1994). This privileged position often takes form in the context of education. In simple terms, this phenomenon can be explained through the utilisation of the metaphor of “capital” which was firstly introduced by Karl Marx (1818-1883) to explain the profit (i.e. surplus value) collected by the dominant economic class (i.e. capitalists) through their investment in a labour system of producing and consuming useful material goods (i.e. commodities). Significantly, the metaphor of capital has been used not only to describe the capitalist system, but also to describe how people profit in different ways such as education (Lin, 2001a,b). In brief, all new applications of capital are similar in taking the position that people expend their resources to produce some benefits and/or profits (ibid).

Several forms of capital have been identified as having an effect on education. Dijkstra and Peschar (2003) say that forms of capital evidently reside within the family and in its relationship with larger social structures in which the family exists. These forms include economic capital, cultural capital, and social

capital, among others. Basically, all forms of capital share one basic attribute, i.e. resources which are seen as being unequally distributed in any given population. Hence, different people possess different amounts of each form of capital from which they can benefit (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001a, 2001b). In the context of education, this fundamental premise indicates that the amount of any particular volume of capital that a student or his/her parents possess will have notable implications for that student's access to and success in education, and/or for the benefits s/he will receive from education. Further illustrations and explanations on the different forms of capital are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

This study sets out to explore the influences of economic and cultural capitals on the students' motivation to learn English. In a very practical sense, the study investigates the influences of the students' socio-economic status and their expectations of the oil project on motivation to learn English in one particular context, i.e. the English Department of the College of Arts and Education, Mukalla, Hadramout University of Science and Technology (henceforth HUST), Yemen. Further explanation on this situation is found in Section 1.3 of this chapter.

1.2.2 Yemen

Yemen is a Middle Eastern country located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula with a vast territory of 555,000 square kilometres (Central Statistical Organization, 1997). On this big piece of land lives a rather small population of about twenty-three million people (Szczepanski, 2009).

For various historical and political reasons, Yemen used to be divided into two parts known as Southern Yemen, a British colony, and Northern Yemen, an Imamate state. According to Willis (2007), people in the former southern part of the country received some education in general, particularly in English, in the schools

and colleges established mainly in the city of Aden and some other parts of the country. The purpose of having English-speaking people was basically to enable them to serve in some official and administrative capacity (ibid). The former northern part of the country remained isolated until 1962, when a revolution took place against the Imamate rule. Consequently, another revolution took place in the southern part of the country in 1963 to oppose the British who had ruled this part for 128 years (Al-Hagari, 1992). Although the two nations were divided geographically, the people shared similar characteristics. These similarities led to the announcement of the formation of a unified nation, i.e. the Republic of Yemen on 22nd May 1990.

1.2.3 Educational System in Yemen

Since the study was conducted in one of the higher educational institutions in the Republic of Yemen, it is important at this juncture to provide some information on the educational system of the country. The current educational system in Yemen is heavily centralized and controlled by the Ministry of Education. Despite limited resources, education is free at all levels. It has always been considered the main channel for the advancement of social equality. The Yemeni constitution stresses six principles regarding the system of governance. Among them, the third principle aims at raising the political, social and cultural levels of the Yemenis (Al-Sohbani, 1990). This principle was established by the ‘promulgation of the Republican Decree Number 16 of 1963, which in turn led to the formation of the Ministry of Education’ (Ba’abad, 1984, p.62).

The provision of education has expanded extensively in Yemen since unification in 1990. Mothar (1998, p.2) states that ‘Yemen, as other developing countries, has endorsed the principles of equal rights, justice and equality in ensuring education for all’. Due to the great social demand for education, the government in

cooperation with society has established various educational institutions to allow Yemeni citizens to pursue educational opportunities (ibid). At present, Yemen owns a well-designed educational system, which begins with the pre-school and primary/elementary education through secondary to tertiary education. The educational system also provides vocational and technical training institutes for the preparation and training of teachers.

In essence, the school ladder consists of two stages: basic education (i.e. primary and preparatory stages), and secondary education stage. Basic education in Yemen is provided in grades one to nine, i.e. primary school (grades 1-6) and preparatory school (grades 7-9). At the ninth grade of the basic education system, the learners have to pass a public examination in order to get the General Basic Education Certificate (henceforth GBEC) which enables them to move to the secondary level. There are three main grades at this level. The first grade is general in nature while the two remaining grades are divided into science and arts tracks. In the science track, the learners mainly study science disciplines such as maths, biology, chemistry, and so forth. In the arts track, the focus is mainly on the sociology, philosophy, and logic. However in both tracks, the learners study Islamic Education, Arabic, English, drawing and physical education. There are two main school-based examinations in the first and second grades of the secondary school stage, conducted by the school under the supervision of the Provincial Education Office (henceforth PEO). In the third year, there is a central examination conducted by the Ministry of Education. If the student passes this examination, s/he will be awarded the General Secondary School Certificate (henceforth GSSC) which makes him/her eligible for admission to higher education.

1.2.4 English in Yemen

During British colonisation, English was the official language in the southern part of Yemen for 128 years. Following its independence in 1967, however, Arabic became the only official language of the country and English became a subject taught in schools. From the first grade through the secondary school stage, students receive English instruction depending on whether they are in the arts or science track. Students in the former continue to get four hours of English instruction per week, while those in the latter receive only three hours weekly (Naif, 2003).

Although English is absent from the official discourse on language policy and taught only as a 'school subject' (Al-Quyadi, 2000, p.2), it nevertheless occupies a prominent place in Yemeni university curricula (Al-Fatah, 2003). According to Al-Quyadi (2000, p.15), 'there is a growing awareness of the need for English language teaching in the different Yemeni universities, especially in the faculties of Science, Medicine, and Engineering'. Indeed, hundreds of Yemeni students choose to continue to study English as their major as evinced by the steadily increasing number of students enrolled every year. The Hadramout University, for instance, has witnessed an increase of 80% in the number of students enrolled in all the English departments for the 2006-2007 academic year (HUST, 2007).

At the college level, two types of English instruction are given. The first is the English language instruction offered in the English departments of all the faculties of humanities and education. Here, English is used as the medium of instruction because all students are English language majors. The second type of English language instruction at the tertiary level is given to all other students majoring in other fields. The instructors invariably use English and Arabic, often code-switching at random. Students in these programmes, unlike the English majors,

receive two to four hours of English per week, and they take English only as a graduation requirement.

1.2.5 The Status of English Language and the Socio-economic Situation in Yemen

The previous section gives a general overview of the historical, geographical, and educational backgrounds of Yemen and presents the position of English in the Yemeni context. In this part, the current socio-economic situation of the country is discussed with a considerable focus on the status of English language in the Yemeni society.

Yemen is a developing country with a highly stratified social structure, which suggests wide variations in its social structural composition. This can be attributed to various historical and political reasons. First, due to the British colonisation, the southern part of Yemen has a prolonged tradition of middle class sectors with high social mobility and access to foreign speakers through travel, media, and work (Hashem, 1992). Second, the country has experienced deep economic crises especially after the Gulf War in 1990, which affected most of the segments of the middle class population. Members in these classes lost their economic capital although they managed to preserve their social and cultural capitals (AL-Hagari, 1992).

According to the classification of the World Bank, Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world, occupying the 171st position out of 206 in terms of GNP (i.e. Gross National Product) per capita (Al-Bana'a & Al-Jabli, 2002; Pargman, 2010; Zunes, 2010). Previous studies carried out in Yemen have reported that 19% of the Yemeni population lived below the poverty line in 1992, increasing to 25% in 1995, 27% in 1998, and 54.7% in 2002 along with high unemployment rates in the country. For all these sectors, the situation is radically different from those in upper classes;

their basic needs are not met and any contact with the English-speaking community is practically non-existent.

On the other hand, it is estimated that the poverty rate was at 47% in 1996, while the result of the National Survey of Poverty in Yemen, conducted by the Central Organization for Statistics in 1998, indicated that the poor form 48% of the total population of Yemen. Poverty in Yemen is also predominant in the rural areas where 81% of the poor live in an environment that lacks resources and has high population growth and poor primary services, among other problems (Al-Bana'a & Al-Jabli, 2002; Pargman, 2010; Zunes, 2010).

In the midst of this bleak socio-economic situation, a new socio-economic context has been developing since 1990 in the Hadramout Province of the southern part of Yemen. This new environment has to do with the decision of the Yemeni government, along with some foreign oil companies, to fund an oil project. It is the most important investment in the country at this time, involving billions of US dollars (Willis, 2007). The project was initially carried out by a consortium of ten oil companies: the Canadian Nexen, Hunt (USA), Alfa (France), Total (France), Schlumberger (USA), DNO (Norway), Exxon (USA), Chevron (USA), BP (UK), Shell (UK) and the Malaysian Petronas. Apart from their common business goals, these companies share a common medium of communication, the English language. This sudden presence of English in a financially critical project was a wake-up call for a population who uses Arabic for day to day communications.

The oil project is seen as a major opportunity for the twenty-three million people of this poor country to achieve a minimum level of social well-being. This social relief is expected to occur through the governmental use of the oil money to increase salaries and create much-needed jobs as well as the direct employment of

locally qualified people in the oil project. In this context, the ability to perform in and speak English is considered a huge advantage for employment (AL-Hagari, 1992; Al-Quyadi, 2000; Willis, 2007). This situation is clearly depicted by Hillenbrand (1994, p.5037), who states that ‘English is beginning to become the most important foreign language in Yemen. English is the lingua franca among the non-Arab groups (from the UK, Germany, the USA, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other countries) working in Yemen’.

In Yemen, knowing the English language has only benefitted the handful of people who subsequently secured jobs in the oil industry or with agencies such as the USA and UK Embassies (Al-Quyadi, 2000; Willis, 2007). This is essentially because of the somewhat special relationship that they experience with native English speakers and the occasional opportunities to make extra money using their knowledge of English (Saif, 1999). Following this, it can be assumed that the oil project may have created an opportunity and motivation for Yemenis to use English and to improve their socio-economic status. From a mere academic subject taught in school, English has almost suddenly become a means of social promotion through better job and salary opportunities.

In the southern part of Yemen where the present study was conducted, the linguistic map clearly shows the socio-economic situation of the people and the country as a whole. As in other former British colonies, the use of the English language as the medium of knowledge transmission and a tool of social and economical status achievement has led to the creation of two categories of citizens: (1) those who speak the European languages and enjoy all the benefits attached to them and, (2) the less fortunate who do not have the luxury of learning those languages (Malumba, 1993; Alexander, 2000). Interestingly, a small group of people

generally referred to as 'élites' has emerged as a result of conducting the countries' business in the languages of the colonizers (Malumba, 1993). This group comprises individuals who are the only ones to secure an observable degree of socio-economic development (ibid).

Similar to the afore-mentioned situation, a distinguishable social class has emerged in the Yemeni context, which includes those who have learned English. They are a remarkably small number of individuals, but they have achieved a social status very much envied by other people in the country (Saif, 1999; Al-Quyadi, 2000; Willis, 2007). This class includes those who are employed in the current oil project in the Hadramout Province or those who have secured jobs with American or European agencies such as the US Embassy. They represent the category that may eventually fuel the motivation of the younger generation of Yemenis to study English.

The language policy in Yemen with its promotion of foreign languages has created an environment which is advantageous mainly to individual promotion. In other words, the linguistic situation in Yemen is not conducive to the socio-economic development of the country as witnessed by the low annual GDP (i.e. Gross Domestic Product) per capita of \$2,406.208 (IndexMundi, 2008). But at the individual level, people do benefit from the learning of English; however, the European languages can only achieve horizontal integration (élites among themselves) and not vertical integration (among élites and the rest of the population (Benjamin, 1994; Katupha, 1994).

Based on the above situation, Yemeni people who desire to achieve some kind of social well-being might have no choice but to learn English. English is becoming the preferred tool for social promotion and the question is whether Yemeni university

students see it as such or not. Given the linguistic context in Yemen as previously depicted on the one hand, and the difficult socio-economic situation of the country on the other hand, Yemeni EFL learners who are supposed to come from families with low socio-economic status are considered as an appropriate cohort for this study. They are also expected to be motivated by what they perceive as an economic asset and/or the benefits that are associated with the use and learning of English. It has been reported that the linguistic picture in Yemen portrays a considerable socio-economic advantage linked to the English language (Al-Quyadi, 2000). Hence, learners in such a context will strive to excel at a language that increases their personal material well-being. All these issues are explained more fully in the next section.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Integrativeness constitutes the basic link between attitudes and motivation in Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational Model. It has been a central concept in the area of language learning motivation for several decades. This concept entails L2 learner's desire to 'come closer to the other language community' (Gardner, 2001a, p. 5). In other words, it involves the desire of the language learner to learn the TL so that s/he can become a member of the social group associated with the TL based on some contact between the learner and the existing TL group.

In Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational Model, learners who had the characteristic of Integrativeness were said to have integrative orientations or goals towards learning the TL and favourable attitudes towards the language community, with an inherent interest in foreign languages (Masgoret, et al., 2001). Learners were also said to be 'integratively motivated' if they exhibited different aspects of motivated behaviour such as effort, an expressed desire and enjoyment in the process of learning the TL (ibid). In essence, 'Integrativeness subsumes all other factors in Gardner's

[2001] model, even instrumentality’ and it ‘can be interpreted as an idealized view of the L2 self’ (MacIntyre, Mackinnon, Clément, 2009, p.12).

Dörnyei and Csizér (2002, p.453) point out that ‘the integrative disposition is some sort of psychological and emotional ‘identification’. Following Gardner’ and Lambert’s (1972) definition of integrative motivation, it can be stated that the authors conceived L2 learners as people who speak the L2 and engage in the culture of its speakers. The theoretical justification for this view lies in the fact that ‘learning another language is not like learning math or word processing... it is likely to involve not only the linguistic and cognitive capacities of the learner as an individual, but her social, historical, emotional, cultural, moral sense of self as a subject’ (Kramsch, 2001, p.12). The sense of self is challenged, as Gardner (2001b, p. 6) claims, by the need to take on ‘the behavioural characteristics of another cultural group of people’.

Interestingly, Dörnyei and Csizér (2002, p. 453) state that ‘some sort of ‘Integrativeness’-related factor typically emerges in empirical studies on L2 motivation’, but the authors also admit that ‘it may be timely to re-examine the term’. Studies conducted by Dörnyei and Clément (2001), Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), and Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a) have revealed a major shortcoming of the concept of Integrativeness; while its predictive value was confirmed in many language learning contexts, Integrativeness was found to be lacking explanatory power, particularly in FL settings. Customary interpretations of this concept entail the existence of a recognizable group of native speakers in the learner’s immediate environment with whom s/he would wish to integrate and interact in some way.

Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), and Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a) argue that the existence of native language speakers in FL learners’ environment is not typical. Based on this, the authors proposed a reformulation of the concept of Integrativeness:

FL students are motivated to learn the TL to enact “possible selves” which are congruent with some social traditions and/or habits in the learners’ environment. In this regard, the current study sets out to investigate the nature of FL learners’ possible selves, i.e. identities or images. It can be stated that English is being used or learnt by the Yemeni EFL students to construct images and identities congruent with some socio-cultural practices of the TL group nationals. This TL group comprises predominantly Yemeni speakers of English who are currently employed in the oil project in the Hadramout Province and thus, considered as highly positioned in the socio-economic sense. They are a remarkably small number of individuals, but they have achieved a social status very much envied by other people in the country (Saif, 1999; Al-Quyadi, 2000; Willis, 2007). This group includes those who are employed in the current oil project in the Hadramout Province who are expected to eventually fuel the motivation of the younger generation of Yemenis to study English.

The situation in which a small number of English language speakers exists in an EFL context and in which they also experience some socio-economic development (Malumba, 1993), holds true in the case of the context of the present study. Such a group enjoy an enviable higher social status in the Yemeni society. Members in this group are currently holding high-ranking and well-paid jobs in the oil industry and at other foreign embassies and institutions (ibid). So, it can be said that the students in the sample who live in a very stratified society, would strive to learn English more since it has become a means of social promotion to better occupational opportunities (Al-Quyadi, 2000). Despite the tangible evidence that social stratification affects many aspects of human behaviour (Grusky, 1994), this research systematically investigates how the students’ socio-economic status and

their expectations of the current oil project influence their integrative attitudes and motivational patterns to study English.

In general, English is associated with groups possessing more social, cultural, or financial resources (Nielsen, 2003). Viewed from this perspective and bearing in mind that the linguistic background in Yemen portrays a considerable socio-economic advantage linked to English language (Al-Quyadi, 2000), the Yemeni EFL students in the present study are more likely to perceive the situation in which English is linked to individuals in higher social positions as a symbol of status and prestige. By utilising the psycho-social notion of Bourdieu's habitus, the students' internalised knowledge and perceived modes of status differences between them and the Yemeni TL group are shaped by their socialisation in a given socio-economic position. Bourdieu (1985, 1986) develops the notion of habitus to express the constructive and reproductive aspects of cognition in its interaction with the social surroundings. This concept can also be utilised to explain how students' integrative tendencies and motivation to study an FL may build on internalised constructions of social reality and recreate them in the undertaking of the process of language learning (Lifrieri, 2005). On the basis of the students' knowledge of the meaning of the representation and the symbols of the social practices of the TL group, the sample's motivational patterns could then be related to their drive to identify or integrate with that group.

To sum up, Gardner's (2001a) Integrative Motivation Framework and Bourdieu's (1985; 1986; 1989) Status-based Approach to Social Stratification undergird the premise of the study in that Yemeni EFL learners' integrative tendencies are influenced by a TL group consisting of Yemenis who are high socio-economic positioned individuals characteristically associated with English in the

students' social environment. Based on the reformulation of the concept of Integrativeness proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), and Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a) as mentioned before, the Yemeni EFL students' integrative motives towards the TL group nationals are regarded as the basic tenet for any relationship that might exist in this study between the students' socio-economic status and their motivation to learn English. In a highly stratified society, the learning and knowledge of English in Yemen is a socially prestigious practice, symbolising membership in higher status groups in the society. Therefore, the motivational patterns of the Yemeni EFL students, who come from families with smaller amounts of economic and cultural capitals (Al-Bana'a and Al-Jabli, 2002; Pargman, 2010; Zunes, 2010), can be related to their desire to identify or integrate with the social practices of the Yemeni speakers of English as a high socio-economic TL group.

Finally, the adoption and adaption of Gardner's framework of L2 motivation and Bourdieu's approach in sociology will help to capture the existing relationships between the components and/or subcomponents of motivation and socio-economic factors. An explanation of the proposed relationships between motivation to learn English and the Yemeni EFL students' socio-economic status is given in Chapter 2, Section 2.16.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the current study is to investigate the relationships between socio-economic factors and motivation to learn English in the Yemeni EFL context. Based on this, four objectives were constructed as follows:

- 1) To investigate the relationship patterns between Yemeni EFL students' socio-economic factors (the economic capital, the cultural

capital, and the students' expectations of the oil project) and their motivation to learn English.

- 2) To examine the influence of Yemeni EFL students' economic capital on their motivation to learn English.
- 3) To examine the influence of Yemeni EFL students' cultural capital on their motivation to learn English.
- 4) To examine the influence of the Yemeni EFL students' expectations of the oil project on their motivation to learn English.

1.5 Research Questions

Given the objectives, the current study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What are the relationship patterns between socio-economic factors and the motivation of Yemeni EFL students?
- 2) To what extent does the Yemeni EFL students' economic capital influence their motivation to learn English?
- 3) To what extent does the Yemeni EFL students' cultural capital influence their motivation to learn English?
- 4) To what extent do the Yemeni EFL students' expectations of the oil project influence their motivation to learn English?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is generally agreed that any study has to benefit the participants and the field in which it is conducted. In other words, it should contribute to all the interested parties. Despite the fact that English is not an important element of the everyday linguistic scenario in Yemen, this study is preeminent since it will indicate how the

sample perceives the benefits of learning English and will clearly show how external factors influence their motivation to learn it.

With regard to the field of motivational research, this study is a first step towards exploring the socio-economic dimensions of the motivation of English language learning vis-à-vis a group of Yemeni EFL students in an English-medium department in a non-English-medium university. By measuring the relationships between language learning motivation and socio-economic factors in this particular setting, this study offers a valid measure for the concept of Integrativeness in the Yemeni EFL context and helps place it in a larger economic, cultural, and social context. In this regard, there are at least two other reasons why this study is significant. First, the fact that English is a language of wealth, prestige, and power in Yemen seems to be supposed, but has never been empirically tested. From an academic viewpoint, this study can provide the evidence related to this widespread but empirically undocumented assumption. Second, it sheds light on whether economic and cultural inequalities in the Yemeni society play a role in the motivation of Yemeni EFL students and, if so, how.

This study expands Gardner's (1985b, 2001a) approaches by incorporating students' socio-cultural backgrounds into the analysis of language learning motivation in the Yemeni EFL context. The study also contributes to the methodology of researching motivation in FL settings, as it combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Such a study will close a long-standing gap; that is, the lack of data on motivation to learn EFL in relation to socio-economic backgrounds in a non-Western context, particularly in Yemen.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

It is the researcher's decision to limit the present study only to the tertiary level, i.e. the Department of English, College of Arts and Education, HUST. Even though students now have a choice to study English as their major, English probably remains for the majority of Yemeni students a mere subject learnt for academic requirements more than anything else. A study of secondary school students' motivational patterns would certainly yield some interesting insights, but probably no definite decision or response could be obtained from the students with regard to the influence of their socio-economic status and expectations of the oil project on motivation to learn English. This is in keeping with Dörnyei's (1996, p.76) claim that 'job-related motives are unlikely to be a relevant concern among school pupils learning foreign languages'.

1.8 Definition of Terms

This section provides a brief description of the relevant terms employed in the present study:

1) Motivation: In general terms, motivation can be described as 'internal energizing states [which lead] to the instigation, persistence, energy, and direction of behavior, [where] direction is provided by environmental cues and by the individual's goals' (Ferguson 2001, p.980). The internal dimension of motivation is made up of processes called 'motives', namely needs, emotions and cognitions which not only trigger individuals' motivation, but also direct and sustain action (Reeve 2005). Internal motives also interact with the environmental conditions which can shape and/or trigger motivated action. The external dimension then involves incentives and/or deterrents' arising from the individual's context (ibid). In the context of

language learning, motivation is defined within Gardner's (1985) Social-educational Model of language learning in terms of attitude, effort and desire. More recent accounts of motivation, particularly by Dörnyei (2005), propose a conceptual scheme called the "L2 Motivational Self System" that takes into consideration the notion of possible selves. The notion offers 'the most powerful, and at the same time the most versatile, motivational self-mechanism, representing the individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming' (Dörnyei 2005, p. 99). L2 motivation in other words involves the learners' desire to learn the TL to enact "possible selves". In this regard, Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a) postulate that that language is learnt or used by L2 learners to construct an identity congruent with some socio-cultural practices found in the learners' social space. Csizér and Dörnyei's definition of L2 motivation is adopted in the current study.

2) Attitudes: Gardner (1985, p.9) defines an attitude as 'an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent'. He also sees an attitude as a component of motivation, and Spolsky (1989) supports this definition by inferring that attitude is a constituent of motivation.

3) Integrativeness: This concept entails an L2 learner's desire to 'come closer to the other language community' (Gardner, 2001a, p. 5). Conceptually, 'Integrativeness [in this study] subsumes all other factors in Gardner's [2001] model, even instrumentality' (MacIntyre, Mackinnon, Clément, 2009, p.12).

4) Social Stratification: The term "stratification" refers to the complex of social institutions that generate observed inequalities of any sort (Grusky, 1998). Social

stratification is the division of society into groups that differ greatly in wealth, power and prestige.

5) Economic Capital: Economic capital is the ‘dominant principle of hierarchy’ in any society; it refers to the financial and material assets available to social agents or groups (Bourdieu, 1986, p.743).

6) Cultural Capital: It is, as defined by Bourdieu (1977) and interpreted by McDonough, Antonio and Trent (1997), an essential form of capital, used by individuals to transform their aspirations and high school credentials into future capital, e.g. admission to a college and ultimately an improved socio-economic status. In Bourdieu’s theory, cultural capital is seen to successfully navigate a student through higher education (Bourdieu 1985). According to Dijkstra and Peschar (2003, p. 61), ‘the motivational qualities of the parents, the linguistic characteristics of the family, and participation in cultural activities and reading behaviour are examples of cultural resources, and these differ according to social status’.

1.9 Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the recent trends in researching and conceptualising L2 motivation. It also presents the linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds of the Yemeni context. Then, it highlights the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations of the study, and the definition of terms. **Chapter 2** focuses on the review of the pertinent literature in the field of language learning motivation. It begins by demonstrating various definitions and conceptualisations of the concept of motivation. In particular, the chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature on L2 motivation paradigms, approaches, and models. Then, it discusses in detail Gardner’s Socio-educational Model and the concept of Integrativeness in EFL