

# *A Review of Gardner's Motivation Theory in Studies on K1-K12 Students*

Linran Li<sup>1,a,†</sup>, and Mingyu Zhou<sup>2,b,\*,†</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Chinese Language and Literature, Xizang Minzu University, Xianyang, Shaanxi, China

<sup>2</sup>English Language and Education, Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, China

a. 836590598@qq.com, b. 1811000537@mail.sit.edu.cn

\*corresponding author

†These authors contributed equally.

**Abstract:** Motivation is one of the subjects that attracts the most research in the field of acquiring a second language. Gardner and Lambert are pioneers in the study of motivation theory, they divide motivation for acquiring new languages into two categories: “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation”, but there is still disunited explanation of the impact of learning motivation on second language learners in K1-K12 stage, so this paper reviews and summarizes relevant literature, and uses systematic review to explore the impact of learning motivation on second language learners in K1-K12 stage. Studies have found that motivation leads to different language learning behaviors in different contexts. Learning motivation directly affects learners' effort, learning attitude and emotional state, which requires teachers to pay attention to stimulating students' learning motivation in various ways in classroom teaching, such as stimulating students' interest in learning, creating situations, providing students with challenging learning task sets as to enhance students' learning perseverance and enable students to successfully acquire a second language. The authors' summary of the effect of learning motivation on second language acquisition and the illumination of second language teaching primarily begins with the types of motivation.

**Keywords:** motivation, second language acquisition, influence, teaching enlightenment, systematic review

## 1. Introduction

Motivation is one of the subjects that attracts the most research in the field of acquiring a second language. Gardner and Lambert are pioneers in the study of motivation theory, they divide motivation for acquiring new languages into two categories: “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation”. Instrumental motivation is the urge to learn a language in order to accomplish immediate goals, such as improving one's own abilities, career development, social development, etc. Integrative motivation is the desire of language learners to blend into the target language group, communicating and experiencing the target language's culture through the use of linguistic skills. There are many studies on “instrumental motivation” and “integrative motivation”, but after reading a large amount of literature, the authors find that there are few studies to systematically summarize the impact of learning motivation on learners' learning behaviors.

According to the hypothesis of the critical period of language acquisition proposed by Lenneberg in the sixties of the last century: 4-12 years old is the fastest and most sensitive period for children to acquire language, and the motivation of K1-K12 students to acquire a second language is more complex and diverse than that of college students or adults. K1-K12 students have both instrumental motivation (examinations or further education and comprehensive motivations) and integrative motivation (interest and cultural factors), and also have both internal motivation for self-realization and extrinsic motivation, such as family and environment. So, students in K1-K12 should grasp this critical period. Exploring the influence of second language learning motivation is necessary. It can motivate learners' learning motivation to succeed in acquiring a second language. In addition, the discussion of these issues is of great significance for second language teaching at the K1-K12 level. This paper reviews and summarizes relevant literature, and uses systematic review to explore the effect of learning motivation on second language learners in K1-K12 stage. The paper mainly starts from the types of learning motivation to summarize the impact of learning motivation on learners and the enlightenment of second language teaching.

## **2. Types of Motivation**

There are various classifications of motivation for learning, among which Gardner and Lambert are the most influential. They divided the motivation for learning a second language into two types. One type is "instrumental motivation", where the language is learned as a tool to achieve a specific goal. Another type of motivation is "integrative motivation". Integrative motivation refers to the learner having a genuine interest in the target language community and learning the language in order to be able to participate in the activities of the cultural community of the second language, in order to fit in with the social life of the community.

### **2.1. Instrumental Motivation**

Research may classify this confluence of instrumental factors and motivation as instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to auxiliary factors that contribute to motivation. Or there might be additional individual differences that encourage drive. There is no basis for arguing that views toward the learning environment and integrativeness are the only factors that influence motivation. By offering strategies and schema to aid in material retention, language learning strategies can have an impact on success. It would be anticipated that the motivated person would use them to the extent that they are relevant to language learning, which suggests a potential connection between motivation and the other non-motivating factors. Although it is clear that the user would use them in such contexts, they are not shown to be linked to learning contexts because an individual's motivation determines whether or not they will use the strategies, so the motivation is what connects them to learning contexts.

### **2.2. Integrative Motivation**

Integrative motivation is the willingness to use the target language in order to integrate and become accustomed to a new target culture as well as a favorable opinion of the target language community [1]. One of Gardner's central theories is that the acquisition of second languages depends heavily on integrative drive [1]. Studies have shown that junior and senior high school students have a stronger instrumental motivation to learn a new language, and college students and adults who enter society have a stronger integrative motivation to learn a new language [2]. Learning a second language is enjoyable for those with integrative motivation, and they also have an easier time mastering it [1]. Of course, learners often not only own "integrative motivation", but also "instrumental motivation",

and some learners have both. The role of learning motivation on language learning will be different from man to man, and also be different from the environment which the learner is located in [3].

### 3. Effect of Motivation

Learning motivation, as a source of motivation, can stimulate learners' learning behavior, and has a motivating effect on learning behavior [4]. For example, if foreign students feel that their pronunciation is not proper, they will have the motivation to train pronunciation, and under the stimulation of this motivation, they will have corresponding learning behaviors, such as imitating the pronunciation of native speakers. In addition, learning motivation can also guide learners' specific learning behavior and become an indicator of this behavior [5].

Therefore, it is meaningful and necessary to explore the impact of learning motivation on second language learners, which is directly related to learners' language learning achievements. This paper explores the influence of K1-K12 students' second language acquisition motivation from three aspects: learners' effort, learning attitude and emotional state [6].

#### 3.1. Learner's Effort

The motivation of second language learners directly affects how hard work the learners to learn language. The reason people choose a specific task, how long they are prepared to continue in it, and how much time and effort they invested in it are all explained by their motivation. These three elements of motivation align with setting objectives and starting and maintaining learning efforts [7].

According to the Gardner's model of social education, people with real motivation will show effort, desire, and impact [4]. The more motivated students are, the more enthusiastically they pursue learning a second language. Students who lack motivation show unengaged and unwilling acts to make efforts, while students who have motivation will work harder to learn the language through various ways, such as completing homework on time, looking for more opportunities to learn and contact the second language environment, and so on.

Pawlak. M confirms this view in his research: some Polish senior high school learners, especially those who were considerably more willing to work on English in their spare time. If they understood the significance of English, had clear future goals, and displayed a high level of international posture. In addition to taking more classes, many learners also looked for more resources, read books, listened to music, or employed other occasionally quite creative learning techniques that they found rewarding and effective [8]. Kathleen A. Laing's study of French middle and high school students' motivation to learn French showed that students who lacked motivation showed disengaged, inattentive, and unwilling to put in the effort behaviors, while highly motivated students studied hard, persevered in overcoming challenges and obstacles, and gained satisfaction by successfully completing learning tasks. For this part of students, the stronger the motivation to learn, the more time and effort they will put into second language learning. Therefore, they are able to use resources more efficiently and constantly exposed to and rendered by the second language environment, so as to achieve better language achievements than students who are less motivated or even weaker. However, those students who have not strongly motivated to learn or showed no interest, avoidance, or even a critical eye for second language acquisition showed less effort than students who were highly motivated to learn, and achieved a lower sense of linguistic fulfillment [9]. As Sayid Dabbagh Ghazvini and Milad Khajehpour say: Effective L2 learning occurs in contexts that are additive; learners who view acquiring the second language as devaluing themselves won't succeed [10].

Therefore, there is a positive correlation between learning motivation and effort. Students who have a higher sense of achievement in language learning, they are more willing to use the second language in study and communicate and so on in their life, so as to get more positive feedback to further increase the learning motivation. Through the interaction of these factors, they can integrate into the second language environment more quickly.

### 3.2. Learning Attitude

Students' learning attitude is crucial to pick up new languages. Gardner believes that motivation consists of three components: the strength of motivation, the desire to learn languages, and the attitude towards the act of learning languages [11]. This reveals a certain relationship between learning motivation and learning attitude.

In Lambert's model of "social psychology", he proposed the theory that "the degree of somebody successfully acquires a second language depends on their attitude and motivation of language learning [10]." Attitudes have been found as the affective predecessors to the beginning of action learning in the domain of L2 motivation. The argument made in this research is that motivational behavior, at the top of the multi motivational system, is linked to linguistic learning behaviors and functions as an intentional system that regulates learners' effort and perseverance when engaged in language learning. The volitional system can detect students' self-guides and attitudes toward language acquisition at the following level [7].

Sporski argues that attitudes manifest themselves in learners as motivation. Positive learning attitudes stimulate students' intrinsic learning motivation, while negative learning attitudes will gradually reduce students' level of learning motivation, which hinders second language acquisition [12]. On the contrary, positive learning motivation will also affect students' learning attitude to a certain extent, the stronger the motivation of a student to learn a second language, the more positive learning attitude he will show, such as adopts more proactive learning strategies: actively interact with teachers and classmates in class, making more practices about second language, completing homework carefully after class, finding available resources and tools to improve their second language level, and finally they can successfully acquire a second language.

Ghazvini S D and Khajehpour M in their findings about the attitudes and motivations of students in eastern Tehran high schools to acquire English as a second language, showed that girls have stronger integrative learning motivation of learning English, and girls had more positive attitudes towards learning English. Many L2 learning socio-educational models focus on the learners' attitudes, and target-language groups' attitudes towards L2 learners. These are crucial elements influencing the L2 learning environment [12]. The combination of learners' learning attitudes and other identifying traits such as prior information, abilities, and personality explains how learners use existing learning opportunities to acquire a second language. All of these factors can affect second language learning.

Therefore, teachers should adopt more effective strategies in the classroom to stimulate students' learning motivation, so that learners can maintain positive attitudes towards learning and finally successfully acquire a second language.

## 4. Emotional State

A lot of research on the learner's motivation and personal traits that affect second language acquisition have been conducted in the field of second language acquisition. Many studies also use students who have successfully acquired a second language as examples to investigate, validate, conceptualize, and divide various motivations and emotional states. The student's motivation, feelings, and emotional condition are all included in emotional state [13]. In 2016, Teimouri argued

that motivation and emotion are intertwined, because any motivated behavior can produce certain types of positive and negative emotions [14]. In the process of second language learning, students' positive emotional states such as interest, stimulation, promotion, etc, and negative emotional states such as anxiety, avoidance, etc. If a student encounters an obstacle, such as worry or weariness, that will hinder them from successfully learning a second language, their ability to acquire a second language will be limited [15].

This view is confirmed by the findings of Papi and Teimouri, which shows that there are strong internalized motivations to evoke various emotions (e.g. anxiety, happiness, etc.) [14]. Saito K, Dewaele J M, Abe M, et al also did some research on this, they took 122 high school students from famous Japanese high schools as a sample for one semester (three months)'s research. In the first month, these students were asked to take seven English lessons per week with teachers whose L2 English level is closed to native speakers. In the second month, they collected questionnaires from students, and in the third month they checked participants' experience and speech performance. The study's findings demonstrated: The degree of students' private satisfaction was substantially connected with their level of learning motivation, while anxiety was adversely correlated with it. When second graders have more clearly and clearly learning motivations, they produced less negative emotions and more positive emotions. Participants' long-term achievement was more affected by learning motivation and emotional differences [16].

Second language learners who with strong motivation tend to have more pleasure experience, which can reduce their anxiety about second language learning. It is easier for them to develop towards positive results in the future.

Inspiration from the theory of intertwined motivation and emotion, teachers should focus more on the arouse and stimulation of students' positive emotions in our classroom teaching. Therefore, this suggests that teachers should adopt more effective strategies in classroom teaching to arouse students' intrinsic learning motivation, make students' intrinsic learning motivation becomes more specific, and then students will produce more positive emotions, which will promote students' second language learning and enable them to eventually successfully acquire a second language [17].

## 5. Strategies of Cultivating Learners' Motivation

Teachers need to fully stimulate students' interest in learning and turn their interest into motivation. Kathleen A. Laing, in her study of the results concerning the motivation of French language learning among French junior and senior high school students, showed that students who lacked motivation showed disengaged, inattentive and reluctant behaviour, while motivated students worked hard, persisted in overcoming challenges and obstacles, and gained satisfaction by successfully completing their learning tasks. For this group of students, the more motivated they are, the more time and effort they will devote to second language acquisition, the more effectively they will be able to use resources, the more they will be constantly exposed to the second language environment and the more they will achieve better language success than students who are less motivated or even less motivated. According to Gardner, R. C., in the socio-educational model, learning a second language Motivation requires three elements. Firstly, individuals who are motivated will make an effort to learn the language. This means that learning the material by doing homework, looking for opportunities to learn more, by doing extra work, etc. is an attitude of persistence. Secondly, the driven person desires to accomplish my objectives. Such a person will express a wish to thrive and put forth a lot of effort to do so. Thirdly, someone who is driven will find language acquisition to be enjoyable. Such a person will describe it as exciting, demanding, and spirited, though occasionally with less zeal than other times. It is believed that integrated motivation combines motivational, goal-oriented, and attitude characteristics. In other words, a



person who is integrally motivated is one who is driven to acquire a second language, who is able or willing to identify with other language groups, and who generally has a positive attitude toward learning. In this paradigm, motivation is seen as being supported by integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning environment, but achievement in the second language is driven by motivation. High levels of integration and/or extremely positive attitudes toward learning situations may be displayed by some individuals, but if these traits are unrelated to a desire to learn the language, they will not be especially strongly associated with academic success. Practice has shown that the easier the learning process, the quicker the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, and the greater the degree of knowledge internalization will be, the stronger the learner's integrative drive and the higher the desire to learn. It can be argued that learners' strong motivation will facilitate their language learning, and progress in language learning will in turn strengthen their motivation to learn the language.

### **5.1. Create a Classroom Environment That Stimulates Students' Emotions**

Creating a classroom environment that stimulates students' motivation to learn and activates their need for knowledge is also supported by the findings of Papi and Teimouri's study, which showed that having strong internalised motivation evokes a variety of emotions (e.g. anxiety, happiness, etc.). Teachers should focus more on the evocation and stimulation of positive emotions in the classrooms. This, therefore, demonstrates that teachers should use more successful strategies to arouse students' intrinsic motivation in the classroom so that students' intrinsic motivation becomes more concrete and, in turn, students will develop more positive emotions, which will facilitate students' second language learning and their eventual successful acquisition of a second language.

Four ideas are put forth by Darnyei (2001) as being crucial to the idea of motivation. Those are:

1. creating the basic conditions for motivation
2. motivating students
3. maintain and protect motivation, language learning motivation
4. encouraging positive self-evaluation. [1]

Teachers should be conscious of the need to motivate students, by creating a classroom environment that inspires students to learn and encourages self-criticism. The teacher's kind guidance and humorous explanations can make students realise the inappropriateness of their perceptions, stimulate their interest in learning about the culture of that target country and understand that learning a foreign language is not only about coping with various exams, but also about mastering a tool for communication.

### **5.2. Help Students to Complete Challenging Tasks**

The teaching content should be difficult and appropriate for the students. If it is too difficult, it tends to lead to frustration, and if it is too easy, it can be boring. The most effective way to motivate students is to have learning tasks that are moderately difficult. With effort, satisfactory results can be achieved. The joy of success will give them more positive challenges and have a positive effect on reinforcing motivation to learn.

Gardner, R. C. says that taking language instructors into consideration in a setting where languages are being learned, language instructors are also responsible for a wide range of tasks. Language instructors need to be proficient in the language in order to accomplish their objectives. On the one hand, this calls for them to be competent enough to possess the information and abilities to teach the language, as well as for students to be able to swiftly assess the teacher's competence. On the other hand, in addition to teaching students the fundamentals of the language, instructors must also inspire them to acquire the content and, more importantly, to apply it. Teachers frequently

demand that their pupils use the language correctly as well as with proficiency. Learning a second language is a challenging and time-consuming job due to a number of variables, including the amount of effort and dedication required from both teacher and pupil. Teachers need to fully stimulate students' interest in learning and turn it into motivation. Practice has shown that the stronger the learner's motivation to integrate, the more enthusiastic they are about learning, the easier the learning process, the faster they acquire language knowledge and the more internalised their knowledge is. It can be said that learners are strongly motivated to promote their language learning, and that progress in language learning in turn strengthens their motivation to learn the language.

## 6. Conclusion

In this review, researchers analyze three categories of motivational effects in second language acquisition for k1-k12 students: learner's effort, learning attitude, and emotional state, based on Gardner and Lambert's classification of motivation, which emphasizes the importance of integrative motivation. Learner's effort is directly influenced by motivation and can have a counter effect on motivation; students achieve through effort and this sense of achievement can enhance learning motivation. There is a relationship between learning attitude and motivation, and teachers can motivate students by adopting effective strategies to help students maintain a positive attitude. Emotional state refers to the student's feelings, mental state. Emotional states can either facilitate or hinder students' second language acquisition. Therefore, in the future, there should be more teacher training for novice teachers on how to motivate students, especially integrative motivation. By assigning challenging tasks that give students a sense of accomplishment and motivation, students learn not only about the language, but also how to use it correctly in context. At the same time, teachers need to pay attention to the positive emotions and interests of students in stimulating them and turning them into motivation to further promote their second language acquisition.

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