

The Role of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition: A review

Jingyi Ai^{1, †, a, *} Yujie Pan^{2, †, b, *}, Wenjia Zhong^{3, †, c, *}

¹Jingyi Ai, McMaster University

²YK Pao School,

³Bishop Montgomery High School

*Corresponding author email: ^aaij5@mcmaster.ca, ^bs18503@ykpaooschool.cn, ^cwzhong@student-bmhs-la.org

[†]These authors contributed equally.

ABSTRACT

This article reviews the role of motivation in second language acquisition. It's well established that motivation is one of the factors affecting learners in learning a second language. By explaining motivation and varying aspects of motivation including attitudes, goals, environment, and other variables, the theories of how motivation affects second language acquisition, Gardner's motivation theory, Socio-Educational Model, and the Process-oriented Model, have demonstrated the significant role of motivation in second language acquisition. Additionally, this article explores the consideration of current studies and data on the role of motivation in second language acquisition. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, Integrative Motivation Study, and Socio Educational Study: Turkey context, presenting the results that learners who have positive motivation are more successful in learning a second language than those who don't have a positive motivation, and indicating the importance of motivation second language acquisition in current days.

Keywords: *Motivation, Second language acquisition, theories.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of Motivation

Motivation is defined as "the internal process that can't be directly observed but that activates, guides and maintains overt behaviour" [1]. Motivation is a "factor that directs and energizes the behaviour of humans and other organisms" [2]. Motivation can be defined as a need or desire that energizes and directs behaviour [3]. Motivation should be viewed as a hybrid concept, an internal attribute that is the result of an external force [4]. The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. One type of motivation can be external such as the punishments for not completing the task and the rewards for completing the task. Another type of the motivation can also be internal such as the feeling of enjoyment the behaviour provides.

1.2. Types of Motivation

There are four types of motivation: Intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation. Intrinsic motivation is driven by the inner force within learners, the desire being derived from learning the language itself, i.e., the willingness and pleasure of learning the language [5]. It is also a type of motivation that is grant learners high learning levels [6]. Whereas Extrinsic Motivation is driven by the desire for an external reward, which is an environmental energizer such as food, money, or recognition [5]. It may also be driven by a desire to avoid punishment [7].

Integrative Motivation is driven by socially and culturally related purposes of learning the language, such as wanting to be accepted by a community speaking a different language and wanting to integrate into another culture or society [8]. Instrumental motivation is driven by career and academic related practical purposes [8], for example, passing an exam, getting a job, or receiving a higher income [3].

The distinction of these four types of motivations is significant as motivation is a “driving force” for learners to learn, knowing the specific type of motivation could also help teachers understand the need of their students more and “meet their particular needs” [8].

1.3. Characteristics of Motivation

For second language learners, motivation plays an important role to stimulate them to acquire more knowledge about language. Under the stimulation of various types of motivations, students can embrace the linguistic patterns, which are reading, speaking, listening, and writing [9]. Motivation must have a goal, which guides the direction of the individual's behavior and provides the prime mover. The individual's understanding of the goal changes from the external incentive into the internal needs, and then becomes the motivation of behavior, and promotes the behavior. Hence, a motivated second language learner can be defined as 1) a person who is eager to learn, 2) willing to devote oneself in acquiring knowledge, 3) love to maintain the study environment [9]. In addition, people with intrinsic motivation are more likely to complete a more creative and unique task, because if there are no external factors such as deadlines or punishment, they can come up with different approaches to solve problems or acquire knowledge. In the following sections, we will review how motivation affects second language learners, and how motivation plays a role in second language acquisition. At the same time, we will review some relevant data and experiments to fully interpret our concept.

2. THEORIES

2.1. Gardner's motivation theory

Gardner's motivation theory is one of the most influential theories in second language acquisition motivation in this area. There are three key elements in motivation that are indicated by Gardner [10], which are eagerness (the resolution to learn), willingness (wanting to reach a goal), and enjoyment of learning. Gardner's research was first aroused in Canada, where both English speakers and French speakers are living together. Gardner mentions that people have a goal as their motivation, but instead of using “goal”, he replaces it with “orientation”. The two orientations are instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. People who have their aim to study one language because of external stimulation, such as a high salary and getting good scores in exams, are called instrumental orientation. In contrast, the integrative orientation means some people learn a second language in order to improve themselves, or in order to

communicate with native speakers and integrate into the culture, the only motivation is to immerse themselves in the individual. Thus, Gardner and Lamberts come up with an idea that the integrative orientation is more likely to provide second language learners a better and long-term motivation.

Gardner's theory consists of four aspects: the integrative, the attitude toward learning circumstance, the socio-educational model, and the construct of extended second language motivation. However, the socio-educational model is the most famous and influential one. This model has been revised several times since it was first proposed in 1975 [9–12]. In the original socio-educational model version, Gardner points out that talent or aptitude cannot be the only factor to determine one learner to study the second language. The culture milieu should be considered seriously since each individual is different. Gardner is interested in how people learn a second language well even if their aptitude is not outstanding. Therefore, he made a conclusion that motivation plays a significant role for those people in second language learning. In 1985, Gardner introduced three elements mentioned before in the text--- intensity, the eagerness to learn, and the attitude towards learning, learners can acquire the second language more efficiently when these three factors work together [9].

2.2. The socio-educational model theory

Gardner differentiates cognitive aspects, associated with intelligence and other related variables, with affective variables such as efforts and desire of a goal in defining motivation [9].

The socio-educational model is basically the differences of learners in second language acquisition. According to Gardner (1985), there are four interrelated variables when acquiring a language, social milieu, individual differences, learning acquisition context, and outcomes [9]. Social milieu refers to individuals' living environment and culture which influences both the affective and cognitive aspects of individuals. Individual differences can be divided into four sub variables including two cognitive factors and two affective factors. Intelligence and language aptitude are two cognitive factors that determine the quickness and linguistic abilities of acquiring a language. The affective factors are motivation, which shows the efforts of the learner in acquiring a new language, and situational anxiety, which relates to the inhibiting effects on learner's efforts on language acquisition. Learning acquisition context refers to the settings where language is learned including formal settings, most of the time in the classroom, and the informal setting, such as music and movies. Finally, the outcome includes two sub variables,

namely linguistic knowledge (including the language skill) and non-linguistic skills [13]. Linguistic knowledge can be defined as grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, etc. Non-linguistic knowledge can be seen as an individual's attitude.

In 1985, Gardner conceptualized a new variable under individual differences variables, integrative motive, which can be divided into two components: attitudes toward the learning situation and integrativeness, in order to modify the socio-educational model [9]. Attitudes toward the learning situation involve learner's attitudes toward the school, textbook, classmate, teachers, etc. The integrativeness can be seen as the interest of the target language and the attitude towards the target language community and culture [9].

2.3. The Process-oriented Period Model

The Process-oriented Period Model focuses on different phases of the changes of motivation over time [14]. This model consists of three phases: the preactional stage, the actional stage, and the postactional stage. The preactional stage is the motivation that has to be generated, the actional stage is the maintaining of the generated motivation, and the postactional stage is the self-assessment of the progress of motivation [14]. This last phase is particularly significant as it determines the future level of motivation the student will likely have in engaging with similar activities [14], for example, if the second language learner has some negative experiences in learning the language, he or she would most likely not be willing to undergo this learning again, resulting in a lack of motivation.

3. EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

3.1. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a research also devised by Gardner to measure the effect of motivation on second language learners [15]. Gardner assessed two types of motivations: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, by measuring the three categories he defined motivation with: "motivation intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes toward learning the language" [16]. The research procedure involves conducting a survey that includes 104 questions asking about the participants' level of agreement in six degrees and 12 questions asking about the participants' feelings in seven degrees.

Gardner's results showed correlations between high language proficiency and high motivation [17]. Gardner's Studies also suggested that students with high integrative motivation generally perform second language learning better than students who are not

motivated, regardless of their language learning ability [18].

However, there are various limitations of this research method. First, there are only six degrees of agreement and seven degrees of feelings, these limited numbers of categories may lead to the inaccurate suggestion of the participants' actual ideas. Second, these general codes (strongly, moderately, slightly) are qualitative, and might lead to the participants' subjective interpretation that varies between individuals, making the survey results not comparable. Third, Gardner condoned other types of motivations, for example, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that was proposed by Ryan and Deci [19].

3.2. Integrative motivation study

According to Gardner's motivation theory, he conveyed "motivation is the eagerness when one individual learns a new language and the satisfaction experienced in that activity" [9]. Integrative/instrumental motivation are the two most influential motivations. Gardner used to mention that integrative orientation is one main factor of integrative motivation. The second language learner who has strong integrative motivation is willing to learn the history, culture, society, and lots of other aspects about the target language spontaneously. Therefore, learning one language is such a pleasure for those SLA learners. Gardner believed that integrative motivation has a significant correlation with L2 learning [20].

In order to have a better understanding of Gardner's statement, Yangtze University conducted a study which is to have a better understanding of students' integrative motivation (what is their purpose of studying English in college), and find a way to foster their motivation in 2014 in Yangtze Universities [20]. The researchers chose 121 freshmen who are not majoring in English but take English as a compulsory course to fill the students' English learning motivation questionnaire. The final result from the most agreed question is 48.07% of students strongly agree or agree that they learn English to communicate with people around the world [20]. The second suggestion is that a lot of students would like to chat with English speakers and love to integrate into a foreign country's culture. About 46.2% of students are willing to enjoy the different cultures, such as music, movies and so on (especially for some students who have had overseas experience before) [20]. The third suggestion is for students to acquire English to understand the foreign country better. Many students do not agree that they learn English is because their friends and classmates are learning it. If they don't study English, they will be left behind. The suggestion that got the lowest score is "learning English to behave

like English speaker". No one strongly agrees with this statement, and 31.13% of students strongly disagree with it [20].

In general, nearly half of the students proposed that they learn English is because they want to meet and talk to more people around the world. In Chinese college, English is a compulsory course. Hence, English speaking environment is not common in students' daily life. Although the university may hire foreign teachers, it is still not enough to create a pure English-speaking circumstance for students. Thus, it is really not easy for Chinese college students to enhance their integrative motivation in English study.

3.3. Socio-Educational model Study

Gardner's socio-educational model theory conceptualizes the complex variables of motivation into social milieu, individual differences, learning acquisition context, and outcomes. For the purpose of expanding the current understanding of socio-educational model theory, Atay and Kurt tested socio-educational models in an EFL setting (English as foreign language), Turkey. The participants were one hundred and thirty-two native speakers of Turkish who were all secondary students at the age between fifteen to sixteen. It was indicated that they learned English for an average of 7.74 years with a standard deviation of 1.52 years and 10% of them had spent time abroad [21]. The motivation data was collected by using the Attitude Motivation Test Battery [9] which was created by Gardner and aimed to measure the different variables of motivation. Can-do scale and first term final English grades were used to determine the participants' English ability [22]. Atay and Kurt's study also provided the correlation between aggregate measure of the AMTB and English grades, and the correlation between aggregate measure of the AMTB and the Can-do scale [21]. The factor structures of AMTB were rotated in order to determine whether they were similar to the already examined study in other countries; the median value of the AMTB in this study is 0.86 while Gardner's values varied from 0.79 and 0.88; the rotated Factor I and Factor III are similar to Gardner's factors; the two conducted correlations indicated that there was a significant correlation between the students' grades and each measure on AMTB and Can-do scale [21]. The attitude toward the learning situation is relatively high compared with the European samples. The results of the study showed that the socio-educational model and AMTB, an associated attitude measuring instrument, was appropriate in learning English as a second language under the context of Turkey.

4. CONCLUSION

Motivation plays an important role in second language acquisition. This review mainly focused on Gardner's motivation theory, the socio-educational model theory, and the Process-oriented Period Model. Also, this study collected a lot of experimental evidence, such as the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, Integrative motivation study, and Socio-Educational model Study. In conclusion, motivation can basically be divided into instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Both of them are significant factors of success in learning a new language. Nevertheless, integrative motivation is found to be more lasting in the long-term study. The student who has integrative motivation to learn a language usually achieves a higher degree of second language and becomes more successful in that field. This present research suggests that learners who have positive motivation are more successful in learning a second language than those without positive motivation, indicating the importance of motivation for second language acquisition in current days.

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