

# *Investigating Integrative and Instrumental Motivation and Vocabulary Learning among Third Year English as a Foreign Language Secondary School Students at Batna Province, Algeria*

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## **Abstract**

A myriad of studies around the world have attempted to study the interdependence of motivation and achievement, however, few have tackled the issue in relation to vocabulary learning, noticeably, in foreign language learning contexts. The present work was developed in order to explore the influence of motivation on Algerian EFL secondary school learners' vocabulary learning. A total of 100 EFL students who were at third-year level of secondary education took part in the study. Data was gathered through the administration of a questionnaire adapted from Gardner's (1985) AMTB to assess participants' type of motivation according to the instrumental/integrative dichotomy. An additional section of the questionnaire was devoted to examine their level of English vocabulary knowledge. Results indicated the outperformance of the integratively motivated learners in vocabulary knowledge. The study outcomes can serve to help educators to take appropriate measures to instil stronger motivation among secondary school students and consequently shed more light on the existing problems Algerian learners experience in their EFL learning.

**Key Words:** Vocabulary Learning, Foreign Language Learning Motivation, Integrative Motivation, Instrumental Motivation, Secondary School Level Learners.

## **Résumé**

Beaucoup d'études dans le monde ont tenté de rechercher l'interdépendance de la motivation et les résultats académiques des étudiants, mais peu ont abordé la question en relation avec l'apprentissage du vocabulaire, notamment dans des contextes d'apprentissage de langues étrangères. Le présent travail a été développé afin d'explorer l'influence de la motivation sur l'apprentissage du vocabulaire des apprenants des écoles secondaires algériennes. Au total, 100 étudiants en troisième année secondaire ont participé à l'étude. Les données ont été recueillies par l'intermédiaire d'un questionnaire adapté de l'AMTB de Gardner (1985) permettant d'évaluer le type de motivation des participants en fonction de la dichotomie instrumentale / intégrative. Une section supplémentaire du questionnaire a été consacrée à l'examen de leur niveau de connaissance du vocabulaire anglais. Les résultats ont montré la surperformance des étudiants motivés par la motivation intégrative dans l'apprentissage du vocabulaire. Les résultats de l'étude peuvent aider les éducateurs à prendre les mesures nécessaires pour renforcer la motivation des étudiants du secondaire et ainsi mieux traiter les problèmes existants que les apprenants algériens rencontrent dans leur apprentissage de l'anglais.

**Mots –Clés :** L'apprentissage du vocabulaire, Motivation de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, Motivation intégrative, Motivation instrumentale, étudiants du niveau secondaire.

## **المخلص**

تطرق العديد من البحوث حول العالم الى دراسة العلاقة الارتباطية بين التحفيز والتحصيل العلمي ، إلا أن قلة منها تناولت هذه المسألة فيما يتعلق بتعلم المفردات ، خصوصا في سياق تعلم اللغات الأجنبية. تسعى هذه الدراسة الى استطلاع مدى تأثير التحفيز على تعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية وذلك على مستوى التعليم الثانوي في الجزائر. شارك في الاستفتاء مئة تلميذ من المستوى الثالث في الطور الثانوي. جمعت البيانات عن طريق استبيان تم اعتماده من مجموعة جاردنر للأسئلة المتعلقة بالحوافز والاتجاهات وهذا لتقييم نوع حوافز المشتركين استنادا للتفرع الثنائي لجاردنر المتمثل في الحوافز التكميلية والنفعية. كما تم تخصيص قسم إضافي في الاستبيان للاطلاع على علاقة نوع التحفيز بمدى معرفة التلاميذ لمفردات اللغة الإنجليزية. اظهرت النتائج تفوق أداء التلاميذ ذوي الحوافز التكميلية. تساعد نتائج هذه الدراسة الاساتذة على اتخاذ التدابير الملائمة من أجل بعث الحوافز المناسبة في نفوس تلاميذ الثانويات ، وبالتالي تقوم بتسليط المزيد من الضوء على المشاكل التي تصادف التلاميذ الجزائريون في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تعلم المفردات ، تحفيز تعلم اللغات الأجنبية ، التحفيز التكميلي ، التحفيز النفعي ، تلاميذ الطور الثانوي.

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## *Introduction*

Everything needs motivation and a reason for action. Motivation is undoubtedly a paramount factor to succeed in any given task, and it is considered as a determinant element in educational success.

The study of motivation was a major point of interest in psychology and education during the past decades, and as a result, a myriad of studies tried to approach the concept from different perspectives in an attempt to understand this multi-faceted complex phenomenon. Research on motivation in second/foreign language learning was heavily influenced by the work of the Canadian Psychologist R. C. Gardner and his student Lambert (1972) who initiated several motivations related studies in the Canadian context. The obtained results constituted the cornerstone for further research and stimulated worldwide interest in the topic.

In the Algerian context, there is a scarce existing body of research on the issue of motivation in the teaching-learning process, and specifically, in relation to EFL teaching and learning. In fact, despite researchers trying to cast light on the interdependence of EFL learners' achievement and motivation, little attention was directed to tackle the issue in relation to vocabulary learning.

Undoubtedly, vocabulary learning is at the core of any successful language learning situation. The researcher, an Algerian university EFL teacher who taught previously the secondary schooling level, observed during her three years of teaching experience a lack of vocabulary mastery among EFL secondary school learners which resulted in poor academic performance, be it written or oral. Nonetheless, the issue of vocabulary learning and students' learning motivation needs to be dealt with in that very specific context in order to come up with adequate remedial plans for improved academic outcomes. Secondary education is pivotal to learners' future academic life, that is why any possible disturbances in motivation need to be detected and dealt with at that critical level before attending university.

Accordingly, the present study is an attempt to examine Algerian EFL secondary school learners'

type of motivation based on Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of language learning. Additionally, it tries to investigate the existing relationship between learners' motivation type and vocabulary acquisition so to uncover the type that results in better mastery of English vocabulary.

## *Statement of the Problem*

Vocabulary learning plays a significant role in language learning (Zimmerman, 1997b; De Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997). It is increasingly important to integrate vocabulary learning research to the overall existing FLL theoretical knowledge, especially in Algeria. In fact, it has been noticed by the researcher; who taught English subject at a secondary school for three years, that students at that level demonstrate a lack of vocabulary mastery resulting in a poor overall performance in their EFL learning.

Actually, Algerian secondary schools adopt the competency-based approach (CBA) in teaching English as a foreign language. This approach merges both types of motivation, integrative and instrumental, as learning becomes learner-centred where different real-world situations are created in order to stimulate communication and enhance the ability to deal with problem-solving issues. However, the structure of Algerian EFL secondary students' motivational attitudes towards English learning has not been highlighted in research.

As a result, there are almost no studies investigating the role of different levels of motivation in EFL learning, especially in relation to vocabulary learning, and more evidence on the role of motivation on vocabulary knowledge in EFL students' learning performance is required.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to add to the scant body of knowledge about Algerian secondary school students' motivation towards learning English as a foreign language by following in the footsteps of previous studies while taking account of the nature of the researched context.

## *Research Questions*

The current research is a descriptive one that deals with investigating Algerian EFL secondary school learners' motivation type in relation to

vocabulary mastery. Thus, the work is an attempt to understand the following research questions:

- What is the prevailing motivation type (integrative or instrumental) among Algerian EFL secondary school learners?
- What causes Algerian secondary school learners' demotivation for learning English vocabulary?
- Are students who evaluate themselves positively in English vocabulary learning integratively or instrumentally motivated?

## **1. Literature Review**

### **1.1. Gardner's Socio-Educational Model**

As mentioned before, Gardner and his associates were the pioneers to undertake studies on motivation in language teaching and learning. From a socio-psychological perspective, Gardner highlighted the fact that learning a language is different from learning any other subject since it involves adding elements of a different cultural group into one's own culture (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), and is easily influenced by a range of social factors, such as prevailing attitudes toward the language, geopolitical considerations, and cultural stereotypes (Dörnyei, 2005). In this vein, Gardner tried to account for differences in motivation to master the language of another community through integrating social and individual psychology.

Motivation is defined as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" Gardner (1985:1).

Within the Socio-Educational Model, Gardner distinguished between two types of motivation, integrative and instrumental. The former referring to a desire to integrate with the target language group and become like valuable members of the target community, whereas in the latter, the student exhibits a need to learn the language for utilitarian purposes like succeeding an exam or getting a job (Lucas, 2010). The model stresses integrative motivation to correlate more positively with language learning achievement (Gardner, 2001a).

### **1.2. The Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery**

Gardner's and associates extensive studies resulted in the production of a set of a battery of psychometric tests, The Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery (the AMTB), designed to measure a variety of motivational factors (Dörnyei, 2001). The questionnaire was used worldwide and contributed in the popularisation of motivation research. Since its publication, it has been used in many different parts of the world to investigate students' motivation to learn second/foreign languages (Mondada & Doehler, 2004), heritage languages (Syed, 2001), foreign languages (Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Shohamy, 2001; Ushioda, 2001), and English as a foreign and international language (Brown, Robson, & Rosenkjar, 2001; Lamb, 2004).

### **1.3. Motivation and Vocabulary Learning**

In fact, a large body of studies unveiled a positive relationship between motivation and language learning achievement among learners at different ages, sex, and proficiency levels (Schmidt and Watanabe, 2001; Masagoret and Gardner, 2003; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Bernaus and Gardner, 2008). However, despite this growing concern about motivation and achievement gaps, little research has tried to explore the existence of such positive link in relation to vocabulary learning (Gardner, Lalonde and Moorcroft, 1985; Elly, 1986; Gardner and McIntyre, 1991; Fernández and Fontecha, 2010b). Gardner, Lalonde and Moorcroft (1985), for instance, investigated the effects of aptitude and integrative motivation of 170 students from an introductory psychology course on their learning rate of 25 French/English vocabulary pairs. Results indicated that participants with a high integrative motivation learned faster than those with a low integrative motivation.

Some researchers suggested that the two key dimensions of vocabulary knowledge are 'depth' and 'breadth' (Meara, 1996; Qian, 1999; Read, 1989; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996). The depth of vocabulary knowledge is concerned with the level of understanding of the various aspects of a given word

whereas the breadth is regarded as vocabulary size. The current study focuses on the dimension of breadth in approaching students' vocabulary learning through the designed items in the data collection tool, i.e., the questions were designed as to examine students' vocabulary understanding level.

## ***2. Aims of the Study***

The current work is a descriptive inquiry that is undertaken in order to unfold the nature of Algerian EFL secondary school learners' motivational attitudes. It intends first to detect the type of motivation, integrative or instrumental, learners hold towards English language learning. Secondly, it aims at examining vocabulary knowledge and motivation through unveiling the motivational type that is positively related to Algerian EFL secondary school students' vocabulary learning.

## ***3. Research Methodology***

The research design for this study is quantitative descriptive. Data were collected by means of an adapted questionnaire containing both close-ended and open-ended items aiming to answer the previously raised research questions. The quantitative research design and the descriptive survey method have been the most commonly employed methods in L2 motivational research because of the initial influence of social psychology and a concomitant emphasis on results that are reliable and replicable to different L2 learner populations.

### ***3.1. Population and Sample***

The population of the study involved all third-year secondary school learners at Batna province attending Mustapha Benboulaïd secondary school.

The reason for selecting that level of instruction is because learners' English vocabulary knowledge is supposed to be well developed and their reasons for learning English language must be clear at that age. Hence, it would be quite an easy task to assess their vocabulary mastery. Additionally, the targeted students are one step far

from attending university, so any problems should be detected then remedied at that stage before enrolling in further studies. As a result, the generated data is expected to be rich in content.

Concerning the sample of this study, the researcher could not work with the whole number (300), and thus only 1/3 of the total population was randomly selected to take part in the study. Random selection allows the ability to give equal chances in representing all students. The sample then comprised 100 students ranging from 16 to 8 of age.

### ***3.2. Data Gathering Instruments***

The present study adopted a quantitative approach, particularly a descriptive method, to answer the previously raised research questions. The research tool used for generating the needed data was a questionnaire adapted from Gardner's AMTB. The questionnaire was deemed appropriate as "it affords a good deal of precision and clarity, because the knowledge needed is controlled by the questions" (McDonough and McDonough, 1997: 171). Furthermore, the use of the questionnaire enables the researcher to collect standardized answers since all the participants respond to the same questions and saves him/her time and effort either in data collection or handling (Dörnyei, 2003).

To serve the purpose of this work, the original AMTB was altered in order to fit the Algerian context. The AMTB was constructed in an ESL setting, and in order to use it in an EFL setting, it needs to be adjusted to both the learning environment and to respondents' 'actual lives'. Therefore, the questionnaire items were modified focusing on English as the target language in order to make it contextually relevant to the participants. Additionally, and to answer the aforementioned research questions, only integrative and instrumental scales were included in the questionnaire as the aim was to divide participants into two cohorts of integratively motivated students and instrumentally motivated ones.

The questionnaire comprised two main sets of questions. The first set was structured with a multiplicity of statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from agreement to disagreement. A total of eight items under two sub-scales were gauged to

explore students' integrativeness and instrumentality. The items were attributed value as follows: 5 for Strongly Disagree, 4 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Agree, and 1 for Strongly Agree. The integrative motivation scale contained four items to discern how much participants of the study learn English with a genuine interest to assimilate with the target language community, culture, way of life and literature. Similarly, the instrumental scale comprised four items, aiming at measuring respondents' practical reasons for studying English language.

The next set of questions was aimed at measuring students' vocabulary knowledge. It contained six items designed to probe into participant respondents' perceptions about their vocabulary knowledge level. The answer options ranged from very poor to very good. Some items required from students a further explanation to their answers through a related open-ended question.

The reliability and validity of the measures used in this test battery have been supported by considerable research (Gliksman 1981; Lalonde and Gardner 1984; Gardner, Lalonde, and Moorcroft 1985; Gardner and MacIntyre 1991).

### 3.3. Procedures

The current study took place at Mustapha Benboulaid secondary school in Batna, Algeria. A pilot study with a sample of 50 third-year students was undertaken two weeks before the actual study. Piloting allows the identification of unclear or ambiguous items in a questionnaire and also the determination of time limits and the clarity of instructions (Welman and Kruger, 1999). After piloting the questionnaire, an Arabic version of the questionnaire was added since the majority of participants were unable to understand the overall meaning of the questions, and consequently, students' opinions were unclear and confounding.

At the end of the second semester, permission was gained from the administration at the level of the targeted school to conduct the research. 100 questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher before regular class time. Participants were provided with a brief and clear explanation of

the questionnaire instructions, aims and expectations. They were also assured about the anonymity of their responses and were encouraged to ask questions at any time during the process. Answering time took an average of 10 minutes. Questionnaire results generated rich data that was later calculated and tabulated.

## 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Data analysis for this research begins with the first part of the questionnaire which was designed to uncover the type of participants' motivation according to the instrumental/integrative dichotomy.

### 4.1. Motivation Type

Results pertaining to students' motivation type are presented below.

#### 4.1.2. Students' Integrativeness

Students' responses to the four items measuring their integrativeness in EFL learning are displayed in the table below.

**Table N°1:** The Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Integrative Motivation Items (n=100)

Items on Integrative Motivation	M	S.D
1. Studying English can be important to me as it will allow me to be more at ease with other people who speak English	3.91	1.01
2. Studying English can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people	4	0.97
3. Studying English can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate British and American art and literature	3.31	1.13
4. Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups	3.53	1.12
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>	3.68	

Note. M=Mean Score, S. D= Standard Deviation

As table 1 makes evident, students' integrativeness represents a mean score of 3.68 indicating a positive tendency towards integrative

reasons for learning English language. Participants of the study, therefore, show positive attitudes towards English speaking people, their culture and civilisation. This comes in line with the findings of Al-Quyadi (2002) who asserted the existence of integrativeness in EFL contexts. Such results posit Algerian students' openness towards the world's different cultures and civilisations as well as a willingness to integrate with other communities and nationalities.

#### 4.1.3. Students' Instrumentality

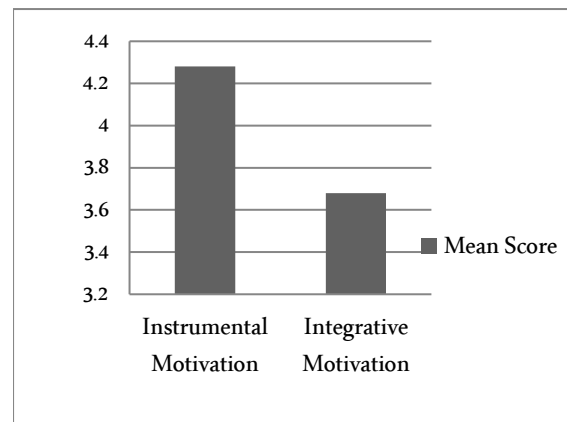
Participants' answers on instrumental motivation items are shown in table2.

**Table N° 2:** The Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Instrumental Motivation Items (n=100)

Items on Instrumental Motivation	M	S.D
1. Studying English can be important for me because I'll need it for my future career	4.40	0.70
2. Studying English can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person	4.20	0.98
3. Studying English can be important for me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job	4.52	0.62
4. Studying English can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English	4	0.97
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>	4.28	

A close examination of the mean scores of responses to the four items comprising the instrumental motivation indicates that students have a positive and high degree of instrumental motivation. A mean score of 4.28 implies that participants of the study were strongly stimulated by utilitarian purposes to learn English language. This is consistent with the results of many studies conducted in Muslim countries (AlMutawa, 1994, Al-Quyadi, 2002, Qashoa, 2006).

#### 4.1.4. Integrativeness Vs Instrumentality



**Figure N° 1:** The Overall Means of Students' Integrativeness and Instrumentality

Comparing the overall mean scores of the instrumental motivation and the integrative one, it can be concluded that instrumental motivation shows a higher mean score of 4.28 compared to integrative motivation which receives 3.68. This indicates that instrumental reasons for learning English language were dominating among participants of the study. This reveals that Algerian secondary school students' foreign language learning is affected by the practical benefits the target language can offer more than it is affected by an interest in its culture. The results of this study conform to the claim of scholars like Gardner (1985) and Brown (1994) who assert that in EFL contexts where students have little or no chance to use the target language and no opportunity to interact with people of the target community, learners are more likely to develop instrumental motivation more than integrative motivation.

## 4.2. Vocabulary Learning

Results of items belonging to section two and which evaluate students' English vocabulary learning are displayed and discussed below.

### 4.2.1. Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Vocabulary in English Learning

**Table N° 3:** Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Vocabulary in English Learning

Answers	SD	D	N	A	SA
n	0	0	11	56	33
(%)	(0)	(0)	(11)	(56)	(33)

Note. SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SD=Strongly Agree

As Table 3 shows, the majority of students approved the importance of learning English vocabulary as more than half of them, (89 students), gave positive answers. Such results demonstrate that Algerian students deem vocabulary a prerequisite for learning English language. In fact, students often instinctively recognize the importance of vocabulary to their language learning, as Schmitt (2010) noted, “learners carry around dictionaries and not grammar books” (Schmitt,2010:4)

#### 4.2.2. Students’ Perceptions of their English Vocabulary Learning Improvement during Secondary Schooling

**Table N° 4:** Students’ Perceptions of their English Vocabulary Learning Improvement during Secondary Schooling

Answers	Yes	No
<b>n</b>	31	69
<b>(%)</b>	(31)	(69)

From the table above we can see that only 31% of participants admitted that their English vocabulary improved during secondary schooling. The remaining (69%) denied any progress.

To analyse the obtained results, it is worth mentioning first, that English language is a compulsory school subject in Algerian secondary schools. Learners experience 3 years of secondary schooling before entering the higher educational institutions. Learners at secondary stages spend three 60 minutes English periods per week. Nonetheless, we can say that despite the shift of teaching from the traditional methods to communicative language teaching, most English language classrooms in Algeria continue to be places to memorize textbooks rather than practice communication. The results above suggest that Algerian EFL teachers are still educating learners in a manner which is directed to meet the requirements of the exams through extensive vocabulary and grammatical rules, as a result, most students are still facing difficulties learning English language, particularly, vocabulary.

#### 4.3. Motivation and Vocabulary Learning

Findings related to items of section three in the questionnaire are presented and discussed below.

##### 4.3.1. Students’ Appreciation of English Vocabulary Learning

**Table N° 5:** Students’ Appreciation of English Vocabulary Learning

Answers	Yes	No
<b>n</b>	81	19
<b>(%)</b>	(81)	(19)

As can be seen from the table above, Table 5, among 100 participants, 81 affirmed their appreciation of English vocabulary learning, while the rest, 19 participants, declared they did not like it. The results indicate that the greater number of Algerian students who took part in the study tend to enjoy learning English vocabulary. However, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that the majority exhibited positive attitudes towards English vocabulary, an important number of participants (26 students) did not adhere to that. Consequently, and to have a more detailed picture of the issue, an open-ended item followed the main question in order to probe into students’ personal demotivating factors in learning English vocabulary. Dörnyei (2001) contends that “demotivation concerns various negative influences that cancel out existing motivation” (Dörnyei, 2001:143).

Table 6 below summarizes the most frequent and important reasons stated by the 19 participants with the negative attitudes.

**Table N° 6:** Students’ Demotivating Factors in Learning English Vocabulary

Students’ Demotivating Factors ( n=19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The difficulty to retain new words and remember all what have been learnt at class.</li> <li>○ Learning English vocabulary is boring.</li> <li>○ Learning English is difficult.</li> <li>○ No interest in learning English language.</li> <li>○ The complexity of English words’ structure and spelling.</li> <li>○ Word pronunciation problems.</li> <li>○ Teacher’s rapid speech.</li> <li>○ The teacher does not provide Arabic translation of English vocabulary.</li> <li>○ Teacher’s personality.</li> </ul>

Closer inspection of the table shows that the demotivation of some students stemmed mainly from the perceived difficulties of English language structure, pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary load. This brings into light Algerian EFL students’ frustration with English subject as they need to memorize a large number of new lexical items to enable them to write and speak fluently and consequently pass English tests.

Additionally, other participants referred to their teachers as demotivators stating three main issues which were the instructor’s rapid speech, personality, and lack of the use of the mother tongue inside the classroom. Indeed, the teacher is the key of the teaching and learning process, and his/her way of teaching has great influence on the learners’ like or dislike for learning the related subject. Krashen (1987) argues that “the effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation” (Krashen; 1987:32).

Accordingly, when planning lessons, Algerian EFL teachers should take into consideration students’ needs in order to help them overcome vocabulary learning impediments and increase their motivation, as one of the main roles of a teacher is that of a facilitator of learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

Moreover, some student respondents judged English vocabulary learning as a boring experience and English language as a difficult and uninteresting subject. This might be due to the teaching method where students are not involved in the leaning process and are kept as passive actors whose main role is to absorb the lesson’s content mechanically. This highlights the incapacity of Algerian EFL teachers to cope with the CBA, which is a learner-centred approach, and abandon the traditional one where they are the sole and main active part in the teaching-learning process. Creating a fun and enjoyable atmosphere within the language classroom where autonomy is promoted facilitates successful learning.

Finally, it can be clearly noticed through these results, that most of the demotivating factors related to English vocabulary learning in the Algerian context are in line with the demotivating factors which are categorized by (Oxford,1994) and (Dörnyei,2001), particularly, teacher’s personality and teaching methods.

4.3.2. Students’ Degree of Motivation to Learn English Language

Table N°7: Students’ Degree of Motivation to Learn English Vocabulary

Answers	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes		
Often	Always				
n	11	12	25	23	29
(%)	(11)	(12)	(25)	(23)	(29)

As shown in Table 7, more than half of the students at Mustapha Benboulaïd Secondary school who participated in the actual study demonstrated a strong motivation to learn the target foreign language vocabulary as 23% answered they often feel motivated about it, and 29% affirmed they are always motivated to acquire English vocabulary. 12% and 25% of the respondents claimed to be less motivated, whereas the rest, 11%, admitted a total lack of motivation in learning English vocabulary. These results suggest that all in all, Algerian EFL secondary school students, and despite the demotivating factors that they may encounter, are still motivated to learn aspects of the English language, and more specifically, vocabulary. This implies students’ awareness of the importance of English language in today’s globalized world as it is an international language used in all fields.

4.3.3. Students’ Reasons for Learning English Vocabulary

Students’ responses to item number 3 in the second section accounted for the ensuing reasons for learning English vocabulary.

- It is an international language (or widely spoken).
- To talk with friends in English
- To gain more knowledge.
- To communicate with people across the world.
- To enjoy speaking English



- To get information from the internet.
- To know about world events.
- To gain a good academic rank.
- To continue education overseas.
- To cope with political, special, and economic changes in the world.
- To increase understanding capacity.
- To understand English books, movies, music, etc.

• To convey a bright picture about Muslims and Islam in general. The list of motives displayed above is in line with the results obtained from a set of investigations conducted by Dornyei (1994a) and Oxford & Shearin (1994), who tried to identify the needs and motives of teenagers for learning a foreign language in the context where the language is learned as a school subject.

#### 4.3.4. Students' Evaluation of their English Vocabulary Level

**Table N° 8:** Students' Evaluation of their English Vocabulary Level

Answers	VP	P	A	G	VG
<b>n</b>	13	28	38	11	10
<b>(%)</b>	(13)	(28)	(38)	(11)	(10)

Note. VP=Very Poor, P=Poor, A=Average, G=Good, VG=Very Good

It can be seen from the data presented in table 8 that the highest percentage is that of students with an average vocabulary level (38%). In the second position comes the "poor" level (28%), followed by the "very poor" one (13%). The 'good' and 'very good' levels ranked last with 11% and 10%. This means that in Algeria as an EFL context, learners' vocabulary level in secondary schools is weak as only 21% of participants evaluated themselves positively. This is probably because of the aforementioned demotivating factors mentioned by students (see Table 6). Teaching methods, teacher' personality, the textbook and certainly more other reasons are hindering Algerian EFL students from developing their vocabulary.

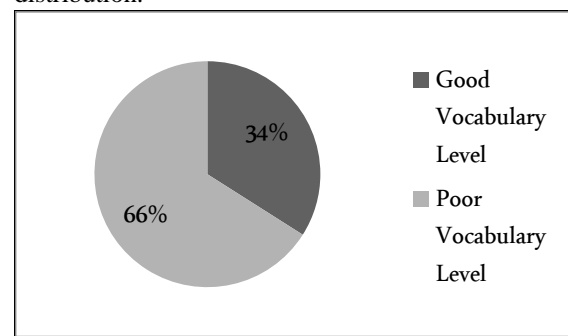
#### 4.4. Integrativeness Vs Instrumentality in Vocabulary Learning

To provide an answer to the second research question stated previously, data from Table 4 were used in order to draw an analogy between the

integratively motivated students and their instrumentally motivated peers in terms of what type of motivation, integrative or instrumental, affects positively students' vocabulary knowledge.

Hence, participants were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of students who attributed themselves a 'good' and a 'very good' level when rating their English vocabulary level. Their total number is 21 students, and they represent students with a good command of English vocabulary. With regard to the second group, it contained participants who belonged to the 'poor' and 'very poor' category, making up a total of 41 participants representing those whose vocabulary level is weak. The ones of the 'average' category were excluded.

Figure2. illustrates the profile of students with a good English vocabulary level and the ones with a weak level based on the results' frequency of distribution.



**Figure N° 2:** Students' Vocabulary Level Profile

Based on the data demonstrated in Figure2, the majority of secondary school students in Algeria have a poor English vocabulary level (66%). The ones with a good level, constituted only 34% of the whole number.

**Table N° 9:** Motivation Type of Students with Good Vocabulary Level

English Vocabulary Level Rank	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Instrumental Motivation</b>	6	28.57 %
<b>Integrative Motivation</b>	15	71.43 %
<b>Total</b>	21	100.0 %

To identify the dominant motivation type among participants of the study who confirmed to have a good vocabulary level, descriptive data were

obtained (displayed in Table 9) which revealed that a large percentage of them were motivated integratively (71.43%). This fact is consistent with the findings from Peipei and Guirong (2009), Monawar (2003), who reported that high achievement in EFL contexts is greatly related to integrative motivation.

Based on the findings of this research, integrative motivation plays a significant role for vocabulary acquisition of the students in secondary schools of Algeria. It means that the integrative motivation is more effective as compared to the instrumental motivation in the study of second/foreign language (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991), and it has a main impact on language learning in school settings, too (Mounawar, 2003).

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that based on table 9, few of the participants with good vocabulary level in this study had instrumental motivation (28.57%). Although this type is limited (less than a half), based on some notions (Brown, 2000; Spolsky, 1989) people with instrumental motivation can also perform well as they might expose themselves more to English learning and they might put more efforts to be successful. As it is asserted by Spolsky (1989), both motivation types influence the second/foreign language learning because those who are motivated (in either way) will allocate more time on learning an aspect of the language, consequently, the more will be learned. Although this may be true to some extent, integrative motivation in this study proved to be a significant determinant of vocabulary knowledge among Algerian EFL secondary school students.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The findings of this study have some pedagogical implications. First the dominance of the instrumental motivation type among third year students should make secondary school teachers try to come up with methods, strategies and introduce some teaching materials that nurture learners' instrumentality in order to achieve better learning outcomes and thus facilitate the teaching-learning process through meeting learners' needs and desires.

Moreover, although Algerian EFL secondary school students recognized the importance of vocabulary when learning English, most of them feel

demotivated to learn vocabulary due to many factors, on top of them were the teacher and teaching methods. As a result, it is increasingly important teachers try to keep up with students' attitudes towards EFL learning by selecting activities that respond to learners' aspirations in order to make them more engaged in different vocabulary learning tasks and thus improve their achievement.

Consequently, vocabulary learning can become a source of pleasure and entertainment and learners will enjoy acquiring new English words when their goals are taken into consideration by the educational staff from teachers to syllabus designers and policymakers.

### ***Limitations of the study***

This study is a human endeavor that is certainly exposed to hurdles and shortcomings that may limit the accuracy of its findings.

To begin with is the concept of 'motivation', which is not a "static mental or emotional state" (Dörnyei, 1998:118), but instead a "dynamically evolving and changing entity, associated with an ongoing process in time" (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998:44). Certainly, therefore, attitudes toward English and learning English can change over time.

Besides, the concept of vocabulary has been approached differently by researchers in the field and definitions may have varied according to what motivates any given study. When definitions over what measures vocabulary acquisition differ in research, there is the potential of reduced comparability.

There is also the problem related to the generalizability of the findings. The current study dealt with secondary school level at one specific secondary school at the region of Batna, Algeria.

Finally, participants of the study may have provided skewed data as they may have not put a reasonable effort into answering the questionnaire.

### ***Suggestions for Further Research***

This study might serve as a basis for further research in many ways. First, participants of the study may have provided skewed data as they may have not put a reasonable effort into answering the questionnaire. More time should be devoted for better results.

Furthermore, both qualitative and longitudinal approaches are desired much more to deal with this topic as a simple questionnaire cannot certainly gauge students' true feelings and perceptions in the long run.

Finally, focused researches in Algeria on studying the effect of motivation on attainment in EFL vocabulary through taking into consideration other dimensions like 'depth' by means of different tests such as the FLAGS (Cid, Granema, Tragant, 2009) or the WTC test (McIntyre et al, 2002), are greatly advised for an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting English language learning vocabulary.

### *General Conclusion*

The success of foreign language learning depends mainly on how a learner is motivated to learn the target language. The present study was an attempt to identify the motivational characteristics of Algerian EFL secondary school students in relation to vocabulary learning for it is underrepresented in research literature especially in the Algerian context. Specifically, this work tried to uncover the type of motivation, integrative or instrumental, that is positively linked to EFL vocabulary knowledge in the Algerian context through the lenses of Gardner's socio-psychological approach.

The yielded results indicated the prevalence of instrumental motivation over the integrative one among secondary school students who took part in the study. This is in line with a similar study conducted in the Arabic context, where Qashoa (2006) found that secondary school students in Dubai demonstrate a high degree of instrumentality. Participants, therefore, exhibited a strong desire to study English in order to fulfil practical goals like

securing a better future career, gaining a respectful social status, passing important exams, and accessing different educational materials in English language.

In terms of motivation and vocabulary learning, this research revealed that instrumentally motivated students differed from the integratively motivated ones in vocabulary learning with integratively motivated students having the lion's share in providing a positive evaluation of their overall vocabulary knowledge (71.43%). Hence, the more students affiliated themselves with the English community, the positive were their attitudes regarding English vocabulary. As a result, the current study alongside many of other empirical studies (Gardner et al. 1987; Gardner et al., 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Gardner et al., 1992; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) turned out to support Gardner's prediction that "individuals who are integratively motivated would be more active in language learning context, they would work harder and learn faster." (Gardner, 1983: 228).

When examining Algerian EFL secondary school students' vocabulary learning motivation, results of the current study indicated that participants recognized the importance of vocabulary in learning English, however, most of them feel demotivated to learn vocabulary mainly due to the teacher of English language and teaching methods.

In light of these results, teachers, educators and syllabus designers should be sensitive to learners' motives by recognizing their instrumentality. Developing curricula and planning courses in secondary schools based on students' goals and needs is important in enhancing EFL learners' motivation and overall achievement.

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## Appendix

### A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT MOTIVATION AND VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN EFL LEARNING

#### Section One: Motivation Type

*-Dear students, below are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. We would like you to indicate your opinion about each statement by putting an "X" in the box that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you very much for your help.*

*-Use the scale below to answer:*

1 = Strongly disagree					
2 = Disagree					
3 = Neutral					
4 = Agree					
5 = Strongly agree					
STATEMENTS	S.D 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	S.A 5
1. Studying English can be important to me as it will allow me to be more at ease with other people who speak English					
2. Studying English can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people					
3. Studying English can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate British and American art and literature					
4. Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups					
5. Studying English can be important for me because I'll need it for my future career					
6. Studying English can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person					
7. Studying English can be important for me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job					
8. Studying English can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English					

#### Section Two: Vocabulary Knowledge

Please tick the answer that best describe your opinion, and provide further justifications when required.

1. According to you, is vocabulary knowledge basic to English learning?

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

2. Do you find that your English vocabulary size has improved through secondary school studying years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

#### Section Three: Motivation in Learning English Vocabulary

3. Do you like learning English vocabulary?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please say why.

.....

.....

4. Do you feel motivated to acquire English vocabulary?

☐ Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

5. Would you please state what motivates you most to learn English Vocabulary?

.....

.....

6. How do you rate your English vocabulary level?

☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Thank you for your cooperation.