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**Title:** The role of motivational factors in the apparent lack of success in English language learning in Arabic-speaking countries, particularly Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

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**Abstract:**

This thesis examines the degree to which motivational factors influence the successful acquisition of English as a foreign language in female Emirati and Omani learners. The research participants were female third-level students taking foundation English and English for Specific Purposes courses in a university in the United Arab Emirates and a teacher-training college in Oman, both of which are based on an American model. In the wider context, Western culture is having an enormous impact on the entire region, primarily due to the media's reporting of regional and political affairs. It is against such a background that changes are taking place in the educational systems across the region, with English assuming more significance as a language of instruction. Arabic is being phased out as the primary language of instruction in many instances. This has an impact on the learners' motivation to study the English language. Studies have suggested that motivation to learn a foreign language may be affected by attitudes towards the target language community and fears of loss of identity (Williams, 1994; Kharbat, 2002), thus indicating that the macro-context may be one of the motivational factors involved in successful language acquisition. This underscores the fact that underlying political, religious and socio-economic issues may have an impact on motivation to achieve a higher level in the English language. The results of the study show many of the participants appear to have a clear grasp of how both the macro and micro contexts influence their motivation to study English. These findings suggest that language planners, policy makers and indeed, faculty, need to be aware of how both the macro and micro contexts influence language acquisition in Arabic-speaking countries.

**Keywords:** Language planning, higher education, motivation