



Motivation: Is L2 learning a special case?

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Why I became
interested in
language
learning
motivation

Encountering
'integrative
motivation' ...

Importance of motivation in L2 learning



Over 50 years of research (dating back to Gardner & Lambert 1959)

‘given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language, if he is exposed to the language data’ (Corder 1967: 164)

Key factor distinguishing L2 learning from L1 learning

Motivation and human learning



Motivation is critical to all forms of conscious and intentional human learning

Major pedagogical and research issue in education field

Question:



Does L2 learning represent a special case in the psychology of learning motivation, with distinctive theories and concepts?

Or can L2 motivation broadly be explained in terms of more general theories of learning motivation?

L2 motivation: its distinctive social-psychological nature



Gardner & Lambert 1959, 1972; Gardner 1985

- Making the L2 part of one's 'behavioural repertoire'
- Adopting forms of expression that represent 'integral parts of another culture'
- Attitudes to and sense of identification with target language culture and people as significant influences on motivation and L2 learning success

Two key concepts



Integrative orientation

- sincere and personal interest in target language people and culture → desire to identify with and integrate into their community

Instrumental orientation

- pragmatic reasons for L2 learning (e.g. to meet a course requirement, enhance job prospects)

Social-psychological tradition



Set research agenda until 1990s – cultural attitudes and integrative orientation (Masgoret & Gardner 2003)

Independent of broader field of motivation research in education

Associated social-psychological theories:

Acculturation model (Schumann 1978); Social context model (Clement 1980); Intergroup model (Giles & Byrne 1982)

L2 motivation and motivation in general: Two paradigms of inquiry



Surprising if concepts of motivation that apply to human learning in general do not also apply to L2 learning

What general motivation theories and concepts can we draw on to explain L2 motivation?

Unlikely that those learning a language regard their motivation for this as independent of motivation in other areas of learning

How can we theorize L2 motivation within an overall complex dynamic system?

Looking beyond social- psychological perspectives



Crookes & Schmidt 1991

Modern Language Journal 1994

Motivation issues relevant to classroom
learning contexts

Focus on motivational cognitions



Beliefs, self-perceptions, thinking patterns that affect motivated engagement in learning

- e.g. goals, self-efficacy beliefs, attributional processes

Internal/external factors that influence motivational cognitions

- Cf. Schunk et al. 2008

Two comprehensive frameworks



Dörnyei's (1994) three-level framework of L2 motivation

Williams & Burden's (1997) social constructivist framework of L2 motivation

For overview of research, see Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011

Three points to note ...



Cognitive 'catching up' phase did not mean abandoning social-psychological perspectives

Learner cognitions (affecting motivation) represent significant research areas in themselves

Difficult to separate motivation from cognitions, affect, emotions, or to classify individuals according to particular motivational cognitions or learner types

Looking beyond social-psychological and cognitive theories



Need for a more holistic perspective

Reframing the question ...

- How does L2 motivation fit within a person's overall complex system of motivations, behaviours, interactions and experiences?

Shift in conceptual focus ...



L2 learners

Abstract bundles of variables

Generalized and essentialized types of learners

Persons

Engaged in L2 learning process

Situated in particular temporal, social, physical contexts



An example: Sean's story



Learners as abstract bundles of variables

‘it is not people but their componentized subpersonal parts that are orchestrating courses of action’

(Bandura 2001: 2)

Complexity and idiosyncrasy of a person's motivational response to events

It is people who orchestrate courses of action in the particular contexts they inhabit and shape through their actions and behaviours

(Ushioda 2009)

Social turn in SLA



Block 2003; Lafford 2007

Language learning as a sociocultural and sociohistorically situated process, rather than primarily a cognitive linguistic process

Kramsch 2002: How can we separate the dancer from the dance, acquisition from use, individual from environment?

Shift from abstract 'L2 learners' to real 'persons-in-context'
(Ushioda 2009)

Motivation and self



Concepts of 'self' now dominating research on learning motivation (Pajares & Schunk 2002)

Future-oriented dimension of self-concept (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Oyserman et al. 2006)

Possible selves (Markus & Nurius 1986):

- People's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, what they are afraid of becoming

L2 motivation and possible selves



English as global language and international lingua franca

L2 motivation: process of internal identification with aspired identity as international or global citizens (rather than identification with external reference group or community)

L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005, 2009a)



Ideal L2
self

Personally desired future self-image as an L2 speaker in personal, social, academic or professional contexts of language use

Ought-to
L2 self

Less internalized future self-image desired for us by others (e.g. teachers, parents, society)

Expanding the theoretical boundaries of L2 motivation ...



Beyond social-psychological and cognitive theories of L2 motivation

Beyond the L2 learner self to the person's motivational self-systems as a whole

How to integrate motivation, self and context



Key issue in mainstream motivational psychology (e.g. Järvelä et al. 2010; Turner 2001)

Towards complexity theory and dynamic systems approaches (de Bot et al. 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008)

L2 motivation within a dynamic systems perspective



Motivation as just one element in a complex evolving system of multiple interacting elements (Dörnyei 2009b):

- Processes of motivation, cognition, emotion and their constituent components interact with one another and the developing context, thereby changing and causing change in unpredictable ways, as the system as a whole restructures, adapts and evolves

But ...



Analysis of motivation may play a major role in any dynamic systems perspective on L2 learning, since processes of human agency, intentionality and reflexivity are fundamental to the interactions between self and context (Ushioda 2010)

To conclude, current perspectives ...



Seek to analyse L2 motivation with reference to a person's motivational self-systems and future self-representations as a whole, rather than just as an L2 learner

Highlight the significant role of motivation in the dynamic interactions between self and context