



The Influence of Environment on Motivation for Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract. Motivation for second language acquisition (SLA) is one of the key topics in language acquisition. Researchers have found that intrinsic factors positively impact motivation in second language learners. However, there needs to be more widespread knowledge of the positive impact of external factors on motivation in SLA. Therefore, this paper combines several dimensions in a comprehensive analysis, dissecting the factors related to motivation for SLA from various directions. In addition, the paper contextualizes the positive role of modern technology for secondaries in a contemporary and forward-looking manner. It also takes complete account of realistic factors concerning both the generation and maintenance of motivation and highlights, in particular, the importance of the achievability of motivation for its maintenance. The study eventually finds that the environment positively influences motivation for SLA. Geographical and cultural factors are prime movers for SLA, and economic conditions, educational tools, and the availability of resources reinforce the maintenance of motivation for SLA.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Motivation, External Factors, L2SMM.

1 Introduction

Motivation for second language acquisition (SLA) plays a vital role in SLA. Increasingly, language scholars are focusing on the impact of motivation on language learning. A study on language learning and teaching mindfulness explores possible avenues for future research on whether, why, how, when, for whom, and to what extent mindfulness influences different education-related outcomes such as perseverance, resilience, and achievement^[1]. The research contributes to the development of foreign language and second language education. Understanding these complex issues is essential in guiding successful teaching and advancing motivational research in SLA^[1]. Another study outlined a new area of research in foreign language acquisition triggered by introducing positive psychology (PP)^[2]. Successfully acquiring a second language (L2) depends on the learner's sustained effort, so perseverance and its relationship to language achievement are directly relevant in SLA^[2]. Teimouri et al. examined its relationship with

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S. Yacob et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2023 7th International Seminar on Education, Management and Social Sciences (ISEMSS 2023)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 779, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-126-5_12

motivational behavior and language achievement in a sample of foreign language learners ($n = 191$) using English^[3].

Research on motivation for SLA has mainly focused on the second language learners themselves, which is customary to focus on intrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of motivation for SLA requires more than focusing on intrinsic motivation alone. External factors also influence motivation for SLA. Therefore, studying the influence of the environment on motivation for SLA is conducive to a more comprehensive understanding of the generation, maintenance, and reinforcement of motivation for SLA.

This paper analyzes the production of motivation for SLA regarding two prime movers: geography and culture. Regarding geographical factors, geoeconomics leads to close international links, resulting in the movement of capital and even people, stimulating the motivation for SLA. Regarding cultural factors, cultural export leads to an interest in foreign cultures and even a sense of cultural identity, effectively stimulating motivation for SLA. Furthermore, from the point of view of cultural import, the multicultural background of the country effectively stimulates immigrants' motivation to learn a second language for communication purposes. In addition to prime movers, supporting factors, including economic, educational, and resource factors, positively impact maintaining motivation for SLA. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the influence of the environment on motivation to learn a second language.

2 Prime Movers of Motivation for Second Language Acquisition

Two prime movers of motivation for SLA are related to interest. The first interest, which stimulates the motivation for SLA, refers to the capital flows due to geographical factors. Therefore, the geographical factor is the first prime mover of motivation for SLA. The second interest refers to the communicative stimulus to SLA brought about by cultural factors. Therefore, the cultural factor is another prime mover behind the motivation for SLA.

2.1 Geographical Factor

From a practical perspective, the geographical factor is the prime mover of motivation for SLA. In the absence of global economic integration, regional economic integration represented by geoeconomics is still the mainstream. Geoeconomics has led to a solid international linkage. A study shows that under the impetus of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the strength of geoeconomic ties between China and countries along the Maritime Silk Road has shown the characteristics of continuous growth because of their close cooperation and trade^[4]. The good relationship between China and other partner countries reflects that with strengthening geoeconomic ties, China has closer cooperation with countries along the route. Therefore, geoeconomics affects the closeness of international relations.

With the increasingly close international connection, commercial trade and capital exchanges between countries have begun, stimulating the demand for foreign

exchanges. The similarity of the official national language and the proficiency of the standard international language have an important impact on bilateral trade [5]. Therefore, the need for exchange leads to the motivation for SLA. A study examining the impact of language on trade has shown that adopting Spanish as a second language in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) positively impacts trade and increases exports [6]. In addition, Spanish as a second language can reduce the cost of trade communication between T&T and Spanish-speaking countries [6]. Language similarity positively affects trade volume and trade relations between countries. Therefore, international trade can effectively stimulate the demand for foreign exchange, thereby stimulating the motivation for SLA.

On top of the primary trade exchanges, it is not only capital that moves but also the population itself. Therefore, as international linkage becomes intensive, overseas companies' attraction to international talent immigration stimulates the motivation of transnational personnel to learn a second language. A report from a study of ESL learning shows that Paul, a Korean immigrant, has self-learning motivation to learn English because he immigrated to Canada for work [7]. Many immigrants like Paul went to work and settled overseas to seek a better development space. In his case, because he chose to settle in a country where the official language is English, the need to communicate in his daily life led him to study the second language. That is why transnational employment requires the foreign exchange to motivate second-language learners to learn a second language.

2.2 Cultural Factor

In addition to the geographical factor, from a psychological perspective, culture is another prime mover behind the motivation for SLA. This section explains why culture motivates second language learning in two parts: cultural output, including cultural interest and identification, and cultural input. Firstly, from the point of view of cultural export, second language learners may become interested in the culture exported by some countries and thus become motivated to learn a second language. Under the wave of globalization, cultural export has become a common phenomenon. A study of Arab children learning Japanese showed that local children were motivated to learn Japanese independently because of their interest in Japanese anime culture [8]. Because children are interested in Japanese animation culture, they tend to be eager to learn more about Japanese culture, including Japanese. As a result, some foreign cultures can interest second language learners and thus motivate them to learn a second language.

Secondly, cultural exports can further inspire nationals of other countries to identify with and follow their culture. Countries wish to export their values through capital and media to evoke cultural identity among people in other countries. As a result, the interest in other countries' cultures actively leads to a desire to learn all aspects of that culture. The cultural identity that results from a deeper understanding of the culture gives the second language learner a stronger motivation to learn the language. A study demonstrates a strong link between Hong Kong and Japanese culture, with many Hong Kong young people being familiar with various Japanese cultural products from an early age, including Japanese snacks, rap, anime, and more [9]. As a result, although

many Hong Kong people do not speak Japanese, its cultural infiltration has made Japanese the most popular foreign language in Hong Kong. In addition, the government officially recognizes Japanese as one of the elective foreign language subjects in Hong Kong's public universities ^[9]. Many Hong Kong people have the motivation to learn Japanese. Because of Japan's successful cultural export, Hong Kong people have gained a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and developed a sense of cultural identity, motivating them to learn Japanese. Therefore, cultural identity is one of the aspects of motivation for SLA.

Finally, from a cultural input perspective, immigrants with different cultural backgrounds living in a culturally diverse country need to communicate and therefore have the motivation to learn a second language. The 2022 World Migration Report shows that Canada has the fourth-highest percentage of immigrants, with 22% of the country's total population ^[10]. Moreover, there are many immigrants in Canada, and they have different social and cultural backgrounds. A study on SLA in Canada found that the motivation of Canadian immigrants to learn English as a second language correlated with the desire to communicate with foreigners ^[11]. As Canada is a culturally diverse country, the diversity of immigrants' backgrounds makes it necessary for them to acquire the same language for communication: English. The diversity of cultural backgrounds, therefore, gives immigrants an incentive to acquire a second language to gain the ability to communicate with others and thus integrate into the national community. This section focuses on the positive influence of national culture on motivation for SLA from the perspective of cultural export and cultural import, respectively.

3 Supporting Factors of Motivation for Second Language Acquisition

Although prime mover plays a dominant role in motivating SLA, other supporting factors need to aid motivation for SLA. Among the supportive factors, economic conditions are fundamental in helping to maintain motivation for SLA. On the other hand, classroom strategies and the language environment in education also contribute to maintaining motivation for SLA. Finally, the maintenance of motivation for SLA needs to be supported by resources brought about by technological developments.

3.1 Economic Factor

To begin with, in economic terms, economic development leading to higher spiritual aspirations and special material conditions are the supporting factors that promote motivation to learn a second language. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the satisfaction of material conditions leads to a willingness to climb higher up the pyramid to pursue higher spiritual pursuits ^[12]. As a result, when people's material pursuits have been satisfied, they would like to acquire a second language to achieve a better self. The better self, in other words, the 'ideal L2 self' of the L2 motivation self-system, is the ideal self that people can achieve through their proficiency in a second language ^[13]. Therefore, people pursue higher spiritual pursuits based on an economic basis.

Moreover, learning a second language can help them realize their ideal selves, which contributes to the maintenance of motivation for SLA.

Another type of financial support is support from parents. Good financial conditions in the family positively impact the children's willingness to study a second language. A study investigating the effect of parental income on children's motivation to acquire a second language showed that families with higher incomes had more positive and less utilitarian attitudes toward their children's SLA ^[14]. The economic conditions support them to focus on the longer-term goal of their child acquiring more knowledge and culture through second language learning ^[14]. Therefore, with the financial support of their parents, the children do not need to consider the cost of living in the short term and are more likely to take up a second language because of their parents' attitudes.

3.2 Educational Factor

With economic support, motivational strategies, and the language environment positively impact the maintenance of motivation for SLA. Firstly, from the teacher's perspective, classroom motivational strategies motivate students to learn a second language. According to reinforcement theory, student motivation can be maintained more effectively through positive reinforcement in teaching and learning ^[15]. Therefore, using positive strategies in the classroom can reinforce students' motivation for SLA. Among the positive strategies, the combination of language teaching and students' career planning stands out ^[16]. Combining teaching with a career plan is quite popular with second language learners, making teaching more purposeful and meaningful ^[16]. The strategy reinforces students' motivation to learn a second language. In addition, using interactive teaching methods in the classroom allows teachers to get to know their students better to meet their practical needs and make teaching communicative ^[16]. Overall, educational classroom motivational strategies encourage second language learners to explore and become motivated to learn the language.

Furthermore, from the student's perspective, the language environment effectively maintains their motivation to acquire a second language. According to Junko Winch, in a Japanese language class, students understand Japanese better when taught multicultural students use the Japanese teaching method than when taught using the communicative language method ^[17]. The success of the Japanese teaching method in practice in multicultural classrooms shows that language learning works better in a multicultural context. In other words, multicultural education is more suitable for second language learning. Thus, the language environment is influential in supporting the maintenance of motivation for SLA.

3.3 Resource Factor

Eventually, people can use the resources of technological developments to acquire a second language, including various platforms and the vast amount of knowledge available through the media. About the use of various platforms for learning a second language, an increasingly wide range of second language learners have a positive attitude towards mobile technology-assisted second language learning ^[18]. A survey identified

seventeen social media platforms that are most popular with language learners because of the diversity of communication functions, the wide geographical distribution, and a large number of active users ^[19]. Benefiting from the rise of various online platforms, second language learners can acquire a second language by browsing the web, downloading language learning software, and interacting in a virtual environment through online seminars ^[18]. Therefore, with the proliferation of mobile electronic products, mobile technology can offer second language learners more versatile ways to acquire a second language.

In addition to the diversity of platforms, the richness of the learning resources provided by social media platforms also contributes to maintaining motivation for SLA. With the development of social media platforms, there is a trend for language learners to interact with each other diversely and extensively ^[19]. As a result, the richness of the outcomes and resources resulting from these interactions is also rising. The study also found that the richness of learning resources has increased the number of relevant language research topics of interest to second language learners ^[19]. As a result, second language learners have the opportunity and resources to explore topics they have previously been unable to delve into due to a lack of resources. The vast research space and resources available satisfy the desire of second language learners to explore. Therefore, social media platforms' wealth of learnable resources effectively sustains motivation for SLA.

4 Conclusion

In a nutshell, this paper finds that the environment positively influences motivation for SLA through the analysis of the study. The main reasons for this positive impact are the movement of capital and people due to geographical factors and the export and import of culture due to cultural factors. Meanwhile, financial aid, active educational tactics, and resource support contribute to maintaining motivation for second language learning.

The main contribution of this paper is to fill the gap in the influence of the external environment on motivation for SLA. Besides, it helps second language learners to stimulate and maintain their motivation to learn the language through the external factors mentioned above. Also, it provides another reference for scholars of language studies on motivation for SLA.

Ultimately, there are some following areas where this study could be improved. Firstly, the article lacks data support; the dominant source is the citation. Secondly, the article requires careful consideration of all factors influencing SLA. Thirdly, the paper does not conduct factor or correlation analysis on a statistical basis, and the degree of logic needs to be improved. Fourthly, the paper does not consider the differences between different languages in different countries and uniformly uses the second foreign language as a reference, ignoring the characteristics of the language itself. Future research could be improved in the following ways. Firstly, the article could collect data through a questionnaire. Secondly, the article could synthesize the existing literature and information to explore potentially relevant data. Subsequently, the article could use

statistics for quantitative analysis. Finally, the article could further refine the classification of languages and categorize countries geographically to analyze differences in second languages between countries and languages.

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