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## **The Impact of Motivation and Parental Encouragement on English Language Learning: An Arab Students' Perspective**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The teaching of English as a second/foreign language to Arab students has received considerable attention during the past decade. The use of English as a medium of instruction in the Arabian Gulf has become prominent but has only recently been examined academically. In Kuwait, the need to learn and use English is emerging. Attention toward how English is learned and taught is considered important for students' achievement of success and teachers' awareness of learners' needs. Many Arab students consider English difficult to learn, and as such, it has an impact on students' motivation and attitude toward learning English. Students are often able to communicate effectively in educational and social settings, but struggle with reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This study aims to identify challenges to learning and teaching English in Kuwait. Using the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, we measured various components of the socio-educational model of second language (L2) acquisition through students' self-reported communicative competence. We found that all items of the socio-educational model play a role in L2 learning. However, parental encouragement is perceived to play the most significant role during the development of motivational intensity, desire to learn English, and attitude toward learning English.*

**Keywords:** Motivation, parents, English, Kuwait.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Researchers and educators of English as a second/foreign language have extensively examined all aspects of the process to identify approaches to positively influence learners' language learning (Oxford, 1996; Dickinson, 1995; Coleman, 2006). Many conditions are needed to successfully learn English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), but most

researchers and educators agree that attitude and motivation to learn a second language are specific factors that determine the success in the language learning process. Extensive empirical research has demonstrated that attitudes and motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér 2002; Gardner, 2010) are related to how individuals learn English as a second/foreign language.

Recent developments in the field of language acquisition have led to a renewed interest in studying motivation toward language learning. According to several language learning scholars (Coleman, 2006; Garcia, 2007; Little, 1991; Maslow, 1970; Oxford, 1996), student motivation and attitude toward language education greatly contributes to learning outcomes, and ways to foster positive motivation among students is undoubtedly important in improving language education (Coleman, 2006).

When discussing the roots of motivation to learn a second language in the educational context (Gardner & Lambert 1972; Gardner, 2001 Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001;), one must focus on an individual's attitude toward the L2 community and the goals or orientations sought through the acquisition. Gardner and Lambert (1972) examined the relationship between motivation and learners' attitude toward L2 learning. These authors provided a differentiation between the core of motivation and orientation as an interpersonal quality (termed 'integrative orientation'); and one that has a more practical quality ('instrumental orientation'). Learners who are motivated instrumentally learn a language for more extrinsic reasons, such as the possibility of a better job or reasons related to travel. In contrast, intergratively interactively motivated learners possess an internal desire and genuine interest to connect or integrate with the target language or culture, or they have an intrinsic goal, such as improving global mindedness. This study uses Gardner and Lambert's (1972) construct of integrative (motivation, desire, and attitudes toward learning English) and instrumental (future career or practical uses) orientations to measure students' motivation for studying English as a second language.

The main expected result of this study is the identification of the factors influencing students' motivational intensity and attitudes, as related to the desire to learn English and the role of parental encouragement in the process. In particular, results showing weaknesses in motivation and attitude among students are considered and analyzed, with the aim of developing recommendations for educators and policymakers to promote improved attitudes and positive motivation toward language education.

Investigating the learning experiences within the higher educational setting is a complex task. Therefore, this research gives students the voice to present their personal opinion.

## **KEY CONCEPTS OF MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ENGLISH LEARNING**

In the study of educational psychology, motivation is likely the essential element that educators can focus on when aiming to enhance learning (Norton, 2000). Motivation toward

learning a second language has been shown to be important for learning achievement (Norton & Syed, 2003). A socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) was primarily designed to measure a number of motivational variables, including integrative and instrumental orientations through the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). Research studying the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning has reported consistent relationships among these variables, as well as their relation to indices of achievements. Motivation has been defined as an overall goal or orientation in terms of second language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Studies addressing the desire to learn the language found that students' desire to learn the language of a valued second language community, combined with inquisitiveness and interest in the group, should underlie the motivation needed to achieve success in second language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

A later study (Gardner, 2010) indicated that instrumentally motivated learners are not necessarily interested in the language or the culture of the target language group. Instead, they are interested in the benefits that might be derived from learning the second language. Therefore, Gardner (2010) suggested that favorable attitudes to learning a second language might correlate with measures of achievement and adds that motivation is a key factor in second language learning and that attitudes contribute to the degree of second language learning.

In the socio-educational model (Gardner, 2010), it is noted that motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements: motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitude and encouragement toward learning a language. Motivational intensity refers to the effort made by students to learn the language, and how important they consider learning to be. The desire to learn the language indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language. Attitude toward learning the language is usually defined as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards the language.

In earlier research, Gardner (1975) suggests that parental encouragement, as a unitary construct toward learning English, plays an important role in their children's attitudes. He writes:

[R]elationships between parents' attitudes and students' orientations suggest that students' orientation grows out of a family-wide orientation and consequently... the degree of skill which the student attains in a second language will be dependent upon the attitudinal atmosphere in the home. (Gardner, 1975, p. 239)

In a later study, Gardner (1985) concurs with the view that parents are the major intermediary between the cultural milieu and the students. The parental encouragement of language attitudes has been categorized on the bases of two roles, active and passive.

The active role involves how parents interact with their children with regard to language learning, and can be further categorized as negative and positive. A positive active role would involve parents monitoring their child's progress in language learning, showing interest, and encouraging success. A negative active role would involve a range of discouraging behaviors,

from openly belittling the importance of learning a second language to favoring other areas of learning over languages. The passive role concerns parents' attitudes to the second-language community. According to Gardner, a positive parental disposition toward a second language (e.g., French for non-French speakers) would support the integrative orientation of a child learning French, while a negative attitude would inhibit this. Gardner concludes that the passive role is of particular importance, and even though parents might be generally supportive of their child's efforts, latent negative language attitudes held by parents will undermine the effects of positive encouragement.

This might seem a rather grand claim, but on reflection, it seems fair to conclude that parental encouragement to learning a second language will lead to higher levels of the learner's attitude to learning the language. Given the widely acknowledged importance of attitudes to learning a second language, it seems timely to examine the nature of Kuwaiti students' motivation and parental encouragement toward learning English.

## **OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE STUDIES IN THE ARABIAN GULF**

A considerable number of international studies have been conducted reporting results of students' motivation and attitude toward learning English as a second or foreign language. The regional literature on English teaching (ELT) in the Arabian Gulf has also recently produced some insightful research addressing students' attitudes and motivation to learning English (and in English) in various educational settings (Ajzen, 1988; Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009; Al-Quyadi, 2000; Malallaha, 2000).

Given that English is the language of international communication, in the Arab world it has a considerable effect on the language policies, language use, and educational systems (Nunan, 2003). According to Dashti (2015), most Arab countries have introduced English as the main subject in the school curriculum, and it is evident that there are significant problems related to the teaching and learning of English. There is a surprising lack of research on the effectiveness of the various instructional practices for Arab students seeking to learn English and improve their literacy skills. Few studies of Arab students' English literacy have focused on the development of reading and writing skills. There is also inadequate knowledge about assessment and ongoing monitoring of Arab students' proficiencies, progress, and instructional environments, which might guide instructional planning.

Upon review of the available literature in the area of students' motivation and attitudes toward learning English, we identified several studies that sought to identify problems facing Arab learners of English. For example, Rababah (2003) states that Arab learners face problems in all language skills. On the other hand, Akasha (2013) found that challenges of time, adequate language support, teacher education/guidance, the difference of social context, and cultural environment were factors influencing students and teachers in middle school classrooms. Also, Khan (2011) studied Saudi Arabia's learners of English and found that limited exposure to

English, inadequate school facilities, inadequate teaching curricula and methods, as well as L1 interference, strongly affect students' English acquisition.

A study (Al-Quyadi, 2000) carried out with Yemeni students investigated English major students' motivation and attitude. In Yemen, according to Al-Quyadi (2000), "English is used as a second language in the sense that it is the most dominant foreign language used in official, professional, academic and commercial circles" (p. 5). In Yemen, English is taught as a subject in public and private institutions, schools, and universities. The results indicate that the students had a high level of motivation and attitudes toward English language learning and use in both social and educational contexts. As English is the language required for most lucrative and powerful jobs, it is much in demand and becomes a must-have language for many individuals. Following this trend, all Yemeni universities offer compulsory prerequisite English language courses in the first year of BA programs to promote students' English speaking competence.

Current theories and models regarding the status of English and its role in education in the Arabian Gulf have largely ignored academic speech communities. Kuwait is an example of such a community, where the need to learn and use English is emerging. The dynamics of how Kuwaitis use English in educational domains merits closer examination. Moreover, in Kuwait, there are claims that the status of English should be changed from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as a second language (ESL). However, there is concern about learning and teaching of English in Kuwaiti government schools. At private Kuwaiti schools, treatment of English contrasts with that of the governmental school curriculum. English is not a subject measured by proficiency, but it is a medium of learning the subject knowledge, and a medium of teaching using contemporary methodologies mandated by educational reforms.

There has been little research on motivation with specific reference to Kuwait. For instance, Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan (2009) conducted a study among Kuwait University students of non-English major to examine their attitude and preferences toward English. A total of 787 ESL students participated in this study. The findings revealed a negative attitude towards learning English among Kuwaiti female students, but not among male students.

Another study conducted in Kuwaiti public schools (Alotaibi, Aldiahani & Alrabah, 2014) aimed to identify the reasons of the poor achievement of the English Proficiency Test (EPT) from teachers' perspective. The results indicated that the teachers acknowledged the curriculum for secondary school students; however, a demotivating factor is the large English syllabus. According to this study, teachers were focused on completing the syllabus at the expense of the student proficiency in English.

Based on the previous research studies and the need to conduct the current study, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How much effort is made by students to learn the language, and how important do they consider English to be?
2. How much does student attitude toward learning English affect their desire to learn the language?

3. How is parental encouragement related to the students' motivation to learn English?

## METHODOLOGY

### **Aim**

This research aimed to identify existing challenges to English learning and teaching among Arab students in Kuwait. In particular, the study focused on the relationships between each construct and scale of the AMTB student self-assessments for learning English.

### **Setting**

This research was conducted at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) in Kuwait. At GUST, English serves as a language of instruction and as the means for enabling campus-wide social interaction with various GUST community members, including students, professors, instructors, administrators, and other support staff, who represent multiple nationalities. GUST offers an interesting microcosm for an exploration of the range of concepts of English held by the English learners in Kuwait during the period of educational and social exchange. Over the course of one academic year, approximately 3495 students are taught from across the university. First-year writing courses are required of all GUST majors. These courses aim to develop students' writing, reading, research, citation, and critical thinking skills to the level required for the degree course.

This survey sample focused on the English Writing Program, which is integral to the curriculum in every discipline. The participants were enrolled in the required writing course: English 100, the Freshman Composition or English 110, and English Composition II or English 112. Permission from the head of the English department and the faculty members teaching these courses were taken before administering the survey.

### **Participants**

Two-hundred-thirty-three undergraduate students (107 male, 126 females) from five different majors participated in this study. The study targeted students of the College of Business Administration (CBA), Mass Communication and Media (MCM), Computer Science, Management Information Systems (MIS), and English. They were mostly freshmen (56.2%) and sophomores (34.8%), with the remaining students being juniors (6.4%) and seniors (2.6%). Most of the students were female (54.1%) with an average age of 17–26 years (77.7%). All participants were currently enrolled in one of three mandatory English courses (ENGL 100 Academic English, ENGL 110 Freshman Composition I or ENGL 112 Freshman Composition II).

**Table 1.** Demographics of the Students who Participated in the Study.

Target Population No	233 undergraduate students
Gender	126 females and 107 males
Age	17–26
Major	College of Business Administration (CBA), Mass Communication and Media (MCM), Computer Science (CS) Management Information Systems (MIS) English (ENG)
Program	English Writing
Course	ENGL 100 Academic English, ENGL 110 Freshman Composition I ENGL 112 Freshman Composition II

Based on the demographic results, English composition courses (ENG 100; ENG 110; ENG 112), students' major, and year in college will be considered as the outcome variables.

### Instrumentation

A questionnaire adapted from Gardner's AMTB (1985; 2004) version was used to assess the attributes of interest. That is, students were not directly asked how hard they feel they work at learning the language, but rather they responded to a series of items and, based on their responses, it is possible to infer their goal or orientation in terms of English language learning. The questionnaire consists of six components, assessed through 104 statements representing 12 subscales that assess the participants' reactions to concepts associated with English language learning (Table 2). Participants rate each statement on a six-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree).

**Table 2.** Constructs and Scales of the AMTB.

Construct	Scale
Integrativeness	Integrative orientation (four items) Attitudes toward the target group (eight items) Interest in foreign languages (ten items)
Attitudes toward the learning situation	English course evaluation (ten items) English teacher evaluation (ten items)
Motivation	Motivation intensity (ten items) The desire to learn English (ten items) Attitudes toward learning English (ten items)
Language anxiety	English class anxiety (ten items) English use anxiety (ten items)
Instrumentality	Instrumental orientation (four items)
Parental encouragement	Parental encouragement (ten items)

Gardner (2004) included items that are related to motivational behavior, asking students for answers in class. The respondents were presented with the item followed by the Likert's six alternative response format:

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
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To illustrate our approach, a sample of the constituent scales followed by examples are shown below:

1. *Integrative Orientation (four items)*  
E.g., "Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English."
2. *Attitudes toward the Target Group (eight items)*  
E.g., "Most native English speakers are so friendly and easy to get along with, we are fortunate to have them as friends."
3. *Interest in Foreign Languages (ten items)*  
E.g., "I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in many foreign languages."
4. *English Course evaluation (ten items)*  
E.g., "I think my English class is boring."
5. *English Teacher Evaluation (ten items)*  
E.g., "I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is so good."
6. *Motivation intensity (ten items)*  
E.g., "I enjoy the activities of our English class much more than those of my other classes."
7. *The desire to learn English (ten items)*  
E.g., "I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day."
8. *Attitudes toward learning English (ten items)*  
E.g., "Most native English speakers are so friendly and easy to get along with, we are fortunate to have them as friends."
9. *English Class Anxiety (ten items)*  
E.g., "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class."
10. *English use anxiety (ten items)*  
E.g., "I am sometimes anxious that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak English."
11. *Instrumental orientation (four Likert scale items)*  
E.g., "Studying English is important because I will need it for my career."
12. *Parental Encouragement (ten items)*  
E.g., "My parents try to help me to learn English."

Gardner (2010) argues that the motivation variable is multidimensional and, in the AMTB, this is tested through motivational intensity, attitudes toward learning the language, and the desire to learn the language. According to the socio-educational model, this motivation depends on the



learner's integrative orientation, attitudes toward the target group, interest in foreign languages, language course and teacher evaluations, and parental encouragement.

## **Procedure**

The questionnaire was administered in English because all participants were studying and attending university courses with instruction in English. Participants were asked to sign consent forms and advised that participation was voluntary. Participants were asked to check the questions carefully and read them thoroughly. If there were any questions regarding the comprehension of the questions, they were allowed to ask their instructor. Participants were allowed the 50-min class session to complete the questionnaire. This ensured that participants had sufficient time to complete the task and all the questionnaires were collected at the end of the class session. Participants were informed that names and the information they gave would be kept confidential, that no one would have access to the data except the researchers, and that the data would be only used for research purposes, after which it would be destroyed.

## **Research Analysis Results**

The data were collected over a 4-day period for an experimental  $3 \times 2$  mixed model ANOVA. SPSS software was used for descriptive data analysis, correlation analysis, and t-tests, and ANOVA was used to analyze the compiled data. The descriptive statistics were calculated based on the data submitted by the students' responses. Statistical analysis included computation of frequencies, percentages, and means for the following descriptive categories: gender, age, major, program, and the English writing course. P-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

## **Delimitations of the Study**

Our analyses address the construct and scales of the Gardner's AMTB self-assessment test. The constructs such as: integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and instrumentality, were excluded from the further analysis in the present study because they did not show a significant impact on the overall results. In addition, language anxiety has been identified as a negative factor in the process of learning English, and as such has been excluded from the present study (we aim to investigate this aspect of learning in a future study). Therefore, the present study focuses on only the construct of motivation, which includes motivation intensity, desire to learn English, attitudes toward learning English, and parental encouragement, which were found to have significant positive effects on Arab learners of English. To understand whether and how the groups of the students and the AMTB constructs selected in this study differ in their English perceived self-choice in English learning, three nominal variables (English composition courses, students' major, and year in college) and four independent variables [students' motivational intensity (the efforts made by the students to learn the language;

students' desire to learn English (how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language); attitudes toward learning English (the disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards the language); parental encouragement to learn English] have been identified as key specific variables of interest.

### Measuring Motivational Intensity (MI)

This section presents the motivational intensity results. Table 4 gives the results of the motivational intensity according to the English courses (100; 110; 112), the number of the participants, and their resulting mean scores.

**Table 4.** Motivational Intensity Results according to Course.

ANOVA according to Course						
M.I	Course	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	ENG 100	82	4.37	0.651	3.061	0.05
	ENG 110	94	4.26	0.673		
	ENG 112	57	4.08	0.755		
	Total	233	4.26	0.692		

Table 4 shows that the students' efforts to learn the language are high. This is clearly shown by the average mean score of 4.26. English 100 had the highest mean (4.37) followed by English 110 (4.26) and English 112 (4.08). By F-test, we detected no significant difference in effort when comparing courses (mean difference, 3.061).

**Table 5.** Motivational Intensity Results according to Program.

ANOVA according to Program						
M.I.	Prog.	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	CBA	152	4.27	0.694	3.369	0.01
	MC M	31	3.99	0.614		
	Com p	6	4.15	0.771		
	MIS	8	3.85	0.723		
	ENG	36	4.53	0.643		
	Total	233	4.26	0.692		

Table 5 gives the straightforward motivational intensity results according to the program. Students majoring in English made the greatest efforts to learn English (mean score, 4.53). The lowest mean of 3.99 was scored by the MCM students.

**Table 6.** Motivational Intensity Results according to Year in University.

ANOVA according to Year in University						
M.I	Year	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	Fresh	131	4.37	0.672	3.390	0.02
	Soph.	81	4.07	0.714		
	Jun.	15	4.26	0.653		
	Sen.	6	4.13	0.468		
	Total	233	4.26	0.692		

Table 6 gives the motivational intensity results according to year in university. The highest mean value recorded was 4.37 (freshmen student), showing that freshmen students made the greatest effort to learn English. However, the two-tailed significance is not high (0.02), indicating that other students were also highly motivated.

### Measuring the Desire to Learn English

This section presents the overall results of students' desire to learn English, identifying the differences between the nominal variables (English composition courses, students' major, and year in college).

**Table 7.** The desire to Learn English Results according to Course.

ANOVA according to Course						
DLE	Course	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	ENG 100	82	4.50	0.724	3.121	0.05
	ENG 110	94	4.37	0.737		
	ENG 112	57	4.17	0.802		
	Total	233	4.36	0.756		

The results in Table 7 indicate that English 100 students' desire to learn English is the highest (4.50), English 110 has an average score of 4.37, whereas the English 112 has the lowest mean score (4.17) and is considered as a moderate level of motivation.

**Table 8.** The Desire to Learn English (DLE) Results according to Program.

ANOVA according to Program						
DLE	Prog.	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	CBA	15	4.30	0.76	7.013	0.00
		2		7		
	MC	31	4.13	0.61		
	M			8		
	Com	6	4.42	0.90		
	p			2		
	MIS	8	3.99	0.70		
	ENG	36	4.92	0.54		
	Total	23	4.36	0.75		
		3		6		

Table 8 shows the results of the students' desire according to their major. When comparing between the scores of the students' major, the highest mean value recorded is 4.92 in the English program. This result shows that students majoring in English have the strongest desire to learn English, whereas the lowest mean score (4.13) was recorded for the MCM program, which might be connected with the nature of the program itself, since Arabic (rather than English) is widely used in the media industry.

**Table 9.** The Desire to Learn English Results according to Year in University.

ANOVA according to Year in University						
DLE	Year	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	Fresh	13	4.48	0.740	3.027	0.03
	.	1				
	Soph	81	4.17	0.771		
	.					
	Jun.	15	4.39	0.701		
	Sen.	6	4.53	0.582		
	Total	23	4.36	0.756		
		3				

The calculated mean values of the answers given for the desire to learn English according to the year in University are high (Table 9). It should be noted that the highest registered scores were given by the senior students (4.53); the senior students' desire to learn English is the strongest. This might be connected with their anticipated future professional lives, where English is used and required. The students' desire to learn English varied slightly and none lacked the desire to learn English, which is reflected by the mean value of 4.17, which is also high compared to the overall norm.

### Attitudes Toward Learning English (ATLE)

This section presents the overall results of attitudes toward learning English (ATLE), identifying the differences between the nominal variables (English composition courses, students' major, and year in college). Table 10 gives the results of the ATLE according to the English courses (100; 110; 112), the number of the participants, and their resulting mean scores.

**Table 10.** Attitudes Toward Learning English Results according to Course.

ANOVA according to Course						
ATLE	Course	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	ENG 100	82	5.05	0.897	2.260	0.11
	ENG 110	94	4.98	0.987		
	ENG 112	57	4.72	0.902		
	Total	233	4.94	0.941		

The students' attitude toward learning English was very high. The mean value for English 100 was 5.05, closely followed by the other two courses. However, the results also show that the initial attitude level of English learners gradually decreased from English 100 (5.05) to English 112 (4.72). The reason of this difference may be seen in the students' comments who mentioned that the assignments in English 112 were challenging and difficult.

**Table 11.** Attitudes Toward Learning English Results according to Program.

ANOVA according to Program						
ATLE	Prog.	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	CBA	152	4.88	0.886	8.431	0.00
	MCM	31	4.58	0.781		
	Comp	6	4.73	1.029		
	MIS	8	4.39	1.153		
	ENG	36	5.67	0.887		
	Total	233	4.94	0.941		

The findings revealed that students majoring in English and CBA had the highest attitude towards learning the English language, which is reflected in the average mean scores (ENG = 5.67 and CBA = 4.88). These findings demonstrate the students' positive attitude toward English, which is a reflection of how ENG and CBA students prioritize the English language.

**Table 12.** Attitudes Toward Learning English Results according to Year in University.

ANOVA according to Year in University						
ATLE	Year	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	Fresh.	131	5.03	0.844	1.721	0.16
	Soph.	81	4.76	1.067		
	Jun.	15	5.03	0.976		
	Sen.	6	5.27	0.880		
	Total	233	4.94	0.941		

The results in Table 12 show no significant differences among the year in college and the attitudes toward English. To further examine the differences, the highest registered score of 5.27 was given by the senior students, the freshmen and juniors had the same score (5.03), whereas the lowest mean of was scored by the sophomore students (4.76). These results indicate that, compared with freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and senior students had more positive attitudes toward English. This finding is also consistent with the results of the desire to learn English, and that the more years a student has spent in college, the more their desire to learn and the attitude toward English is likely to grow.

### Students' Perceived Parental Encouragement toward Learning English

This section presents the overall results of Students' perceived parental encouragement toward Learning English, identifying the differences between the nominal variables (English composition courses, students' major, and year in college).

**Table 13.** Parental Encouragement Results according to Course.

ANOVA according to Course						
PE	Course	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	ENG 100	82	4.49	0.977	0.319	0.73
	ENG 110	94	4.50	0.943		
	ENG 112	57	4.39	0.747		
	Total	233	4.47	0.909		

Table 13 indicates the high level (4.47) of parental encouragement toward learning English. When considering all three English courses, it was found that parents' stressing the importance of English gained the highest score in English 110 (mean score = 4.50), while the lowest score was recorded for English 112 (mean score = 4.39). Interestingly, these results also indicate a decreased interest in English 112.

**Table 14.** Parental Encouragement Results according to Program.

ANOVA according to Program						
PE	Program	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	CBA	152	4.57	0.767	3.318	0.01
	MCM	31	4.36	0.923		
	Comp	6	3.73	1.661		
	MIS	8	3.66	0.834		
	English	36	4.45	1.175		
	Total	233	4.47	0.909		

These findings show that students majoring in English and CBA had the highest attitude towards learning the English language (ENG = 5.67 and CBA = 4.88). These findings reflect the students' positive attitude toward English and how they have prioritized learning English.

**Table 15.** Parental Encouragement Results according to Year in University.

ANOVA according to Year in University						
PE	Year	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig. (2-T)
	Fresh.	233	4.09	0.615	1.141	0.33
	Soph.	131	4.44	0.995		
	Jun.	81	4.44	0.762		
	Sen.	15	4.75	0.900		
	Total	6	4.96	0.714		

The data shows that, as far as the responses of the participants at parental encouragement are concerned, senior students scored best (mean score 4.75), followed by sophomore and junior students (both 4.44), and freshmen students came last (means score 4.09). This finding is also consistent with the results of the desire to learn English (4.92) and the attitude toward English (4.94), indicating that the highest variable in the rank was the attitude toward learning English

## Correlational Analysis

A Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between students' motivational intensity, desire to learn English, attitude toward learning English, and parental encouragement.

**Table 16.** The Correlation among Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn English, Attitude toward Learning English, and Parental Encouragement.

Correlations	
	B
Motivational Intensity	.323**
The desire to Learn English	.292**
Attitude Toward Learning English	.394**
Parental Encouragement	.435**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).	

As evidenced in Table 16 motivational intensity (0.323), desire to learn English (0.292), attitude toward learning English (0.394) and parental encouragement (0.435) are all positively correlated with one another. These four AMTB scales, were expected, according to the literature, to correlate with one another. The strength of correlation between the four scales among the students highlights the importance of learning English as perceived by Arab students in Kuwait. It is interesting to note that a stronger relationship was found between parental encouragement (0.435) and attitudes toward learning English (0.394) indicating that Arab students' parental encouragement to learning English leads to higher levels of the learner's attitude to learning the language.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Here we present the differences among the nominal (English composition courses, students' major and year in college) and dependent (students' motivational intensity, students' desire to learn English, attitudes toward learning English, and parental encouragement to learn English) variables among Kuwaiti language students. Addressing how much effort is made by students to learn the language, and how important they consider English to be, among the subjects being studied, we found that English and CBA students' motivational intensity was highest. We propose that this finding is related to the awareness that English will give these students the best return for their efforts and open up possibilities for their career. Also, students of English might have opportunities to find a job as an English teacher, translator and interpreter



(e.g., translating marketing materials or communicating with customers), or other attractive job positions where English proficiency is required. On the other hand, considering that English is “the language of business” and is a global language, CBA students might have opportunities to start or continue their own business at an international level.

We found that the students’ attitude scores toward learning English are high. However, the attitude scores toward learning English decrease gradually from English 100 to English 112. This result was found interesting assuming that students have difficulty in understanding the lessons in English 112.

Addressing how parental influence is related to the students’ motivation to learn English, we found that the students’ motivational intensity, desire to learn English, and attitude toward learning English is correlated with parental encouragement.

## **Recommendations**

In this study, the conceptual framework that guided the synthesis of research and gathering of other information on the attitude and motivation to learn English by Arab students in Kuwait has been presented. Also, the framework also explains inadequate knowledge about assessment and ongoing monitoring of Arab students’ proficiencies, progress, and instructional environments, which might guide instructional planning. The data presented here is mostly relevant to motivation intensity, desire, attitude, and parental encouragement toward learning English, and future studies should address how language anxiety influences learning English. Based on our review of the literature and the findings presented here, we propose that further research should address the diversity of student populations to whom literacy improvement is a concern, including the varying levels of language proficiency and academically underprepared college students. Future research should also design and integrate multidisciplinary perspectives that can clarify the effective components of instructional practice and why they work. We recommend that future research should address the following aspects: (i) characteristics of the Arab learners of English: the range of specific literacy needs of the learners’ should be better understood, including the development of English literacy and the challenges to learning faced by the learners; (ii) specification of the literacy skills required in the society (e.g., for meeting certain educational or career milestones, including the literacy skills associated with knowledge building); and (iii) contextual influences on literacy development, which would include research on how various factors (cognitive, linguistic, social, cultural, and instructional) interact to affect literacy development.

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