

## On the Study of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

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*Abstract: In the process of second language learning, motivation is an important factor, which helps to determine the level of proficiency achieved by different learners. It is the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language. The paper wishes to classify four main researching aspects of motivation in order to give the implication of researches for language teaching and learning.*

*Keywords: SLA, motivation*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

SLA research views motivation as a key factor in L2 learning. The motivation to learn a second language has been conceptualized by Gardner (1979) as a combination of a positive attitude or desire to learn the language and effort expended in that direction. Gardner (1985) used the following equation to represent the components of motivation: Motivation = Effort + Desire to Achieve a Goal + Attitudes. First, motivation is made up of effort, but as Gardner point out (1985), there are several potential components of effort, such as compulsiveness, desire to please a teacher or parents, a high need to achieve, good study habits, social pressures, including examinations or external rewards, which do not relate specifically to learning a language. In other words, Gardner is suggesting that it is important to study what channels this effort.

Brown identifies three types of motivation

- (1) Global motivation, which consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning an L2.
- (2) Situational motivation, which varies according to the situation in which learning takes place. That is, the motivation involved in naturalistic learning is distinct from the motivation associated with classroom learning.
- (3) Task motivation, which is the motivation for performing particular learning tasks.

Skehan(1989) puts forward four hypotheses:

----The Intrinsic Hypothesis: motivation derives from an inherent interest in the learning tasks. The learner is asked to perform, because classrooms or learning situations might be attractive places in themselves.

----The Resultative Hypothesis: learners who do well will persevere, those who do not do

well will be discouraged and try less hard. That is motivation might be influenced by the success experienced by learners.

---the Internal Cause Hypothesis: the learner brings to the learning situation a certain quantity of motivation as a given, which lead to the interesting question of why the learner is motivated to the degree that he or she is.

Given the abstractness of this concept, it is understandable that there is no general agreement about what precisely motivation consists of . However, we will focus on the research which has addressed Skehan's hypothesis.

## **2. INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION**

Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that the learner would like to resemble the foreign peoples concerned, to understand their culture, and to be able to participate in it. This pattern of motivation they label an integrative orientation. Spolsky (1969) defined integrative motivation as the amount of agreement between a subject's view of himself and his view of speakers of the target language on a variety of personality traits.

This type of motivation is an extension of Mowrer's(1960) account of motivation in first language learning. Mowrer argued that the child associated the language he hears with the satisfaction provided by the parent's presence. Thus, just as the child seeks to identify with his parents by learning their language, so the L2 learner may be motivated to identify with the L2 speech community by learning its language.

This integrative orientation is a particularly important source of motivation because it is firmly based in the personality of the learner. Therefore, it is likely to exert its influence over an extended period and to sustain learning efforts over the time that is necessary to attain language learning success.

In the late 1950s Gardner and Lambert initiated a series of studies investigating the relation of attitudes and motivation to achievement in a second language. In their first study on anglophone Canadians studying French, such as an early study by Gardner (1960), but also more studies (Gardner et al. 1976, Clement et al. 1978, Gardner et al. 1979) showed integratively motivated students not only to be better achieves than instrumentally motivated students, but also to have greater persistence in studying French and to engage more actively in French class activities. That is, integrative motivation also affects actual behavior in the classroom.

Spolsky (1969), in his study, also found a positive correlation between an integrative motivation and English proficiency of foreign students at American University.

Learners may have both integrative and instrumental motivation. Burstall's study (1974) suggests that it is impossible to separate the two kinds of motivation. Ely (1986) investigated the types of motivation found in first year university students of Spanish in the United States. He found evidence of both strong integrative and strong instrumental motivation. However, Gardner(1985) argued that whereas instrumental motivation emerges as a significant factor

only in some studies, integrative motivation has been found to be invariably related to L2 achievement.

However, some studies have failed to find positive relation between integrative motivation and L2 achievement. Oller (1977) found those she rated Anglo people negatively were more successful in learning English than those who rated them positively. Oller (1978) suggests that some learners may be motivated to excel because of negative attitudes towards the target language community. One explanation is that in this case negative feelings may lead to a desire to manipulate and overcome the people of the target language.

Integrative motivation is not the only kind of internal motivation involved in L2 learning. One of the main findings of Clement's study (1986) was that the best predictor of language proficiency proved to be self-confidence (lack of anxiety, outgoing personality, self-esteem). In another study of language learners in Quebec, Clement(1986) found evidence of a number of different reasons(friendship, travel, knowledge and understanding and instrumental) with different groups of learners revealing different dominant reasons, depending on their learning situation.

Integrative motivation has been shown to be strongly related to L2 achievement. It combines with instrumental motivation to serve as a powerful predictor of success in formal contexts.

### **3. INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION**

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), instrumental motivation occurs when the learner's goals for learning the L2 are functional. That is, this type of motivation is based on the advantages that can occur if a language is known, for example, professional advancement; capacity to do one's job well; ability to read useful material in the target language, etc. They hypothesized that an instrumental motive is less effective because it is not rooted in the personality of the learner, and therefore, the learner is less likely to expend effort to achieve cumulative progress. They claim that once for receiving a reward is eliminated, learners may cease applying extra effort. They see this as a major disadvantage of instrumental motivation.

From some studies it would appear that the relative importance of an integrative or instrumental motivation depends to a large extent on the context in which a language is learned. Lukmani (1972) showed that among Marathi-speaking Indian students learning English in India an instrumental motivation was positively correlated with English proficiency, suggesting that in a post-colonial society an instrumental motivation is more effective than an integrative one. Gardner and Lambert's study(1972) shows that in Philippines, students who approach the study of English with an instrumental outlook are clearly more successful in developing proficiency in the language than those who fail to adopt this reason. Apparently when there is a vital need to master a second language, the instrumental approach is very effective, perhaps more effective than integrative.

It seems to be concluded that instrumental motivation may be very important in some 'second' as opposed to 'foreign' settings. Incentives may help learning, but the effects may

cease as soon as the reward stops.

In China today the main motivation for the majority of foreign language learners is clearly instrumental. Learners hope to benefit personally, in terms of their later career in China, from their knowledge of the foreign language. The motivation for learning, some languages, especially American English, may also have an integrative aspect for some Chinese learners who identify very strongly with an often idealized picture of the L2 culture.

#### **4. RESULTATIVE MOTIVATION**

In the studies considered above, integrative and instrumental motivation were seen as cause of L2 achievement. For instance, on the basis of the large amount of data he collected Gardner (1985) concluded that there is no evidence that differential success influences attitudes and motivation.

However, other studies suggest that learner's motivation is strongly affected by their achievement. It was supposed that one possible influence on motivation might be success itself (Skehan, 1989). The results of a research with a sample of primary school children learning French led Burstall (1975) to the conclusion that it is achievement which is primary, and motivation the consequence. Hermann (1980) also suggested that it is success that contributes to motivation rather than vice-versa. He advanced 'Resultative Hypothesis', which claims that learners who do well are more likely to develop motivational intensity and to be active in the classroom.

It is likely that the relationship between motivation and achievement is an interactive one. A high level of motivation does stimulate learning, but perceived success in achieving L2 goals can help to keep existing motivation and even create new types of motivation.

#### **5. MOTIVATION AS INTRINSIC INTEREST**

Keller (1984) defines 'interest' as a positive response to stimuli, identifying it as one of the main elements of motivation.

On the one hand, intrinsic interest in L2 learning might be achieved by providing opportunities for communication. Mc Namara (1973) argued that the really important part of motivation lies in the act of communication. Rossier (1975) also argued that an integrative motivation may not be effective without interest. On the other hand, teachers might seek to foster intrinsic motivation. For instance, they may try to provide the reasonable learning tasks to the students (neither too difficult nor too easy) or opportunities for group work.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

The conception of motivation has been explained in the paper, it showed that motivation plays an increasing role in language learning and an influential aspect of education. The key theories of motivation in language learning have been briefly examined here, such as integrative

motivation, instrumental motivation, resultative motivation, motivation as intrinsic interest. These theories proved that motivation plays various roles in the process of language learning. Integrativeness emphasizes that language learners can learn a second or foreign language quickly and successfully by integrating themselves into the target language society. Instrumental motivation is most typical of foreign rather than second language learning contexts. It is likely that the result of being able to use the L2 within the L1 context will confer prestige, status and financial benefits. Resultative motivation suggested that it is success that contributes to motivation rather than vice-versa. And interest is seen as a positive response to stimuli. In addition, strategies for achieving motivation have been suggested. Though there are some limitation in making more clear about the terms of motivation in some research area, many language researchers have provided a solid foundation for future research.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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