

# Literature Review of Motivation for Second Language Learning

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**Abstract:** Motivation is the internal motivation or drive that directly drives an individual to carry out an activity. An individual's activities, whether simple or complex, are regulated and governed by motivation. Therefore, the motivation of learners is particularly important in foreign language learning. In this paper, the author summarizes some important theoretical perspectives on motivation for second language learning at home and abroad, with the aim of better guiding the actual teaching of foreign languages and more effectively promoting students' learning of foreign languages based on some theoretical knowledge.

**Keywords:** Motivation; Second language learning; Teaching practice

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## 1. Previous Research Abroad

Canadian scholars Gardner and Lambert identified two key determinants of second language learning, one being language talent and the other being motivation to learn. Drawing on Dornyei & Ushioda, the author divides second language motivation research into four stages, including the classical model's personal trait orientation stage, the cognitive-situational orientation stage, the process-oriented stage, and the social dynamic orientation stage. (Qiu, 2013)

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Gardner divided the classical model of personal trait orientation stage.

The study of motivation for second language learning began with Gardner and Lambert in the 1950s. Gardner and Smythe proposed the social-educational model of motivation, which was a formalized and extended version of theoretical formulations proposed by Lambert. The socio-educational model in which integrativeness plays as the most powerful factor in L2 achievement, suggests that cultural perceptions in the social environment influence four aspects of individual differences: intelligence, language ability, motivation, and situational anxiety, and that these individual differences directly influence language learning and ultimately lead to differences in learning outcomes. (Gardner, 1998) However, this model was criticized because of its invalid evidence such as some hypothesis, and some oversimplified propositions. In addition, its focus on general motivational components in the social context rather than in the language classroom.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Gardner divided motivation for learning a foreign language into "instrumental motivation" and "integrative motivation". Integrative motivation refers to the genuine interest of foreign/bilingual learners in the target language community. They learn foreign languages in order to communicate better with the people of the target language and to have a closer contact with the culture of the target language. This type of motivation is intrinsic to the learner and has a lasting power. Instrumental motivation refers to learners who use the target language as a tool to gain benefits or advantages for themselves, such as using the foreign language to find a better job, to gain respect from others or to gain financial benefits. Gardner and Lambert argued that both instrumental and integrative motivation contribute to language learning. However, the effect of integrative motivation is more positive on the outcome of language learning.

In addition, the AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery), which is a motivation test scale, was designed to assess motivation in their experiment, and it has become an authoritative instrument widely used by researchers in the investigation of foreign language learning motivation. (Yin, 2017)

### 1.1 Cognitive-contextual Orientation Phase of The Extended Model

Since the 1990s, English has gradually become a lingua franca, so the "integrative" motivation of Gardner's theory has been se-

verely challenged, which makes it difficult to explain the motivation for learning English as a process of identification with a specific language and culture. In this context, Gardner, Lambert and Cléments researches were based on a social psychological perspective, which led to a large number of followers. In 1995, Trembley and Gardner created an extended motivation theory model based on integrative/instrumental motivation theory by referring to mainstream motivational psychology's expectancy-value theory as well as goal-setting theory, three elements of goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy were added in this model. (Lu,2005) The important contribution of this theoretical model is that it clarifies the linear relationship between three major factors, namely, attitudes toward language, motivational behaviors for language learning, and learning achievement, and has important implications for the study of foreign language motivation.

Based on a long-term empirical study, In 1994, a three-dimensional model of foreign language learning motivation was proposed by Hungarian scholar Dornyei to define and measure foreign language learning motivation, namely, the language dimension, the learning dimension and the learning situation dimension. The three dimensions of the doctrine are closely related to the three basic elements of the foreign language learning process: language itself, foreign language learners and learning environment, and they are also closely related to the second language learning environment, for example, classroom teaching practice. So that theory and practice are closely integrated, which has a positive guiding effect on college English teaching.

Dornyei motivation framework has guiding meaning for language teaching. First of all, from a macro point of view, the socio-economic situation in China determines that our students have instrumental motivation in general. In the light of this, teachers can add more culture and customs of English-speaking countries to their teaching, broaden students cultural horizons, integrate language and culture organically to facilitate motivation changing from “instrumental” to “integrative”. And then students attitude toward English learning will change from a task to a pleasure. Secondly, from a microscopic point of view, teachers should be selective of teaching materials, and not depend on textbooks only, instead, they can flexibly match the difficulty of tasks with students abilities. Whats more, teachers can make full use of multimedia and modern technology to add movies, videos, newspapers, songs, literature etc to the teaching content, and carry out various language activities to create a multi-dimensional language environment, so that learning is close to students lives and students will find meaningful things during the learning process. From the perspective of learners, the influence of peers on each other is extremely important, teachers can take steps, such as cooperation and competition, to help create a positive learning environment in the classroom, in which students sense of learning autonomy can be strengthened gradually. (Lu,2005)

## 1.2 Process Orientation Phase

Dornyei and Otto constructed Process model, based on the relationship between motivation and time. Process model has been divided into three phases: Pre-actional phase, actional phase and post-actional phase. The pre-actional phase refers to the process of choosing a course of action to be conducted, which contains three sub-processes: goal setting, intention formation and the initiation of intention enactment. During the actional phase, three basic processes are involved: subtask generation and implementation, a complex ongoing appraisal process and the application of a variety of action control mechanisms. During Post-actional Phase, the learners compare initial expectancies and plans of action to how they conducted in reality and then form attributions about the extent to which the intended goal has been reached. (Xu,2015) This motivational self-system theory of second language motivation, which makes teachers aware of the irreplaceable and important role of intrinsic motivation in English learning has application value and positive practical implications for teaching. Dornyei further suggests motivational strategies that may enhance learners ideal bilingual selves: creating a vision, filled with high expectations, to construct an ideal L2 self; exploiting an action plan and taking active steps to make the vision feasible; reinforcing the vision and building confidence to make the vision realistic and feasible; activating the ideal L2 self to make learning English is a pleasure, and keeping the vision active; and considering the possibility of failure to make the vision balanced. These provides teachers with a complete strategy for teaching motivation to learn and thus motivate students to practice more in their classroom. (Qiu,2013)

## 2. Previous Research at Home

Domestic research on motivation for second language learning started late, and this kind of motivation research can be divided into two stages. From the 1980s and early 1990s, most of the foreign language learning motivation studies in China adopted Gardners psychological model, like Wen Qiufang, Gui Shichun, Zhu Chun and other educational experts. There are papers “Affective factors of foreign language teaching”, “Psychological analysis of English majors in China”, etc.

From the 1990s to the present, foreign language learning motivation studies was expanded from multiple perspectives, such as psychology, sociology, cognition, and behaviorism. Most of the studies on motivation for second language learning in China have

been conducted on college students, and less on secondary school students. Wen, Qiufang focused on investigating the changing patterns and characteristics of English learners' motivation, perceptions and strategies in China, and she further divided English learning motivation into surface motive and deep motive. Yihong Gao and her associates studied a series of changes in English learning motivation and self-identity among Chinese college students by sampling undergraduates from 30 colleges and universities in China using a self-administered questionnaire, and the results showed that intrinsic interest motivation was quite strongly associated with productive and additive changes.

These studies have given some insights into foreign language teaching practice in China. Firstly, foreign language teachers should pay special attention to students self-identity changes while focusing on language learning results and trying to help students improve their English skills. For example, they should cultivate students sense of social responsibility towards their own nation, deepen their identity and understanding of their own culture, promote their personal all-round development and personality development, treat foreign cultures correctly, learn foreign language with a positive attitude, and better implement quality education. At the same time, in the actual English classroom, teachers should help students build up their self-confidence, guide them to establish their own learning goals, improve their learning efficiency, and develop their independent learning ability.

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