
A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION OF CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXTS

Jirada Wudthayagorn

Maejo university

“There are no magic motivational buttons that can be pushed to “make” people want to learn, work hard, and act in a responsible manner. Similarly, no one can be directly “forced” to care about something... Facilitation, not control, should be the guiding idea in attempts to motivate humans” (Ford, cited in Dörnyei, 2001, p. 25).

ABSTRACT

Attitude and motivation is one of the psychological variables that play a role in language learning and achievement (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This paper demonstrates how in different contexts of learning languages, attitude and motivation play a different role in child language learning. This paper begins with an overview of attitude and motivation. Then, the two empirical research of attitude and motivation conducted in different language learning contexts are discussed. Pedagogical and research implications are also provided.

It is hoped that this paper will shed some light on a better understanding of attitude and motivation in child language learning, especially in a context where the language being learned has a foreign status such as learning English in Thailand.

Attitude and motivation: An overview

Attitude

Gardner (1985) states that attitude is “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s belief or opinions about the

referent” (p. 9). Mantle-Bromley (1995) refers attitude to “affect and is evaluative, emotional reaction (i.e., the degree of like, or dislike associated with attitude object)” (p. 373). In addition, Rajecki (cited in Allport, 1935) defines attitude as “a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through

experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 4).

From the above notions, we have seen that when an individual has an attitude toward something, it means that he has an object to react or respond to and his reaction or response is based on his belief or opinion about the object. For example, in relation to language learning, the English language may be considered as an object. Students may believe that the English language is easy to study and believe that they can take advantage of studying it because they can get a good job. They, thus, may feel positive toward the English language and enjoy studying it. As a result, they pay more attention to class, seek out opportunities to use English, and continue their English language study. To conclude, Gardner (1985), Mantle-Bromley (1995), Mantle-Bromley and Miller (1991) are in agreement that attitudes have three components: affect, cognitive, and behavior. The "affect" component refers to feelings toward an attitude object. The "cognitive" component refers to beliefs which each person has about the object. The last component, "behavior," refers to intentions or actions related to the object. Also, it is important to note that "object" can be animate (e.g., people) or inanimate (e.g., language or culture).

Motivation

According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), motivation involves all classroom activities because it can affect the learning of new behaviors and the performance of earlier learned behaviors. They refer motivation to "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (p. 4). Related to motivation in language

learning, Gardner (1985) states that motivation is "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goals of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). Gardner (1985) notes that motivation consists of four elements which are (1) a goal, (2) effortful behavior, (3) a desire to attain the goal, and (4) favorable attitudes toward the learning activity. Moreover, achievement can be viewed as one of indexes of motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Many researchers (e.g., Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dirnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) maintain that attitude and motivation are related to achievement in language learning. Gardner (1985) clarifies that attitude and motivation might relate to other aspects of behavior that are connected to second language acquisition. Such aspects are, for example, participation in class (Gardner, 1985), pronunciation accuracy (Donato, Antonek, & Tucker, 1994; Tucker, Donato, & Antonek, 1996), and persistence in language study (Ramage, 1990).

According to Gardner (1985), motivation can be classified into two types: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The former one occurs when students wish to identify with the culture of the language being learned. The latter one occurs when students have functional goals such as they want to pass an exam or they want to get a good job. Students who have integrative motivation reflect a personal interest in the target language, the people, and the culture; however, those who have instrumental motivation seem to show little or no interest in people who speak the target language. However, they want to learn the

language for utilitarian purposes such as getting a promotion or passing a test.

Unlike Gardner, Covington (1998) states that motivation can be categorized into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Covington notes that “the key to understand the concept of intrinsic motivation is that the payoff resides in the actions themselves—that is, the act of learning is its own reward.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, spurs ones to learn in anticipation of rewards from external sources such as praise and grades” (pp. 18-19).

It is important to note that integrative/instrumental motivation can interact with intrinsic/extrinsic motivation as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Integrative/instrumental motivation and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (adapted from Brown, 1987, p. 117)

	<i>Intrinsic</i>	<i>Extrinsic</i>
<i>Integrative</i>	L2 students want to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g. immigration)	Someone else wants L2 students to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g., in the U.S., Thai parents send their children to Thai temples to learn Thai language.)
<i>Instrumental</i>	L2 students want to achieve goals utilized (e.g., for a career)	An external force pushes L2 students to learn the L2 (e.g., French company sends their employees to Spain for Spanish language training.)

Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (1999) believe that extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation are similar in that they both concentrate on the role of tangible rewards external to the language learning process. Intrinsic motivation seems similar to integrative motivation in that it refers to positive attitudes toward the learning situation and the learning process.

There is no definite answer of what dichotomy of motivation should be used when conducting research. Researchers may adapt different dichotomies depending on language learning contexts, research questions, and theoretical frameworks. For example, in Gardner’s socio-educational

model of motivation (1985), integrative/instrumental dichotomy is used. However, Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (1999) focus on intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy.

Two empirical research studies

I. Attitude and motivation in a bilingual context

In Canada, English and French are the official languages. Dörnyei (2001, p. 15) writes that Canada is “one of the *rare* bilingual locations in the world” [emphasis added]. Thus, as he concluded, the competition between English and French has been exceptionally strong.

Tremblay and Gardner (1995) propose a structural model of motivation to describe French language learning phenomena in

Canada. That is to say, this model explains what variables affect the French language achievement among Canadian students.

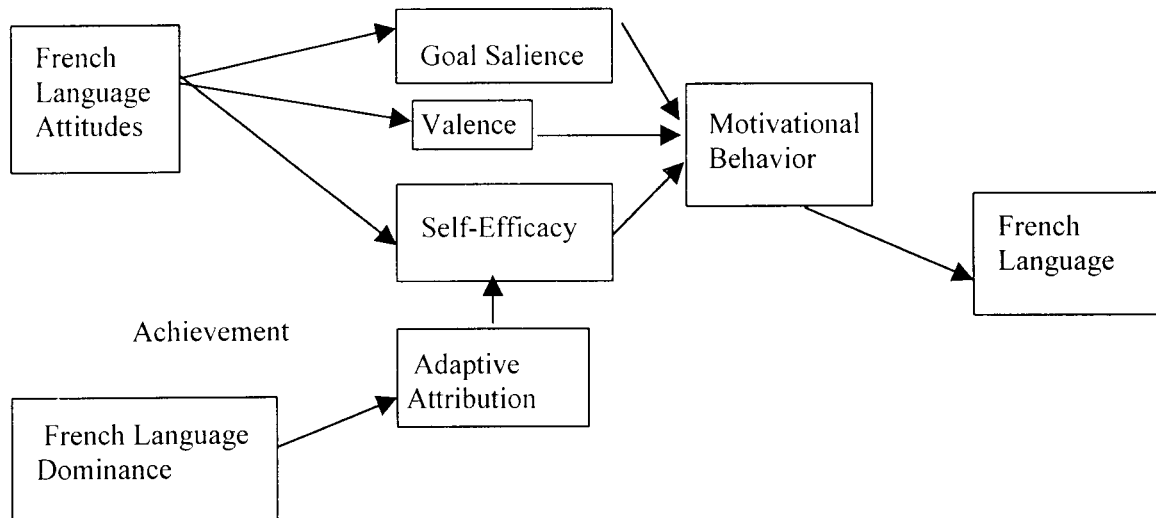


Figure 1: Tremblay and Gardner's model of motivation (1995)

The above model contains seven variables that are used to predict French language achievement: (1) language attitudes, (2) goal salience, (3) valence, (4) self-efficacy, (5) adaptive attributions, (6) motivational behavior, and (7) French language dominance.

Language attitudes can be defined as reactions and feelings toward French language, French class, French people and French culture. Goal salience refers to the degree to which students express specific and distinctive goals associated with studying French. Valence refers to the degree to which the students are drawn toward the learning of French, consisting of attitudes toward learning French and desire to learn it. Self-efficacy can be seen as the students' beliefs in their own capacity to reach a certain level of achievement. Adaptive attributions assume that future behavior is in part determined by the

perceived causes of past events. That is, the students may attribute their success or failure to their own ability, luck, or context when language learning takes place. Motivational behavior refers to the level of motivational intensity, attention, and persistence. French language dominance is the other variable included in this model because of the bilingual situation in Canada. It refers to the use of French by the participants as a primary language.

Tremblay and Gardner (1995) tested this model with 75 secondary school students in Ontario, Canada. They used the method of self-reporting called the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to collect data for each variable, except French language achievement which was identified by scores on French essays and final course grades. The Linear Structural Relationship (LISREL) technique was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that attitudes

toward French, French language dominance, and French language achievement were significantly related. Attitudes toward French were significantly related to the three variables —goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy. These three variables were also found to significantly affect motivational behavior. Furthermore, French language dominance was found to significantly influence adaptive attributions and adaptive attributions to self-efficacy.

In sum, French language achievement was influenced by motivational behavior. In other words, in order to predict the success in learning French in Canada, motivational behavior is counted as one of the main variables. Motivational behavior is socially and psychologically complex influenced by several variables, especially language attitudes which were found to be related to motivational behavior in a significant manner.

II. Attitude and motivation in a monolingual context

In the U.S., English is the official language. Less commonly taught languages

such as Chinese and Japanese are considered as foreign languages. In Pennsylvania, at Falk elementary school, a laboratory school at the University of Pittsburgh, students study Japanese as a foreign language. The students study Japanese with a well-trained native speaker beginning in kindergarten for 15 minutes a day, 7 days a week.

Tremblay and Gardner's structural model of motivation was modified by Wudthayagorn (2000) to see if the attitude and the motivation of the students who studied Japanese as a foreign language affected their Japanese language achievement. In the modified model of motivation, six variables were included: (1) language attitudes, (2) goal salience, (3) valence, (4) self-efficacy, (5) adaptive attributions, and (6) motivational behavior. Unlike Canada and because of the monolingual context in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the variable "language dominance" was not taken into account. Therefore, the modified model of motivation used in a monolingual context can be displayed below.

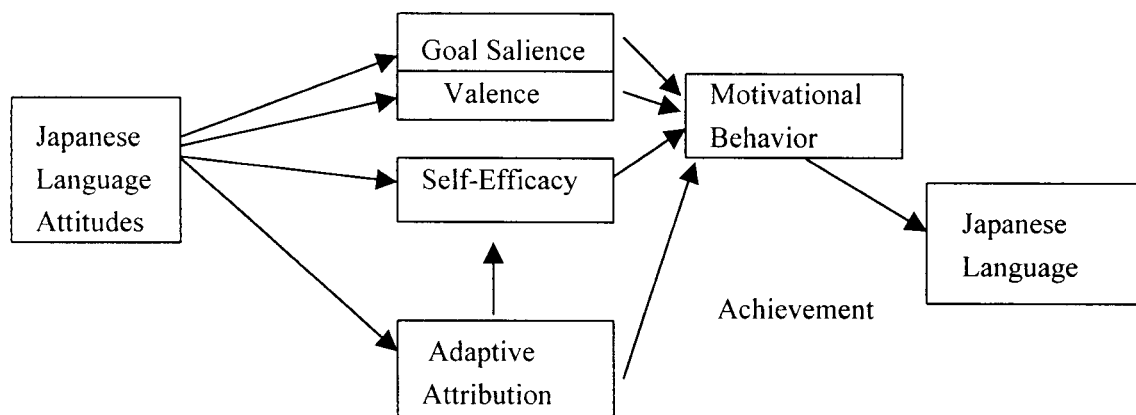


Figure 2: The modified model of motivation

While Tremblay and Gardner tested their model with secondary school students, Wudthayagorn (2000) tested this model with 82 American elementary school students at Falk school. The modified AMTB was used to collect the data regarding Japanese language attitudes, goal salience, valence, self-efficacy, adaptive attribution, and motivational behavior. Japanese language achievement was indicated by the final grades at the end of the school year in combination with aggregate scores on the Stanford FLOSEM (Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix), developed by Padilla and Sung (1999). The LISREL technique was also used to analyze the modified model of motivation.

The analysis revealed that Japanese language attitudes were significantly related to goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy. Valence and self-efficacy were significantly related to motivational behavior. In addition, goal salience was not significantly related to motivational behavior. Furthermore, adaptive attributions were not significantly related to self-efficacy. Interestingly, although there was a weak positive relationship between motivational behavior and Japanese language achievement, this relationship was not significant.

Significant relationships As mentioned, significant relationships between Japanese language attitudes and goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy were found. Thus, Japanese language attitudes tend to influence goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy in a positive way. Also, valence and self-efficacy appeared to influence motivational behavior in a positive way.

Therefore, based on these findings, it seems conclusive that if Falk elementary school students have positive attitudes toward the Japanese language, they appear to

have clear and focused goals in Japanese language learning—as referred to goal salience, as well as put value on the study of Japanese—as referred to valence, and at the same time, realize their language learning ability—as referred to self-efficacy. Moreover, if the students put more value on studying of Japanese and realize their language learning ability, they show a positive motivational behavior towards learning Japanese. More specifically, they show motivational intensity, attention, and persistence during the course of learning Japanese.

Non-significant relationships Unlike Tremblay and Gardner's model of motivation (1995), the modified model in Wudthayagorn's study (2000) demonstrated some non-significant relationships. As mentioned, goal salience was not significantly related to motivational behavior. The possible explanation is that although the students have clear and focused goals, they may not behave relevantly to the goals. Or the linkages between goal salience and motivational behavior are not established in the classroom (Ames, 1992).

Concerning a non-significant relationship between adaptive attributions and self-efficacy, several researchers (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1991; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995) explain that adaptive attributions go through developmental changes. Thus, because adaptive attributions are in the stage of developmental change, it may be difficult to find a relationship to other variables. Moreover, Stipek (1993) explains that young children commonly have inaccurate perceptions of causality. That is, the students may be unable to reason accurately why they succeed in or fail to study languages.

Interestingly enough, the relationship between motivational behavior and Japanese language achievement was not found. Put differently, in a monolingual context, it is inconclusive how attitude and motivation affect language achievement. This point, however, needs more clarification.

Statistically, with a smaller sample size in Tremblay and Gardner's study (1995), a significant relationship between motivational behavior and French language achievement was found. The sample size in this study was a bit larger than that of Tremblay and Gardner's study (1995). Thus, the sample size may not be the main reason contribution to any non-statistical significance.

As mentioned previously, the participants in this study were elementary school students who studied Japanese as a foreign language. They were younger than those in Tremblay and Gardner's study (1995); and furthermore, they studied Japanese in a monolingual context where it was quite difficult to find native speakers of Japanese to interact with regularly. The secondary students in Tremblay and Gardner's study (1995) used French as the primary language and were put in a bilingual context. Thus, the contexts of learning languages seem to play a role.

Language learning contexts & attitude and motivation

Based on the two empirical research studies, it seems that in different language learning contexts, attitude and motivation function differently in child language learning.

In a bilingual context (e.g., learning French in Canada, learning Malay or English in Singapore), children should express more positive attitudes and should be more motivated because they can interact with

native speakers everyday and they are able to realize practical reasons in learning other languages. Or, because of everyday interaction and practical reasons, they may express a more positive attitude and are more motivated. In this case, the integrative motivation or integrativeness may be apparent.

Put differently, in this context "integrativeness" is highlighted. It is considered as "(a) positive affect towards the other language community" (Gardner, 1983). Therefore, with such consideration, integrativeness, language learning context, and language achievement are closely linked.

In a monolingual context (e.g., learning Japanese in the U.S., learning English in Thailand), children may have a less positive attitude and may be less motivated because they do not see real and practical reasons in learning the language and/or they cannot find frequent opportunities to use the foreign language. Thus, because of impractical reasons and less frequent opportunities, they may have a less positive attitude and may be less motivated. More specifically, integrativeness is minimal in a monolingual context.

Likewise, Ely (1986) questions whether Gardner's notion of attitude and motivation is adequate to capture the full scope of students' language motivation in the foreign language context.

In the next section, based on these two empirical research studies, pedagogical and research implications will be discussed.

Pedagogical and research implications

We have seen that in different contexts (i.e., a monolingual and a bilingual context), attitude and motivation affect language achievement differently. Strictly speaking,

in the context where students learn foreign languages, their integrative motivation may not be rigorous enough because they have few opportunities to interact with native speakers on a regular basis.

Moreover, Hatho (1999) states that the context of a foreign language classroom is an environment for language motivation which is different from that of a second language classroom. Hatho (1999, p. 37) writes that Gardner and his colleagues consider the motivation to learn a language as a socio-psychological phenomenon, closely related to and influenced by the social context in which language learning takes place. Thus, in different language learning contexts, socio-psychological factors such as attitude and motivation play a role in child language learning in different ways and magnitudes.

However, it doesn't mean that they cannot achieve in their language study. Other factors that language teachers can manipulate such as teaching techniques and classroom conditions may help students to learn better. In a monolingual context, the classroom appears to be a significant place for students to learn a foreign language.

Dörnyei (2001, p. 29) has suggested a motivational teaching practice for language teachers that, I believe, can lead to a good classroom condition; thus, it can possibly enhance students' attitudes and motivation. Dörnyei's notion of a motivational teaching practice is process-oriented involving four components.

First, the teachers create the basic motivational conditions consisting of appropriate teacher behaviors, a friendly and supportive atmosphere, and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms. Second, teachers generate initial motivation by, for example, enhancing the students'

foreign languages-related values and attitudes, increasing the students' expectancy of success, making the teaching materials appropriate to the students, and creating realistic learner beliefs. Third, the teachers maintain and protect the students' motivation by, for example, making learning stimulating and enjoyable, presenting tasks in a motivating way, setting specific learner goals, and protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence. Fourth, the teachers encourage positive retrospective self-evaluation by, for example, promoting motivational feedback and offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner.

Besides pedagogical implications, research implications comprise two points. As stated earlier, this paper mentions two empirical research studies on attitude and motivation in relation to language achievement. Methodologically, Wudthayagorn (2000) tested the applicability of the model of motivation as proposed by Tremblay and Gardner (1995). While they tested their model in a bilingual context, Wudthayagorn (2000) modified the model and tested in a monolingual context. Thus, it is interesting to see in other language learning settings (e.g., learning English in Thailand or in Singapore) how their model of motivation still works. Additionally, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) greatly emphasized integrative/instrumental motivation in their study. Future researchers may enhance the scope of motivation by including other aspects of motivation appropriate to the context. For example, one may use or include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and then see how such attitude and motivation affect language achievement.

The Author

Jirada Wudthayagorn is a lecturer of English at Maejo University, Thailand. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees (Educational Research) from Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. She was also trained in Linguistics and Sociolinguistics in the U.S. She finished her Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2000, specialized in foreign language education. Her research interest includes sociolinguistics, language policy, language assessment, and teacher education. She can be reached at jirada@mju.ac.th

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