

# The Impact of the Affective Acculturative Variables on Adult Arab Learners of Finnish

**Ahmed H. Naif**

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Nilai, Malaysia

*Farookhani7@gmail.com*

Article Information	Abstract
<p><b>Article type:</b> Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received: April 02, 2022 Revised: April 05, 2022 Accepted: April 05, 2022</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Acculturation, Language shock, Culture shock, Motivation, Ego-permeability</p>	<p>Adult Arab immigrants living in Finland face a kind of difficulty acculturating into the Finnish society and difficulties in learning Finnish as acculturation into the target language society is relayed to the process of the Second Language (L2) acquisition and vice versa. The study looks at the impact of the affective acculturative variables proposed by Schumann (1978) on the acculturation process of 9 (male and female) adult Arabs taking Finnish as a Second Language (FSL) course at 'Helsingin Aikuopisto' Institute of Adult Education in Helsinki. An in-depth interview was used for the purpose of data collection. Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model was adopted as a framework for the study. For managing and analyzing collected data, ATLAS.ti version 7 software was utilised in this study. The findings showed that during the processes of acculturation and learning FSL; the participants experienced both cultural and language shocks, integrative and instrumental types of motivation were reported, and low ego-permeability towards learning Finnish was announced; however, semi-ego permeability was reported towards the Finnish culture.</p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Finland, the Nordic country with a low population density, has been attracting immigrants from many countries for different reasons. Middle East countries, particularly Arab war-torn countries like Syria and Iraq, form the highest rate among immigrants and this might be attributed to wars and unstable political situations there. Population of Arabs in Finland is continuously increasing, and the number of Arab immigrants was doubled and rose from 1138 in (1990) to 14825 in (2014), (Statistics Finland, 2015). Oudenhoven (2006:163) argued that immigrants "may have been pulled to the new country by personal, political, or religious reasons, but most often they went there to find a better economic position, or to be reunited with family members".

According to the formal Finnish statistic (2015), there are about 22000 Arabs living in Finland. This category of immigrants is encountered with difficulty acculturating into the Finnish host society. Apparently, there is no commonality between the Arab immigrants as Second Language (L2) group and the Finns as the Target Language (TL) group in terms of language, culture, religion, traditions, and norms. The Finnish society is open and liberal and the Arab society is Muslim conservative one. Despite the fact that accepting new culture's traditions and norms (other than the native one) depends mainly on individual differences; however, the great disparity between the immigrant's native culture and the host culture can form big psychological and social barrier and can cause real language and culture shock. It can also affect the L2 learners' motivation in acculturating into the host society and learning its language.

As a learner of Finnish language, the researcher has observed that there are many adult learners who find it difficult to acculturate into the Finnish society and hence learning Finnish as "the degree to which a learner acculturates to the Target Language (TL) group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (Schumann 1978:34). Although some of these adult learners have already spent a reasonable period of time living in Finland, yet not acculturated

into the Finnish host society and are not aware of many details in the Finnish local life. It has been also noted that adult Arab immigrants live in large social isolation inside the Finnish community. They depend mainly on Finnish-course teachers at schools to learn about the local culture. Moreover, the influence of the social and psychological distance is clearly reflected on the process of learning Finnish for this category of learners.

Motivation, culture and language shocks, and the ability to accept new a new culture are influential factors and inevitable. They accompany the processes of acculturation and FSL learning for adult Arab immigrants. The reasons that stand behind the psychological gap between the adult Arab immigrants and the Finnish society can be diagnosed through exploring the impact of the four acculturative affective variables, presented by Schumann (1978), on the acculturation process of this category of learners. These variables include language shock, culture shock, motivation, and ego-permeability.

The main objective of the study is to enrich the research literature with information related to the acculturation process of this category of learners. The results of the study can be very useful to the adult immigrants to Finland, Finnish Labour Office, the patron of the FSL courses and schools and institutes that administer Finnish courses for adult immigrants.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

(Sam, 2006), reported that in English language the term “acculturation” was first used by Powell (1880-1883) who suggested that acculturation refers to the psychological changes that urged by cross-cultural interaction. Berry argues that one of the earliest definitions of acculturation was presented by Redfield et al. who think that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result (when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with) subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al., 1937 as cited in Berry 1997:7).

Schumann (1978:29) defined acculturation as “the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group”. In the same line, Sam (2006:11) argued that “Acculturation covers all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds”. For immigrants, acculturation and L2 learning are related and complete each other; efficiency in L2 eases the process of acculturation and good integration helps in rapid L2 acquisition. Brown (2000:182) correlated between L2 learning and acculturation that “SLL involves the acquisition of a second identity; this creation of a new identity is at the heart of culture learning, or what some might call acculturation”.

According to Berry et al (1997:299), for acculturating individuals, adaptation to the new culture usually occurs in one of two types, psychological and sociocultural, predicted by different set of factors. The former refers to a number of internal psychological results like “a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context”, however, the latter refers to a number of external sociocultural results related to the new situation of the individuals and include; “their ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of family life, work, and school”.

Fan (2010) opined that culture and language are related to each other and language difference might cause culture shock and that depends on the individual himself. He also argued that language shock can be caused by linguistic and sociolinguistic factors. The former refers to differences between the target language and the L2 learner’s native language in terms of grammar rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation while learning new language. However, the latter is related to the linguistic habits or the use of some expressions not existing in the L2 learner’s native language.

Masgoret & Ward (2006:62) explained that immigrants to a new culture must be acquainted with some new “values difference” and equipped with” behavioral strategies” that can help the immigrants to interact, deal and adapt with a new culture in which they are involved. They also argue that there are some cross-cultural differences that may cause difficulties for immigrants to achieve success in things like “effective communication, positive social relations and broader sociocultural adaptation”. These difficulties include: language (when language family, types of scripts, and the verbal and written system are different), nonverbal communication (nonverbal acts usually include messages and these messages can be differently interpreted and cause cross-cultural misunderstandings), and rules and conventions (refer to differences in values like individualism, collectivism, and power distance).

### **2.1 Schumann’s Acculturation Model**

Schumann’s (1978) Model of Acculturation is based on the notion that acculturation into a host society and learning the language of that society, support and complete each other. His model comprises a number of social and affective (psychological) variables that usually accompany acculturation process. Affective variables (the concern of the study) include four variables and under the psychological umbrella. These variables deal with individual learning a new language and influence the process of acculturation and then second language learning. The proposed psychological variables include: a) Language shock, when the L2 learner fears being criticized by a listener or interlocutor. b) Cultural shock, it is anxiety caused by perplexity when learner involved in new culture life. c) Motivation related to the reasons that motivate

learners to acquire a new language. There are two orientations in motivation for L2 learning, integrative and instrumental orientations. d) Ego permeability when the learner is able to accept individuality with belonging to a new language society. Schumann’s Model of Acculturation became related to this study because “the model is intended for immigrants who are in an environment that uses full target language and the society that speaks full target language” (Noor Saazai, 2014:31).

## 2.2 Research on Acculturation

The reviewed literature shows a dearth of studies that tackle the acculturation process of adult immigrants in Finland. Moreover, in the Finnish context, research on Arab immigrants learning Finnish and acculturating into Finnish society is greatly lacking. However, there are some studies that have been conducted by researchers from different parts of the world like Okeke (2007) US; Hasting (2012) Saudi Arabia; Rafieyan (2014) US; Spenader 2011 Sweden and only two studies that have tackled integration issues of immigrants in Finland, like Mwai & Ghaffar’s (2014) and Oguntuyi’s (1998). Table I shows in details these studies.

**Table I. Studies on acculturation from different parts of the world**

Location	Purpose	Methods used	Samples	Major findings
Finland Mwai & Ghaffar’s (2014)	Investigate the role of Finnish in the integration process.	Semi-structured interviews	(5) immigrant women living in Finland.	-Finnish language is essential in integration into the Finnish society. -Finnish people are antisocial with immigrants.
Iran Rafieyan (2014)	Investigate the acculturation attitude.	Likert scale acculturation attitude questionnaire.	70 undergraduate EFL Iranian sojourners in the USA.	-Integration and Assimilation strategies were adapted. -maintaining the native culture.
Saudi Arabia Hasting (2012)	Investigate the acculturation process.	Schumann (1978) acculturation Model.	(11) EFL teachers working in Saudi Arabia.	-Acculturation is difficult due to high level of isolation. -social distance prevent teachers from learning Arabic.
Sweden Spenader (2011)	-investigate the relationship between acculturation and language learning.	Acculturation Index.	(4) American sojourners to Sweden.	- Acculturation is correlated with high proficiency in target language. -Rejection of the target culture is correlated with low proficiency in target language.
USA Okeke (2007).	Examine acculturation of ESL African adult learners.	Schumann (1978) Acculturation Model.	Adult African immigrant ESL learners.	-learners have positive attitude towards ESL course. -learners choose adaptation for integration. -learners report limited contact with native speakers.
Finland Oguntuyi’s (1998).	Investigate the importance of Finnish in the acculturation process.	Berry’s theory of acculturation	Seven African women from Ghana and Nigeria.	-The relationship between African and Finnish women is not equal. - Finns attitude towards Africans is negative. -proficiency in Finnish is essential for integration.

Table I shows acculturation studies from different parts of the world. It manifests the purpose, methodology used, people involved in the study, and also the major findings. Apparently, only two studies have been conducted in Finland and used female immigrant participants only. The following part will highlight the findings in these two studies besides the studies in Table I.

Mwai & Ghaffar (2014) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the role of Finnish language in the integration process among five immigrant women spent two years in Finland. The study also aimed at explaining the chances acquired by immigrant women in the process of integration. The results emphasized that competency in Finnish is essential in strengthening the situation of the immigrant woman and it also helps in the integration process into the Finnish society. These findings echoed in Oguntuyi’s (1998) study, who investigated the factors that affect the acculturation process of seven African immigrant women living in Finland. The results showed that the participants were trying to acculturate to the host Finnish society and cope with the new societal norms; however, the relationship between African women and Finnish women is not equal. In addition, the attitude of the majority of Finns towards foreigners, mainly Africans, is

negative. On the other hand, proficiency in Finnish has a great influence on the immigrants' life and essential as it helps them to communicate and then integrate into the Finnish society.

The role of fluency in the target language is also emphasized by the findings of Spenader (2011) and Rafieyan's et al. (2014) studies where language skills in the target language has been reported to lead to successful integration and help sojourners to acculturate into the target language society. Rafieyan et al. (2014) and Spenader's (2011) studies are compatible when sojourners university learners, living in the US and Sweden sequentially, have been utilised. Moreover, integration and assimilation strategies have been adopted by the participants in both studies.

In Sweden, Spenader (2011) investigated the relationship between acculturation and language learning. Four American sojourners to Sweden participated in this qualitative study and the results showed that assimilation, as an acculturation strategy, is correlated to high language proficiency. On the contrary, low language proficiency reduces acculturation chances for immigrants and sometimes leads to rejection of the target language and culture by the learners. In the same vein, Rafieyan et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate the acculturation attitude of 70 undergraduate EFL Iranian sojourners in the US. The findings showed that integration and assimilation strategies were adopted by the Iranian sojourners by interacting with the American society and at the same time they kept their original culture. More interaction opportunities were suggested for the EFL students to integrate in the target culture.

The effect of social distance is present in Okeke (2007) and Hasting's (2012) studies. Hasting investigated the acculturation process of eleven EFL teachers working in Saudi Arabia, into the Saudi society. The findings showed that acculturation into Saudi society seemed difficult because teachers were in a high level of isolation from the host society. Some teachers wanted to learn Arabic, however, the social distance prevented them from doing so and also from gaining new experiences through integrating into Saudi host society. In (Hasting 2012; Mwai & Ghaffar 2014; Oguntuyi's 1998) studies, a qualitative approach and adult participants have been utilised and that is compatible to the present study in terms of adopting same research approach and same category of learners, adult FSL learners.

Within the context of English language acquisition, Okeke (2007) reported the effect of the social distance between the American society and adult African ESL learners. She examined the acculturation of these learners in two centers of continuing education in the US. The findings showed that the adult African ESL learners have positive attitude towards learning English language. Adaptation was chosen by the adult African learners as a strategy of integration, they adopted the American lifestyle and values with keeping their own life styles.

The context and the research approach in Mwai & Ghaffar and Oguntuyi's studies are in line with the present study where Finnish context and qualitative approach have been used in these studies. Moreover, the three studies used adult immigrants learning Finnish trying to integrate into the Finnish society with little disparity that the present study intends to include Arab adult FSL learners, men and women; however, African adult women only have been included in Oguntuyi's (1998) study.

The above mentioned studies showed that acculturation to the host society is mainly related to the extent to which the language of that society is acquired. Brown (2000:183) stated that acculturation can be better achieved within the existence of the language; he also argued that language is the "most visible and available" sign for acculturation. In the Finnish context, the relationship between the acquisition of Finnish language and acculturation to the host society echoed in the findings of Mwai & Ghaffar (2014) and Oguntuyi's (1998) studies.

Stefánsson (2013:3) claimed that "if there is not enough language exposure, this might prevent the learners from succeeding in learning the language". In the same vein, Okeke (2007) studied the acculturation of adult African ESL learners within the context of English language acquisition and argued that if a society makes a full effort to integrate immigrants into the mainstream, immigrants will then work to respond and accept the new way of life. Reuter & Jaakola (2005) also asserted the importance of communication for language learners and they believed that the skills of the language can be improved when learners have the chance to communicate with native speakers.

The study aims to answer the following research question:

What are the acculturative affective variables that affect the acculturation process of adult Arab FSL learners?

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The aim of the present study is to explore the acculturation process of a group of 9 adult Arab FSL low-literate and illiterate learners of Finnish acculturating to the Finnish society. Therefore and to fulfill the aim of this study, a qualitative approach is appropriate and will be adopted in this case study to answer the question of the research. According to Bogdan & Biklen (1998:4) "qualitative research has actual setting as the direct source of data". This also echoed in Bryman (1995:61), who argued that the main characteristic of qualitative research lies in "its express commitment to viewing events, action, norms, values, etc. from the perspective of the people who are being studied". This approach will help to know more about the experiences and perceptions of the very special participants, the current study intends to use. Moreover, qualitative approach gives the researcher the opportunity to be close to the small number of participants to elicit the required data that cannot be reached if quantitative approach used.

### **3.1 Participants**

In this study, the sampling was purposive because the study is a qualitative one and aims to build up a deep investigation of the implications of acculturation process within the context of FSL learning for nine Arab adult FSL learners (five males & four females). According to Cresswell (2008:213) “in purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally selects individuals and site to learn or understand the central phenomenon”. This category of learners are newcomers to Finland and usually live with no or limited interaction with the host Finnish community.

The participants of this study are nine adult Arab FSL learners taking beginner level course in Finnish at ‘Helsingin Aikuisopisto’ Institute of Adult Education in Helsinki city and they are of different backgrounds and different levels of education received at their home countries. Participants also included three FSL instructors and one school administrator, FSL course coordinator.

### **3.2 Instruments**

In-depth interview has been used to explore the impact of the acculturative affective variables on the participants’ process of acculturation into the Finnish society. Bogdan & Biklen (1998:94) supported the prominence of interview in qualitative research and argued that “Interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world”. Interviews were guided by Schumann’s (1978) acculturative affective factors.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

The participants, (nine FSL learners, three instructors, and one FSL course coordinator) were interviewed separately at ‘Helsingin Aikuisopisto’ Institute of Adult Education in Helsinki city. All of the interviews were audio-recorded after having the consent of the participants and video recording was eliminated so that the participants “talk freely about their points of view” (Bogdan & Biklen 1998:95). Interview with the learner participants were conducted in Arabic and then were translated into English, however, English was used during interviewing instructors. Data were collected from in-depth interviews guided by Schumann (1978) Acculturation Model. The participants were interviewed separately to explore the impact of the four psychological variables on their acculturation into the Finnish society. Pseudonym names were given to all participants in the study, teachers and learners.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

After collecting the required data, all of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and put in Word documents. Primary documents were assigned and names were given to each primary document. The next step was coding the primary documents and topic-related themes emerged. The relationship between the emerged themes, subthemes, and sub-subthemes were presented in shape of network views using ATLAS.ti, (Refer to Appendix C).

## **4. FINDINGS**

The participants are adult Arab FSL learners and potential acculturative individuals into the Finnish society. They reported the impact of the affective acculturative variables on their acculturation process (Refer to Appendix B). The following parts will discuss the findings related to each variable in detail.

### **4.1 Language Shock**

The participants experienced the effect of language shock while learning Finnish and they justified that differently. Language shock was reported by the participants from two aspects, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. Five participants introduced the language shock they encountered from a linguistic aspect ‘language differences’, however, participants B, D and G only attributed the language shock to the sociolinguistic aspect.

#### **4.1.1 Linguistic Aspect**

The disparity between the participants’ native language ‘Arabic’ and the target language ‘Finnish’ means that the participants had to deal with new grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing system, that are not familiar for them, to learn Finnish. Participant A presented an example about language shock from a linguistic aspect and reported; “Finnish is a difficult language and new for me” (A, inter\_2). This opinion was echoed by participant E who attributed the language shock to the difficulties in learning Finnish. For that he said; “Yes, of course. I got surprised the letters, numbers, pronunciation... Finnish is difficult, Yes, difficult for me. (E, inter\_2)

### **4.1.2 Sociolinguistic Aspect**

Language shock was reported by participant D too and she imputed that to the sociolinguistic aspect. She experienced embarrassment when some of her classmates commented or laughed at her performance in Finnish in the classroom and said; “when I want to read a word in the class all the students start to laugh and I used to feel very shy and cannot continue” (D, inter\_1).

Participant B and G also experienced language shock but outside the classroom. This happened when participant B could not understand what was said to her and she thought “Some Finns, at an office or a shop, intentionally speak fast and they know that I cannot understand” (B, inter\_1), and when some Finnish people asked participant G some embarrassing questions about the reasons behind his presence in Finland. For that he reported; “They (Finns) have some difficult questions. For example, why did you come here? They embarrass me and I try to avoid them” (G, inter\_1).

## **4.2 Culture Shock**

The negative impact of the culture shock was experienced by the adult Arab FSL learners. The findings revealed a number of factors that cause this kind of shock, like the Finnish life style and the harsh winter, Finnish T.V programmes, and the paper-based correspondence system.

### **4.2.1 Finnish Life Style**

The participants are from the Middle East and their native culture is affective and completely different from the Finnish culture. However, the effect of the cultural shock, the second affective factor, was reported by five participants only. Different reasons were behind the culture shock mentioned by the participants, for example, participant I who came from a moderate weather country reported different kind of shock and her new life in Finland was disturbed by the weather. She argued that the harsh weather in winter caused her a shock when she first came to Finland and said: “Sure there are differences, the weather for example, it is completely different. I suffered a lot here because of the weather in winter and I am trying to get used to that” (I, inter\_2).

### **4.2.2 Finnish T.V Programmes**

participant B & D came from a Muslim conservative community and when asked whether they watched Finnish T.V channels to learn Finnish language, traditions and culture, both argued that not all programmes are suitable for them as some Finnish T.V programmes show some uncomfortable materials to watch and against their culture and religion. For that participant D reported; “Sometimes I watch Finnish T.V and it is limited to some news, cooking, and documentary programs. Because you know sometimes they show some materials that are against our tradition and culture” (D, inter\_1). This was echoed by participant B who argued; “Some programmes include uncensored scenes and I do not like my children to watch them” (B, inter\_1).

### **4.2.3 Paper-based Correspondence**

The researcher thinks that there are some important issues related to the local Finnish culture and life system that cause both ‘language & culture shock’ for the participants. The official contact between the Finnish departments and the people in Finland is paper-based system and depends mainly on mail. However, this is something new for immigrants who came from the Middle East and from third world countries i.e., Iraq and Syria. It has been observed that the immigrants in general and the participants in particular find it difficult to understand the constant mail they usually receive from the social service office, labour office, tax office, schools, social insurance department, the monthly financial report of the family’s pecuniary benefits, bills, immigration office, medical appointments, and police notifications. Needless to mention the social benefit form that immigrants need to fill up monthly. All these correspondences are in Finnish and immigrants must know how to deal with them. This causes real embarrassment and disorientation for the immigrants who usually depend on someone who is fluent at Finnish or native speaker, if possible, for help.

## **4.3 Motivation**

The uncontrolled influx of refugees who arrived in Finland between 2015- 2016 pushed the Finnish government to adopt new rigorous immigration policy (Refer to Appendix A) which is undoubtedly influenced the immigrants’ motivation towards acculturation and FSL learning. Nevertheless, the participants have more than one reason to keep them motivated to acculturate into the Finnish society and learn Finnish as well, although their acculturation into the Finnish host society is rather complicated process. All but one participant, B, reported that their motivations towards learning Finnish are for both; integrative and instrumental reasons. Participant B reported that her motivation in learning Finnish was for instrumental reasons only and stated;

“The main motivation is work and also because I am living here and I need to speak Finnish when I go to the hospital or any other place, therefore one must know some Finnish to understand all that” (B, inter\_1). However, the rest of the participants, who reported both integrative and instrumental motivations in learning Finnish, mentioned that they intend to

live in Finland for good and learning Finnish is essential and key for successful life in Finland. Finnish language proficiency is the main requirement for any job opportunity and for naturalization in Finland. Moreover, Finnish is necessary for immigrants' daily life to deal with the received official paper-based daily mail. Justifying his motivation participant F said; "Yes, of course I want to learn. All my life here depends on language. I am motivated" (F, inter\_1). This opinion was echoed by participant I too who stated; "Yes, I am motivated as one must be motivated to learn Finnish to integrate into the society. My main goal is that I don't want to look weak in front of my kids" (I, inter\_2).

Teachers Sara and Sari had very high expectations for the learners. They said that their learners are motivated to learn Finnish and not just because it is part of the Immigrant Integration Programme that is administered and funded by the Finnish Labour Office. FSL learners, who are included in this programme, usually get around (180 Euros) per month for attending Finnish language classes. When asked about the motivation of the adult FSL learners, Teacher Sara argued; "Yes, because they are very much motivated, the most of them 95% of the class are motivated" (Teacher Sara). Teacher Sari echoed this opinion and stated; "I think they are mostly have motivation and they want to learn and get the job, mostly. There are maybe some only some, but mostly people want to learn to get use to life here" (Teacher Sari).

#### **4.4 Ego-permeability**

Ego-permeability is the last affective acculturative variable which is completely L2 learner-related factor. All of the participants reported permeable language ego but mostly are not open for some Finnish cultural habits and traditions. For that participant A argued; "In between, I can accept new things in life but not everything. I usually avoid things that I do not like" (A, inter\_2). Participant G echoed this opinion and reported "I accept anything, teacher's anger or when a colleague misbehaves with me because I am in class to acquire the language (Finnish)". (G, inter\_2).

### **5. DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Language Shock**

According to Schumann (1978), language shock is when L2 learners feel that they look foolish or ridicule when they speak the new language other than their native one. Under the language shock umbrella, Fan (2010:44) found that language shock can be attributed to both linguistic and sociolinguistic reasons and "can occur at different linguistic levels: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics". The participants experienced these two types of language shocks. Finnish was something new for them in terms of grammar rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation. They complained of the long words in Finnish and the difficult grammar rules for them in addition to pronunciation in Finnish. For example, the participants are not familiar with using what so called "partitiivi" in Finnish which means that the word takes different shapes by adding different suffixes at the end and according to its function in the sentence. This finding is compatible to the impact of the cross-cultural differences proposed by Masgoret & Ward (2006), that different language, nonverbal communication, and rules may cause real difficulty for immigrant to achieve successful L2 learning and acculturation into the host society.

For immigrants, the relationship between the target language proficiency and successful acculturative process was supported by the findings of Mwai & Ghaffar (2014), Oguntuyi (1998), Spender (2011), and Rafieyan et al. 2014.

With regard to sociolinguistic aspects, the participants reported some incidents in which they felt embarrassed, e.g., when asked about the reason of their presence in Finland and when ignored by Finns who did not respond to their questions in public transportation. This definitely affects the participants' perceptions, motivation, and attitudes towards the Finnish society. It might also; arise the feeling of anxiety, lead to more isolation, and decrease their level of motivation in learning Finnish. The participants' feeling of isolation increases the psychological and social distances with the Finnish society and is conducive to inhibition and then rejection to Finnish language.

#### **5.2 Culture Shock**

The Finnish culture is completely different from the participants' native culture in terms of language system, traditions, life style, habits, food, social relations, religion, and beliefs. According to Schumann (1978:383), entering new culture can engender a state of perplexity for the L2 learners. The disparity between the L2 learners' old life and the new life requirements can also cause "stress, anxiety, and fear". The participants experienced the effect of psychological and social distance because of the new insular life in which they are involved and the lack of interaction with the host Finnish society.

The differences between the Finnish host culture and most of the participants' cultural backgrounds deemed the main cause for the culture shock. Most of the participants are Muslims from conservative societies that value the social life and social relations and did not experience insular life before; however, the picture is completely different in Finland. Moreover, some of the participants, who live with their families, feared the effect of the uncensored T.V programmes and the open life style. Beside the paper-based system of correspondence between the Finnish departments and the people

which deemed another cause of shock and perplexity for the Arab immigrants as they were not used to deal with such kind of system that needs good knowledge in Finnish language. As language and culture complete each other, the effect of the disparity between the two cultures necessarily affects the participants' motivation in learning Finnish and reduces the opportunities of integrating into the Finnish society.

These findings are inline with both Mwai & Ghaffar (2014) and Oguntuyi's (1998) findings in which the effect of the isolated and antisocial Finnish life style on the immigrants' process of acculturation was very clear. The findings also support what Hasting's (2012) study came up with, when American FSL teachers lived in an isolated compound in the Saudi Arabia and could not acculturate or learn about the Saudi local culture because of the high level of social and culture distance. The psychological and social isolation, undoubtedly, negatively affect immigrant's process of acculturation into the host society.

### **5.3 Motivation**

Schumann (1978) presented two orientations of motivation for L2 learning; integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The former is related to learners who intend to be part of the L2 host society by interacting and meeting with members of that society, however, the latter is related to learners who need to learn the L2 for certain purposes, e.g., to get a job opportunity, naturalization or more appreciation from the host society. Most of the participants reported that they are motivated to learn Finnish for both integrative and instrumental purposes.

They also confirmed that they intend to stay in Finland for good because of the deteriorating security situation in their home countries, e.g., Syria and Iraq, and learning Finnish is necessary to cope with life requirements in Finland. They have the desire to learn more and to integrate into the Finnish society despite the insular nature of the Finnish society and Finn stereotype. Dornyei (2005:65) asserted the effective role of motivation on L2 learning and said "high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions". Thus, the participants must maintain their good motivation to make up the lack of communication with the Finnish host society.

### **5.4 Ego-permeability**

According to Schumann (1978), L2 learner must have enough ego-permeability to acculturate and then to acquire the L2. The participants reported that they have permeable egos for learning Finnish language and that is related to their high motivation; however, their culture ego-permeability is low, i.e., they are not all open and ready to accept everything in the Finnish society. As mentioned earlier, the participants are Muslims from the Middle East and their cultural backgrounds are not inline with the Finnish culture. As language is part of culture, this disparity necessarily hinders the acculturation process into the Finnish society and then the learning of Finnish.

Generally speaking, for some Arabs and Arab females in particular, it is not possible to meet and interact with Finnish people in bars, the favourite place for Finns to socialize, or watch the Finnish T.V channels that sometimes show uncomfortable scenes. The participants asserted that they do not share Finnish people their social activities or religious occasions, e.g., Christmas, Easter, 'vappupäivä' (1st of May) days. They also reported that they do not share online social media websites with Finns. The participants' ego can be described as semi-permeable, they accept what they think is good and do not contradict with their beliefs, values, and traditions. Female participants feel that acquiring new cultural habits may threaten their identity. Hence then, their chances in acculturating and learning Finnish are less than others whose ego-permeability is high because "learning a second language involves taking on the behavioural characteristics of another cultural group of people" (Gardner 2001:3).

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Summing up, there are three main findings related to the effect of the acculturative affective variables. First, the participants experienced language shock while learning Finnish that was due to linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. With regard to the former, they found difficulty in dealing with Finnish alphabets, sounds, and grammar, while the latter was when they were laughed at, asked some embarrassing questions by Finns, and when Finns disregarded their questions in public. They also experienced cultural shock when they arrived in Finland because of the different Finnish life style and Finn stereotype. Second, the participants' reported two types of motivation for learning Finnish, integrative (to integrate into the Finnish society) and instrumental (to manage their daily life, find a job, and to apply for the Finnish citizenship). Third, the participants announced low ego permeability towards learning Finnish, however, semi ego permeability were shown by the participants towards the Finnish culture because the participants' cultural boundaries are rather rigid against things that are incompatible with Arab Islamic principles. This was clear because of the vast difference between their culture, religion, traditions, and norms with the Finns'.



## References

- Berry, J. W. (1997). "Lead article, Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation". *International Association of Applied Psychology*. Vol.46. (1): pp 5-34. Retrieved 12 May 2018 from <http://www.ucd.ie/mcri/resources/Dermot%20Ryan%20Reading.pdf>
- Berry, J.W., Segal, M. H., & Kagitçibasi, C. (1997). *Handbook of Cross-cultural Psychology. Social behavior and Applications*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories an Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. US: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brown, H.D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. NY. Addison Wesley long man, Inc.
- Bryman, A. (1995). *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). "Determining validity in qualitative inquiry". *Theory into Practice*. Vol. 39(3): pp.124-131.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design; Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) USA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (3rd ed.) Boston: Pearson.
- Daily Finland, (2017). Retrieved 10 June 2018 from <http://www.dailyfinland.fi/national/1122/Govt-moves-to-review-migration-policy>
- Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*.USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate, Inc.
- Fan, S. (2010). Language Shock: A Challenge to Language Learning. *The International Journal-Language Society and Culture*. Vol. 6 (31). Retrieved 11 July 2018 from [www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL/](http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL/)
- Finnish Immigration Service. (2016). Retrieved 6 June 2018 from <http://www.migri.fi/frontpage>
- Gardner, R. C. (2001). "Integrative Motivation: Past, Present and Future". *Gardner public lecture 1*. Retrieved 5 April 2009 from <http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/docs/GardnerPublicLecture1.pdf>
- Hastings, C. J. (2012) . *Attitude and Acculturation: A qualitative Case Study of EFL Teachers In Saudi Arabia*. (PhD Thesis). The University of Memphis. ProQuest
- Helsingin aikuisopisto, (2016) . Retrieved 1 April 2018 from <https://helao.fi/en/home/>
- Masgoret, A. and Ward, C. (2006). Culture Learning Approach to Acculturation. In Sam, D. L. and Berry, W. (Ed.) *Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. 11-26. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mwai, A. & Ghaffar, N. (2014). The Role of Learning Finnish Language in the Integration Process Among Immigrant Women. Diaconia University Degree Program in Social Services. Retrieved 18 May 20018 from [http://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/73039/Ghaffar\\_Nazish.pdf?sequence=1](http://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/73039/Ghaffar_Nazish.pdf?sequence=1)
- Nissila, L. and Sarlin, H. (2009). *Maahanmuuttajien oppimisvaikeudet (Immigrants learningdifficulties)*. Keuruu-Finland: opetushallitus ja kirjoittajat Printing house, Painopaikka: otavan Kirjapaino oy.
- Noor Saazai M, S, (2014). *The English Language Learning Experiences of International Students in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*. (PhD Thesis) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Oguntuyi, O. (1998). Finnish Language as an Agent of Integration for Immigrant Women. *Finnish Folklore at the Society*. Retrieved 20 June 2009 from [http://www.elore.fi/arkisto/2\\_98/ogu298.html](http://www.elore.fi/arkisto/2_98/ogu298.html)
- Okeke, A.S. (2007). *The Acculturation Model: A Case Study Of The Resent Adult Sudanese and Somalis Immigrants English Language Learners*. (PhD Thesis). Alliant International University.
- Oudenhoven, J.P. (2006). Immigrants. In Sam, D. L. and Berry, W. (Ed.) *Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* .pp.11-26. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rafieyan, V., Orang, M, Bijani, M., Sharifi, M., & Eng, L. (2014). Language Learners' Acculturation Attitude. *English Language Teaching*.Vol.7 (1): pp. 114-119. ProQuest.

- Reuter, A. & Jaakkola, M. (2005). Venäjänkielisten, vironkielisten ja kaksikielisten maahanmuuttajien sosiaaliset verkostot (The social networks of Russian, Estonian, and bilingual immigrants). Paananen, S. (toim). Maahanmuuttajien elämää Suomessa (The life of immigrants in Finland). Helsinki: Tilastokeskus. pp.23-42.
- Sam, D. L. (2006). "Acculturation: conceptual background and core components". In Sam, D. L. and Berry, W. (Ed.) *Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. pp.11-26. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Schumann, J. H. (1986). "Research on the acculturation model for second language acquisition". *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Vol.7 (5): pp.379– 392.
- Spenader, A., J. (2011). Language Learning and Acculturation: Lessons from High School and Gap-Year Exchange Student. *Foreign Language Annals*. Vol.44. (2).
- Statistical Year Book of Finland. (2015). Helsinki: Suomen Tilastollinen Vuosikirja.
- Statistics Finland. (2017). Online. Retrieved 23 May 2018 from [http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2016/vaerak\\_2016\\_2017-0329\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html#\\_ga=1.123337483.1619543817.1491940897](http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2016/vaerak_2016_2017-0329_tie_001_en.html#_ga=1.123337483.1619543817.1491940897)
- Stefánsson, E. G. (2013). Second Language Acquisition, the Effect of Age and Motivation. Retrieved 18 June 2018 from [http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/15018/35741/1/BA\\_EinarG.pdf](http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/15018/35741/1/BA_EinarG.pdf)

## Appendix A: New immigration policy in Finland

### **“Gov’t suggests drastic changes to immigration policy, experts say proposals unconstitutional”**

Finland’s government is planning to tighten Finnish immigration policy. They say their objective is to get skyrocketing immigration under control. A list of some of the proposed measures follows.

- 1- Launch an immediate evaluation seeking to lower the amount of reception funds asylum seekers are entitled to.
- 2- Explore whether it is possible to change the system of state support so asylum seekers would not fall under the sphere of residence-based social assistance any longer, but instead be assigned to a separate 'integration programme' of their own.
- 3- Lower the basic level of financial support asylum seekers receive in the integration programme below the current residence-based system levels.
- 4- Consider introduction of a notification obligation for labour authorities, to ensure that asylum seekers are not in fact living elsewhere while they are receiving support.
- 5- Enact a notification obligation whereby foreigners who have relied on social assistance for long periods are reported to the Finnish Immigration Service.
- 6- Adopt internal border controls in the Schengen Area, including limited spot checks, as an active option.
- 7- Demand shipping companies check the necessary entry documents to Finland in connection with the sale of passenger tickets, just as when travelling by air.
- 8- Inform the countries of origin of the potential changes to Finland’s immigration policy.
- 9- Boost the resources of the Finnish Security Intelligence Service to combat terrorism.
- 10- Tighten criteria for reuniting families.
- 11- Speed up the deportation of perpetrators of serious crimes, repeat offenders and persons deemed a threat to public order originating from outside the EU.

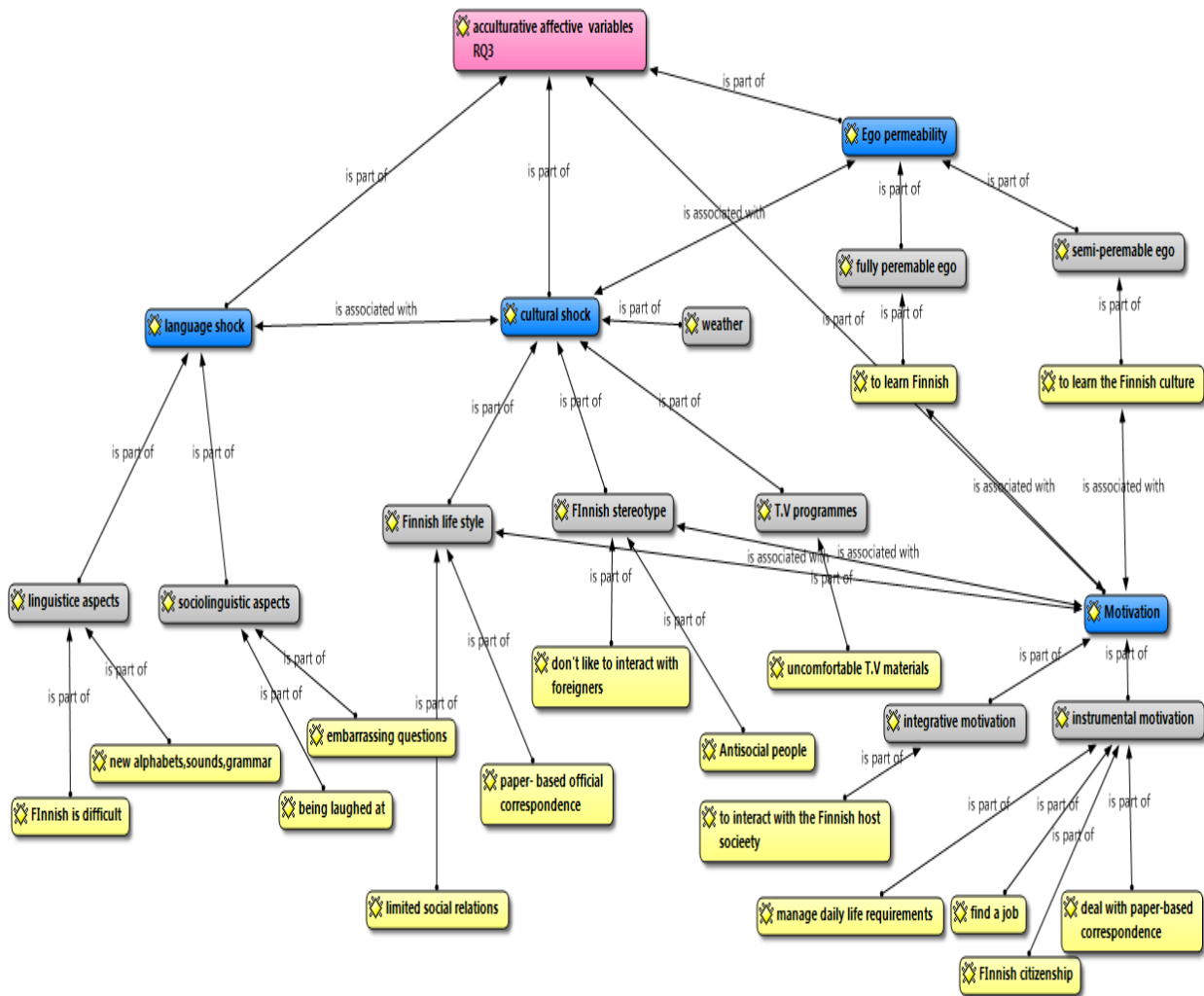
At the same time the government is looking to cut state funding and services to asylum seekers, they plan to invest in measures to encourage faster integration.

- 1- Ensure asylum seekers have quick access to language training and other integration-supporting measures in their journey towards acquiring their own livelihood.
  - 2- Ensure local TE-Offices that assist Finnish residents to find employment are prepared for increasing number of clients and make sure immigrants have access to their services.
  - 3- Make certain that all asylum seekers that have been granted a residence permit participate in integration measures. This decision cannot be left to the asylum seekers to decide; rather it must ultimately be a condition for receiving social assistance.
  - 4- Arrange sufficient Finnish and Swedish language instruction at asylum seeker reception centres.
  - 5- Monitor inter-ethnic relations, as part of the “zero tolerance for racism” government programme.
- Source: Daily Finland 2017

**Appendix B: Acculturative affective variables that influence acculturation & FSL learning, 47 cases**

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS- TABLE										
Report created by Super - 15.02.2018 19:05:36										
HU: [D:\Adult learning Finnish Atlas 2.hpr7]										
Code-Filter: All [44]										
PD-Filter: All [33]										
Quotation-Filter: All [464]										
	P53: I 2.doc	P54: A 2.doc	P57: C2.doc	P59: B2.doc	P61: D2.doc	P63: E2.doc	P65: F 2.doc	P67: G 2.doc	P69: H2.doc	TOTALS:
RQ 3 cultural shock	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	12
RQ 3 normative ogn	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
RQ 3 language shock	1	1	1	1	3	2	4	1	2	16
RQ 3 Motivated	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	10
TOTALS:	4	4	4	4	7	6	8	5	5	47

### Appendix C: ATLAS.ti output



Acculturative affective variables