A Study on Motivational Strategies of Adult Second Language Acquisition from the Perspective of TESOL Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the value and significance of motivation by studying the principle of motivation strategy acquisition. The purpose of this study is to provide normative motivation strategy theory of adult learning motivation for education managers, planners and educators. This theory provides an important step for the integration of adult learning theory into adult learning motivation teaching design. In the study, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation were investigated to determine the correlation between the form of motivation and successful second language acquisition. The results of the study obtained and analyzed the views of adults on motivational needs. These results show that specific teaching strategies are important for adult learners' motivation. The current research results support the theory of adult language learning and provide new ideas for the future research of motivation strategy theory in this field. If there is not enough language motivation, it will hinder learners from learning language successfully. Obviously, these factors play a more important role in the learning process. Therefore, no matter how old the learner is, it is extremely important to implement motivation from the beginning of the learning journey and provide sufficient motivation strategies for adult learners.

Keywords: *motivation, adult education, second language acquisition, motivational strategy theory;*

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation for second language acquisition refers to a relatively stable attitude towards learning for a long period of time, which is a complex psychological state. Gardner[1] defines motivation as a combination of effort, a desire to reach language learning goals and a positive attitude towards language learning. Particularly for adult second language learners, motivation has a deeper and more complex impact on learning effect, and is influenced not only by the learners themselves, but also by the learning context and social environment.

However, few researchers have clearly defined the concept of motivation for second language learning because of the complexity of motivation itself. For example, they failed to distinguish learning motivation from learning purposes and attitudes. To our knowledge, few studies on motivation yielded in adult second language acquisition, and motivational strategies in some studies are slightly behind the times. Moreover, in terms of motivation research questions, the most involved ones are the relationship between motivation and other factors of learning, including learning strategies, effort and academic achievement.

Given the importance of motivation in second language learning and the gap of previous research, our research objective is motivational strategies of adult second language acquisition from the perspective of TESOL teaching and it will be discussed in four aspects: motivational education, individual differences on motivation, motivational strategies and learners learning motivation improvement path in adult second language acquisition to gain a deeper understanding of motivational strategies for adult second language acquisition.

2. THE EFFECT OF ADULT SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION EDUCATION AIMED AT LANGUAGE MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Students' motivation is made up of three components: effort (the amount of time spent studying and the learner's drive), desire (the desire to become fluent in the language), and affect (the emotional reactions of the learning towards studying). [2] As a result, it may be described as the different aims that are part of learning a second language. There are two sorts of motivation: integrative and instrumental. The learner's positive attitudes toward the target language group and desire to integrate into the target language community constitute integrative motivation. The goal of gaining some social or economic reward through L2 performance is referred to as instrumental motivation, and it refers to a more functional motive for language acquisition.

The importance of motivation in achieving L2 proficiency cannot be overstated. As a result, it's critical to understand the type and combination of motivation that helps people learn a second language successfully. At the same time, motivation must be viewed as one of many variables in a complex system. Each language learner has a unique set of interconnected individual and situational elements.

However, the majority of second language acquisition's work focuses on children, especially those who live in bilingual or multilingual settings. Adult language learners in non-academic contexts and adult education programs have received little attention from SLA researchers. [3]There appear to be no language development theories that could accurately describe and explain the process of how an adult acquires a second language (Gregg, 1999). [4] Adult education program SLA research is mostly observational, focusing on moving individuals from proficiency in their original language to the ability to operate in the second language as full members in society, rather than linguistic processes. There are an increasing number of immigrants enrolled in adult education programs, but there are insufficient resources and time to provide them with adequate instruction. [5] Thus, explaining and predicting how adults learn a second language remains a critical topic of research.

Motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language. Both forms of motivation are examined in light of research which has been undertaken to establish the correlation between the form of motivation and successful second language acquisition. [6] Therefore, language motivational education and adult second language acquisition education needs to be closely connected to improve the effect of adult second language acquisition education.

2.1. Motivational education theory promotes the development of adult second language learners

According to the research of the development of a model for the design of motivational adult instruction in higher education Bohlin studied by R. M., Milheim, W. D., & Viechnicki, K. J. [7], adult learners' motivation was evaluated in terms of interest and effort. The prescribed methodologies should be validated against the actual motivational impacts of these instructional strategies on adults, based on the ARCS model's theory grounds and adult learners' perspectives. It is proposed that more research be performed into the motivational systems' affective effects. Learners' attitudes, feelings, values, and emotions are all essential factors that should be explored.

For learners of all ages, John Keller provides a paradigm for designing motivated instruction. Keller's ARCS model is based on inductive analyses of highly motivating teachers' actual teaching practices, as well as deductive assessments of current learning and motivation theories (including theorists such as Gagne, Bruner, Bandura, Weiner, and Malone). The ARCS model brings together a lot of what we know about motivating students and provides a framework for both theory and practice.

It has been suggested that some instructional methodologies are more important for adult learners than for younger students. Adult learning theory and the ARCS model are combined to form a foundation for a potential adult motivation model. This integration was investigated using a needs-assessment tool based on both theoretical bases' literature.

2.2. Improve the motivational education system

A significant limitation of the research of the motivational education system is that the participants were recruited from a small and fairly privileged community. This indicates that more research is needed to determine the motivating demands of various adult populations. To study potential changes in the instructional motivation demands of learners of various ages, research across all age groups is required. While the literature suggests that adult learners have distinct demands than other types of students, there appears to be little evidence to back up those claims.

Adult students are motivated most by internal factors and external factors which combine the interconnections between learning subject (adult students) and learning objects (teachers, government and education sector, institution, peers, and educational technicists). Only by paying attention to the interconnections between learning subjects and learning objects can help adult students arouse their interests and motivations in English learning to embark on a fantastic English learning journey.

In reviewing the developments of the concept of motivation, two key factors can help adult students achieve these instructive goals: multicultural and comprehensive English learning instruction and motivational moments in TESOL journey. For this reason, it is suggested that with the rapid development of adult English education, there is great potential in putting the theory of motivation into effect. Despite its practical and commercial successes, adult English education remains a young field with many underexplored and innovative research opportunities.

3. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE INFLUENCES OF ADULT LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

Second language acquisition is a complex and lengthy process. In terms of language characteristics and personality of learners, they are not only affected by second language characteristics but also by their mother tongue. However, second language learners are also affected by relevant social factors, such as age, gender, attitude, personality and other non-structural factors. As a result, whether the effectiveness of second language acquisition is so important under the motivation of the second language adult learner, the following factors have been concluded.

3.1. Age factor affect efficiency of second language acquisition and degree of gaining

As an important factor in language learning, age has always been the focus of language researchers. People have adopted different research methods and strategies, thus forming many views on how age factors affect language acquisition.

The difference between children, adolescents and adults is nothing more than the maturity of brain development. Studies have shown that the two sides of the human brain are gradually given different "functions" as they mature – this is the phenomenon of cerebral hemispheric lateralization. Human intelligence, logic, analysis and other functions will be gradually laterally laterated to the left hemisphere, while social functions such as emotions will be gradually laterated to the right hemisphere. For language acquisition, this process is called a 'critical period', and this is the theory proposed by Lenneberg, from *the Critical Period Hypothesis*, that is, during this critical period, the brain is flexible and language learning can occur naturally and easily; once this period is missed, it is impossible to learn a language well. In addition, long[8] believes that the age at which language learners enter the critical period is 6 years old, and both Penfield and Roberts believe that the best time for language acquisition is in the first decade of life.

In conclusion, most researchers believe that the critical period ends in adolescence, and the language abilities of adolescents and adults will not make better use of these natural learning abilities than children, and second language learning often becomes an artificial and laborious process. In terms of grammar and pronunciation, younger learners have greater advantages in natural conditions, because children have longer learning time, more communication needs and more opportunities to use language, which leads to more focus in the learning process. On the contrary, adults can master the grammar of the second language faster, but because adults have mastered their mother tongue, the "interference" caused by the mother tongue is much greater than that of children. In any case, the age factor of language learners does affect the second language acquisition, and different development results can be seen.

3.2. Gender differences reflect the different feelings of interest and passion in TESOL learning between male and female learners

The difference in gender characteristics of men and women refers to the unique stability characteristics embodied by different genders, which are more at the psychological level, and human research on gender has a long history, but varies in different disciplines and different fields. At TESOL

The cash embodied in teaching is also remarkable. In McCobee and Jack Lynn (E. E.Maccoby &. C. N . Jacklin, 1974)[9] criticizes a variety of traditional biases in the psychology of gender differences. It is precisely because of the different understanding of the differences between male and female students that teachers have different ways of dealing with boys and girls, and only teachers can fully consider this gender difference in order to properly choose the way of education and teaching. Teaching according to gender differences needs to take into account several differences, namely differences in physiological factors, personality differences, memory ability differences and learning strategies.

As for the views embodied by gender differences, I think they can be reflected in two words, which are sex and gender. The meaning of Sex is genetically inherited. The meaning of Gender is the result of the socialization of people based on physiological differences, influenced by social and cultural and psychological influences. The discrepancy in personality depends entirely on a person's attitude and behavior towards reality, which is both variable and relatively stable, and personality is an important part of the learning of second language, in terms of second language habits, men belong to the impulsive type and women are subjected to the introspective type, which is also for TESOL teaching teachers, to take the appropriate strategy to meet the needs of students. In this way, the initiative and enthusiasm of students can be fully stimulated. Regarding the difference in memory ability and learning strategies,

women have an advantage in memorizing words, memorizing texts, and repeating stories, and will remain until adulthood, so in many universities, studying liberal arts, especially in foreign language departments, the number of females is much higher than that of males and the grades are better than those of men. The use of learning strategies has a great correlation with the learner's foreign language level, because girls are more likely to achieve good results in learning a second language, and it also reflects that women use various learning strategies better than men and in teaching, female learners will be more positive about foreign language learning and are more willing to use effective second-language learning strategies, which is firmly related to their motivations.

3.3. The influence of adult learner's learning attitude and teacher's teaching attitude on TESOL teaching

Attitude is an important factor in second language learning. Whether as a student or a teacher, a good and correct attitude is necessary. For society and individuals, the status and importance of language come from people's attitude towards language, which affects human language learning and language teaching.

Lambert [10] believes that attitudes have three components: cognition, emotion, and intentional movement. Cognition refers to the individual's beliefs and opinions on things; emotion refers to the response to things; and intentional movement refers to the tendency of individuals to take action on things to deal with affairs. In simple terms, for learners, parents, friends, learning environment, and racial feelings all factor the learning attitude of individuals or a group of people, which coincides with Long's theory, and Gardner[11] also proposes that learners' learning attitudes directly affect learning motivation, and then affect second language acquisition. Therefore, from the perspective of their interrelationship, the learning attitude is an indirect, inevitable and huge influence on the acquisition of second languages.

For TESOL teachers, a positive, optimistic and rigorous attitude is also what students want to see, which is also conducive to the success of students in the process of second language teaching. According to Svanes' research results[12], in the classroom with cultural differences, it creates a relaxed, democratic and harmonious growth environment for students, promotes students' lively and active development, can be more in line with their personalized and independent development, and finally realize the success expected by students and teachers' own honorary achievements. In reality, most children in many countries, especially in East Asian countries, bear heavy academic pressure, learning burden, economic burden and even psychological burden. Teachers pay attention to scores

and quantitative score standards, which leads to the change of the original intention of second language learning. The improvement of this phenomenon is an urgent and long change process, which takes a long time, but it can be expected.

3.4. Adult learner's personality and characteristic demonstrate different learning strategies on second language acquisition

The so-called personality factor, also known as personality, refers to a person's overall mental outlook, that is, the psychological characteristics of tendencies. Many teachers will think that students' success in learning a second language has a lot to do with their personality, but this is not entirely the case. Personalities such as self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety, risk-taking and introversion-extroversion have a certain influence on second-language learning. For adult learners, teachers need to take into account that adult students have a complete personality, mature thinking and a relatively stable world view, values, so it is particularly important to respect each person's personality and characteristics, such as extroverted students in mastering the basic language required for interpersonal communication in the second language learning occupies a certain advantage, especially in the oral communication activities inside and outside the classroom to be more proactive, but there is no significant difference between introverted in the mastery of language structure and listening, reading comprehension and written expression, etc.

As for learning strategies, these two students with different personalities, introvert & extrovert, handle different learning tasks and apply different learning strategies. Extroverted learners are more likely to react to more input and practice opportunities, and they tend to pay less attention to language form; while introverted learners may be better at using their steadiness and calm personality to conduct a deeper situation analysis of limited inputs, especially in language form and language rules, and most people are better in the classroom teaching environment[13].

Therefore, different teaching methods can be used to treat learners with different personalities, on the one hand, to maximize the probability of success of learning tasks in different environments, and second, to make learners with different personalities change in the opposite and appropriate direction through certain means. In any case, it is necessary and critical to understand the learner's personality and adopt appropriate teaching methods.

4. MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES USED IN TESOL TEACHING TO ADULTS IN PRESENT

According to the editor of the student book series "WorldView", Michael Rost, motivation is the 'neglected

heart' of language teaching. As motivation directly impact students' effort and ability of learning, multiple categories of motivational strategies are widely used in TESOL teaching to adults. The first category is to motivate adult learners based on their purposes of learning. Different from K-12 students, adult learners have a more clear and direct purpose of learning English, so content-based instruction is a commonly used strategy for adult language learners. The second category is to incorporate life experiences with language learning. Adult learners have more connection with the community and the world compared to K-12 students, offering them chances to express and teaching them how to express their life experiences is an effective strategy used to motivate adult ESL. The third category is designing collaborate learning, for example setting up peers for adult learners, and designing group activities in class. The forth category is combining language learning with modern technologies, for example social medias, visual arts, and music.

4.1. The advantages and disadvantages of traditional motivational strategies appliance

The first three categories of motivational strategies are traditional strategies that have been used for dozens of years in TESOL teaching. For the first category, because adult learners often study a second language due to a real-life problem they need to face, for example employment or immigration. By applying content-based instruction, instructors can build a positive connection of adult learners' practical appliance of the language and the class materials, adult learners can be more motivated because they spend most of their learning time on learning specific contents that related to their life and work, rather than basic language skills, but in the meanwhile their language and literacy skills will be proved implicitly. Content-based instruction also have disadvantages, as the instruction and study method used in this strategy focuses more on appliance, and views language learning more as mastering a skill, learners' critical thinking ability, collaboration, and interpretation won't be as strong as the result brought by systematic learning (Ewert, 2014)[14].

For the second category, by incorporating life experiences with language learning, adult learners' social identities are considered. Sharing life experience is important for integrating into a new environment, so learning how to express themselves properly is important, furthermore, compared to native speakers, second language learners usually struggle with the linguistic codes of the local communities. Learning how to express their life experience is a strategy to combine classroom-based language learning with community-based language using, and this language "bridge" can motivate adult learners effectively, because it helps them to solve the environment adapting problem (Norton-Peirce, 1995)[15].

The ineffective side of this strategy is that every place have its own linguistic code and language habit, the coverage of one linguistic code is limited, and it is hard to carry out instructions and studies of all kinds of linguistic codes. So this strategy is relatively not suitable for long-time and large-scale use in TESOL teaching.

For the third category, setting peers and designing class activities can motivate adult learners to fully participate in class. Peer activities provide a chance for learners to support and help each other, while in this interacting process, they are more likely to output and pay effort on expressing themselves and communicating with others (Robinson et al. 2017)[16] . The evenly-matched language level of students provides them a more comfortable environment of speaking, the patience and fault tolerance provided in this classroom environment can help adult learners gain more confidence and therefore motivate their language learning enthusiasm (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks 2016)[17]. This strategy requires instructors to evaluate students' ability and character, a language proficiency test and a personality test for example MBTI test should be done before paring students to work together. Or students with lower language level and introverted students may struggle with group works and may feel stressed, and the strategy may have opposite effect on motivating them (Ramírez-Esparza et al. 2012)[18].

4.2. The importance of developing new strategies and the appliance of it

The forth category of motivating strategy is a modern strategy that commonly applies in TESOL teaching in the 20th century. Modern technology including social medias for example Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat, visual arts for example posters and movies, and audio arts for example music can all be applied in TESOL teaching for motivating students.

Social medias is an efficient way of communicating, for second language learners, they have little access of communicating with the language they are learning outside the classroom, this lack of practice and appliance can affect their motivation of learning it and stop them from progressing. Social medias offer them a platform to express and communicate in the language they are learning, as there are people from all over the world that can communicate and be pals with. Posting, commenting, and viewing the posts on social media with second language can have positive influence on learners, according to the research done by Hattem, using Twitter in English grammar course can help students notice the targeted grammar features and enhance long-term memory capacity (Hattem, 2013)[19]. And due to the characteristic of social medias, learners would pay a lot attention on how their private accounts look like, and therefore be motivated on keeping their posts grammatically correct and well written.

Visual arts and audio arts are both media that relate a student's personal interest with language learning. As there are various kinds of movies and music, one can pick the movies and music in the language they are learning that they are interested in. Interest in the most important internal motivation for one to study a language, and implicit listening and reading learning can be done while learners reach out the arts they are interested in (Eftekhari, 2020)[20].

5. ADULT SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS LEARNING MOTIVATION IMPROVEMENT PATH

The factors influencing adult second language learning can be divided into two categories - external factors and internal factors. External factors refer to the influence of society and schools and teachers, while internal factors refer to the learners' own intrinsic motivation to learn new knowledge.

5.1. Building a lifelong learning system in society to create a good motivation environment for adult second language acquisition

Society is the general environment for adults to learn a second language. It is very important for the government to formulate new policies and create a social atmosphere in which adult learners have less barriers to second language acquisition.

First of all, adult learning status should be guaranteed by the system. Adult education is an important part of the lifelong education system. However, adult learning has not received enough attention. We can learn from the effective experience of the world's mature adult education system and combine the reality of China to introduce adult education rules and systems to ensure that adult learning is well maintained. For example, adult education certificates are recognized and treated to a corresponding extent within the scope of adaptation.

What is more, the government should increase financial investment in adult education. [21] First, it can allocate funds to build and maintain campus infrastructure and teaching facilities for adult education. Since many adult learners have their own careers and housework, the government needs to ensure that they are not disturbed in school. Second, a reasonable student aid policy can reduce students' economic pressure and help encourage them to study harder. On the one hand, adult education learners have explicit costs such as tuition and textbook fees. On the other hand, they have hidden costs such as transportation and catering. They have to give up overtime compensation because they can't work overtime during study. In this way, the government can reduce learners' economic anxiety and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning a second language.

Finally, the government should provide more guidance and encouragement to enterprises and institutions. First, relevant policies should be formulated to encourage these enterprises and the institutions to support further learning of employees. Second, the government should build a bridge between companies and schools to promote employees' further learning.

5.2. The construction of adult second language acquisition teaching team needs to be improved

The school is the immediate place of adult learning and the teacher is the person with whom the students are most closely connected. Therefore, the construction of teaching team is of great importance for adult students' second language acquisition.

Firstly, schools should lay more emphasis on building up foreign language teaching staff. For instance, adult education schools can send teachers abroad or hold academic forums to improve their teaching ability. What is more, schools should separate administration from teaching and set up dedicated staff for it. Nowadays, it is common for teachers responsible for teaching to combine administration work at the same time. To improve current situation, adult education schools should have more administrative staff so that teachers can have more energy and time to concentrate on teaching.

Secondly, foreign language teachers should establish a harmonious and cordial relationship with their students. [22] The interaction between teachers and students is a process of mutual understanding and consensus. When teaching knowledge, the teacher should respect all the learners and protect each one's learning enthusiasm. They should also encourage students from different professions and backgrounds to present themselves and to work and interact with their classmates. What is more, providing students with instant feedback is of great significance, in that students can know how they can progress and have more improvements. [23]

Finally, second language teaching needs to keep up with times. [24] On the one hand, schools need to secure modern teaching hardware facilities, such as stable networks, projectors and tablets, to ensure that teachers' online and offline teaching is carried out smoothly. On the other hand, second language teachers need to have an international perspective and be aware of the most advanced teaching ideas and methods at home and abroad. In this way, teachers can help students apply foreign languages to practice.

5.3. Adult second language learners need continuous empowerment of their own motivation

As external factors have already been discussed, internal factors are equally important. Internal factors

play a decisive role in learning effect. Since the learner is the learner itself, adult second language learners need to cultivate and maintain their own learning motivation.

First of all, learners should change their utilitarian mindset towards learning second language and try to adopt various aspects of another linguistic and cultural group. [25] A large number of people taking adult education courses for practical reasons such as promotion or salary increase. As a result, they learn with the aim of obtaining a diploma rather than actually mastering a foreign language. As the academic performance in second language, especially English, is an important component of the ability to graduate from adult education, adult students learn out of a test-taking mentality rather than their own desire.

Besides, adult learners should be in a positive mood when learning second language. [26] As some of the adult second language learners do not have a strong foundation for the language they are learning, they often have obstacles in progressing. In the long run their motivation to learn will decrease and they may even develop a negative attitude towards it. Statistics show that the emotional state of the learner can affect the learning effectiveness. Learners should therefore adjust their mindset and try to learn in a positive way and achieve the desired results.

Last but not least, adult second language learners have to balance study with work and life. Because most of the adult learners have their own families and jobs, the duration of time left for second language learning is often hard to ensure. This makes it even more significant for learners to make full use of their spare time and increase the efficiency of their learning. For instance, they can utilize various kinds of sources and take online courses when they are not able to take face-to-face classes.

6. CONCLUSION

The study shows the importance of motivational strategies, how they affect adult second language teaching in TESOL, and how educators provide a set of strategies and guidance for adult learners. Through research, motivation is mainly divided into internal factors and external factors. Motivation is divided into internal factors and external factors because learners' own conditions and external environment have great differences in the impact of second language acquisition, and even affect the level of second language acquisition. The study found that learning motivation is mainly affected by age, gender, attitude and personality factors. In this case, how to closely combine learners and educators. For example, educators combine life experience with language learning in the teaching process, and use social media to interact with learners, so as to improve the effectiveness of second language teaching. At the same time, we need to establish a macro-control

mechanism, such as the government and schools to increase financial investment in adult education and implement the lifelong learning system. From the perspective of educators, combined with learners' own experience and different relevant materials, this paper discusses the improvement of motivation education strategies and external environment. In the future, the combination of factors to be considered will gradually increase, which requires close cooperation between adult learners and educators, and is limited by social environment and cultural background, which opens up many research paths for future research and may also hinder learners' language learning. However, due to the combination of various motivational factors and viewpoints, the effectiveness of the research and the feasibility of TESOL teaching will continue to improve, and will provide sufficient methodological guidance for adult learners' learning path, so as to improve learners' motivation and achieve better teaching effect in the future.

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