Motivation in Language Teaching and Learning :
A Critical Analysis of Recent Theory and Research.

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Abstract This paper is an attempt to show that, in the area of motivation and language learning, there is a gap between theory and research, on the one hand, and its practical application, on the other hand. Surveying some of the literature on motivation we find that ideas on motivation differ amongst theorists and educators in general educational psychology and in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Foreign Language Learning (FLL). An attempt is made to show why it has been difficult to apply theory to the learning situation and why it is important to remain open-minded and aware of the learning environment when trying to apply motivational theory to particular situations. Implications for language teaching and learning in Japan are also considered.

"Most language teachers will agree that the motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language." (McDonough 1986, 148)

Introduction

Language teachers often use the word 'motivation' when explaining the relative success or failure of an activity, a lesson, materials, a course, a particular student, groups of students or all students in the class. It is seen to be of vital importance in all forms of learning. More often than not, the teacher only becomes interested in the concept of learner motivation when there is a lack of it, which manifests itself as a behavioural problem or the failure of students to meet the expectations of the teacher. In Japan especially, motivation is often seen as the greatest problem or obstacle to language learning.

However, if asked to explain what they mean by 'motivation,' teachers would probably give a wide variety of definitions. McDonough (p 149) gives some examples

of concepts which are associated with the use of this term: energy, willingness to learn, perseverance, interest, enjoyment of lessons, incentives, benefits of knowing the language. One can think of other examples, but the point is that for many teachers motivation remains a vague and general, though very important, concept.

The vagueness with which many teachers use the term 'motivation' may not be a major problem, especially if individual teachers have their own interpretation of the term, understand the problems a lack of it might present, and have some ideas of how to deal with those problems. However, confusion and misunderstanding do exist I think, especially as researchers, writers and teacher-trainers have studied and used the term in a variety of ways. This paper is an attempt to bring together some of the main writings on the topic and to clarify the concept for teachers. In addition, the limitations of recent theory and research, as well as the implications for language teaching in Japan will be discussed. Despite, or maybe because of, the widespread acceptance of its importance, motivation in language teaching and learning is an area which many teachers avoid, out of feelings of ignorance or impotence, or a lack of motivation on their own part. There is a great need for clarification of the term 'motivation': what it is, what factors are involved and what individual teachers and educators can do.

Ideas of Motivation

A look at some of the contexts in which the term 'motivation' is used would illustrate my point about the variety of interpretations it has:

ⅰ) In Hubbard et al. (1983) the only index entry for motivation refers to "we must provide *motivation* for Student A to ask the question; we must arrange it so that he *wants* to find out the answer." (p 199, *italics* the authors).

ⅱ) From O'Malley and Chamot (1990) "Motivation is probably the most important characteristic that students bring to a learning task. Motivation, or the will to learn,..." (p 160).

iii) In Oxford (1990) "More highly motivated learners use a significantly greater range of appropriate strategies than do less motivated learners. Motivation is related to language learning purpose..." (p 13).

iv) Spolsky (1989) schematically describes a model of Second Language Learning in which the "Social context leads to Attitudes (of various kinds) which appear in the learner as Motivation..." (p 28).

v) Gardner (1985) defines his use of the term : "Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language." (p 10) .

These examples give us different interpretations of motivation as being : in the learner ; provided by the teacher ; derived ultimately from the social context ; related to purpose ; and a combination of factors. These are not necessarily contradictory, but this variety of views from which motivation is looked at, is not helpful for the teacher interested in understanding their students' lack of motivation, rather than just using it as an excuse when a problem arises. In addition, many writers and textbooks on language learning don't even mention the term.

Cognitive Theories of Motivation

It would be useful, I think, to step back to general educational psychology for a look at recent theory and research on motivation. Cognitive theories of motivation, which stress the importance of peoples' conscious thoughts or experiences over the unconscious, basic drives or needs of behaviourist theories, have dominated recent thinking. This stress on conscious thoughts gives motivation three main aspects : goals, cognition and behaviour. These three concepts will be referred to when we look at recent thinking and studies, so we should clarify what we mean by them.

There are a number of ways in which we can look at *goals*. These include two distinctions : (1) long-term and short-term, and (2) Maehr's (1989) division into mastery goals, where the performance of others is irrelevant, such as achieving a

certain level on a test, and performance goals, where one's performance is evaluated against others, such as passing an entrance examination. Cognitions may include choices, values, attitudes, expectations, attributions, self-evaluations, which is the personal experience, for example, the choice to study a language and the effort involved, would include cognitions of the value or usefulness of the subject, one's attitude to the language and the culture of the speakers, attribution's of one's ability based on past experience, and expectations of learning or improvement. Behaviour can be looked at in terms of persistence, activity level, decision, and performance.

Kinds of Motivation

There is a human tendency to divide things, people or ideas, into groups. Taking this tendency to its humourous extreme we could say that there are two kinds of people : those who put people into two categories and those who don't. This liking for categorisation may be natural and/or useful, but it can be problematical when applied inappropriately. For example, the Male/Female distinction seems natural and has its uses, but we are all aware of its inherent dangers. Motivational theory hasn't escaped this tendency to bisect and has its fair share of dualities. The value, usefulness and danger of these divisions is an issue which will be considered here.

Apart from the divisions of goals we saw above, into long-term and short-term, and into mastery and performance, the first distinction we meet is that between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This distinction has been generally accepted by educators and refers to the source of motivation. A simple example would be playing tennis for the fun of it or playing for money, though the simple division becomes fuzzy when we think of professional players enjoying their jobs. Related to language learning we might find the same mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the Japanese student who likes learning English but is also studying to pass the university entrance examinations.

The second duality we come across in the literature is that between instrumental and integrative motivation, as proposed by social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1972). They suggest that the motivation is instrumental "if the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian values of linguistic achievement," and integrative "if the student wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way." (p 3). This interpretation of motivation as a duality of orientations towards the language is the basis of their sociopsychological theory of language learning, and Gardner and Lambert have been largely responsible for much of the increased interest in the role of motivation in second language and foreign language learning. This increased interest in, and study of, language learning in its social context has been a major benefit to the areas of study of both language learning and social psychology.

Brown (1987) (p 117) gives a useful illustration of a matrix setting out these two divisions as it was presented by Kathleen Bailey in a lecture:

	INTRINSIC	EXTRINSIC
Integrative	L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e. g., for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e. g., Japanese parents send kids to Japanese-language school) [in U.S.]
Instrumental	L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e. g., for a career)	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2 (e. g., corporation sends Japanese businessman to U.S. for language training)

This matrix is useful in showing the difference in viewpoint which separates the

two distinctions, though the idea of an Intrinsic Instrumental motivation appears contradictory to the 'pure' idea of intrinsic motivation as one in which there is no external goal, generated by either the teacher or the student. Perhaps it's time to look at these different ideas of motivation more closely with the purpose of assessing their applicability to teachers, course designers, administrators and educators in Japan.

Intrinsic/Extrinsic

Different interpretations of the division of motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic can be seen in the literature and this does have implications for teaching. Firstly, there is Harmer's (1983) definition of extrinsic motivation as being that "which is concerned with factors outside the classroom," and intrinsic motivation as being that "which is concerned with factors inside the classroom." (p 3). This definition limits intrinsic motivation to tasks or short-term goals provided by the teacher and is similar to Hubbard's use of the term in ⅰ) above. It doesn't consider the possibility of students bringing strong intrinsic motivation to the classroom. The focus here is on motivation applied to teaching methodology. Increasing motivation involves creating situations in the classroom with real communication with a purpose, for example, information gap activities. The Communicative Approach, the name given to this approach to teaching, has as one of its main goals the involvement of students in real communicative tasks. Pre-reading or pre-listening activities aimed at relating the material to the students and thus making them more motivated to understand the material, usually 'authentic' in the sense of not specially designed for the classroom, are other examples of this idea of motivation. This is the meaning of motivation, which Harmer inappropriately calls intrinsic. It would be more appropriate to call it task-related motivation or classroom motivation. Another example of this type of classroom or task-related motivation would be Granger's (1992) Metaplan techniques. The goals here are the short-term, classroom, mastery goals of achieving the task or communicating purposefully ; the cognitions of the

students would be feelings of achievement, enjoyment, personal involvement and competence ; the behaviour, ideally, from the teacher's point of view, active and goal-oriented.

This idea of intrinsic motivaion as something that the teacher is solely responsible for, in terms of teaching method and materials, is very different to Kathleen Bailey's example in the matrix above where intrinsic motivation is 'in' the student. Bailey's example of intrinsic motivation includes 'internalised' goals of originally external ones, for example, a career or an examination. In her sense, extrinsic or 'external' means someone else's motivation. This, in turn, is different to the interpretation of intrinsic motivation of Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989), who have a 'pure' definition of intrinsic motivation as "When a person does something because he or she gets a reward directly from doing the activity itself, rather than because of a reward that comes after," (p 52). For Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura the importance in difference in the two kinds of motivation is not where the activity takes place (inside or outside the classroom), or who generates the goal (the person doing the activity or someone else), but the experience or state of consciousness, which they describe as "so enjoyable as to be *autotelic* ("having its goal within itself")" (p 52 italics the authors'). The two interpretations of intrinsic motivation of Bailey and of Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura are both 'in' the actor, but the goals and cognitions are different. Bailey's interpretation consists of previously external goals, which are satisfied after the event, which have now been internalised through socialization. The cognitions of the person are ones of later expectations and achievement. On the other hand, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura's interpretation excludes any goals which are achieved later. The only goal is one of pure satisfaction with the chosen activity. Cognitions here are ones of immediate pleasure and enjoyment ; fulfilment is almost hedonistic, and not related to achievement.

A definition of intrinsic motivation is considered to be important as it is widely

considered in general educational psychology to be more beneficial to learning and have longer-lasting effects than extrinsic motivation. Supporting this notion, Lepper and Hoddell (1989) argue that there are negative effects of extrinsic motivation on both behaviour and learning. Their notion of motivation is similar to that of Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura. Their study was applied to children, and this I feel may account for some of the difference in interpretation in intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. If we see these two interpretations as being on the same scale of internal motivation, but at opposite ends, one, Bailey's, includes the internalised goals of the adolescent and adult, while the other, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura's, is limited to the child's goal of 'pure' satisfaction. These different interpretations of intrinsic motivation along a continuum is acceptable, I feel, if we define it broadly as motivation which is satisfied 'internally'. We can therefore refer to another division in goals, innate ones and acquired ones. 'Learning for its own sake', seems to satisfy the goals of curiosity and achieving competence. Jerome Bruner, as claimed in Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990), sees these as innate, but others may consider them acquired. 'Learning for one's own sake', on the other hand, seems to satisfy the generally accepted acquired goals of achievement and approval. We will assume for the purposes of this paper, that these two 'internal' interpretations of intrinsic motivation have the same, or a very similar, effect on behaviour. As insisted above, of greatest importance are the feelings of the adult or child. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (p 48) suggest the important things are 'novelty', 'curiosity', 'the need to feel in charge of their own actions', 'autonomy' and 'self-determination'. Some, if not all, of these feelings would exist in either of the interpretations.

Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura's study is of what they call the 'flow experience'. This is a state of consciousness characterised by people feeling : "(1) that all of their minds and bodies are completely involved in what they are doing, (2) that their concentration is very deep, (3) that they know what they want to do, (4) that they

know how well they are doing, (5) that they are not worried about failing, (6) that time is passing very quickly, and (7) that they have lost the ordinary sense of self-consciousness..." (p 54). They argue that this experience is an important source of intrinsic motivation and exists when one's perception of the challenge of an activity is equal to one's subjective estimate of one's skills. This study of cognitions and states of consciousness may be very useful for exploring areas of learning or study that students find enjoyable with the aim of increasing intrinsic motivation. This, I feel, is a very important role for language teachers in the situation sometimes referred to as TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason), an acronym used by Abbott and Wingard (1981), and with students who have just achieved their main short-term goal, and are thus in a motivational limbo, for example, first year university and college students in Japan.

Suggestions for increasing Intrinsic Motivation

Lepper and Hoddell, in the study mentioned above, also claim the possibility of negating the negative effects of extrinsic motivation and increasing intrinsic motivation, which gives university language teachers in Japan some hope after the hellish extrinsic motivation of the entrance examinations. A good example of the success and appropriateness of this is given in Fox (1990), where he applies it to reading. Extensive Reading is an obvious skill area in which to increase the intrinsic motivation of students. It is an area in which choice and some level of control exists.

In general educational psychology, there has been an abundance of theories on Motivation. Suggestions about applying them and the research findings in the classroom are also numerous. Good and Brophy (1990) list four major dimensions synthesised by Keller from these theories. They are : "(1) interest, or the extent to which the learner's curiosity is aroused and sustained over time ; (2) relevance, or the learner's perception that instruction is related to personal needs or goals ; (3) expectancy, or the learner's perceived likelihood of achieving success through personal

control, and (4) satisfaction, which refers to the learner's intrinsic motivations and responses to extrinsic rewards." (p 408). These practical factors should be kept in mind when teachers are looking for ways to increase motivation.

Zamel (1992) arguing for the integration of reading and writing both ways, writing for reading and reading for writing, differentiates between two views of Reading : (1) 'The Making of Meaning' with the reader interacting with the text, as opposed to the more widespread form of reading classes 'The Finding of Meaning.' The type of writing she argues for suggests another obvious area for increasing intrinsic motivation, journal writing. Her argument for the natural togetherness of these two skills in the learning process is convincing and suggests to me the idea that part of the natural curiosity of children to learn language is this flowing back and forth of feedback from different skills, which is lost in non-integrated classes. However, my main point here is that journal writing is another area which can increase intrinsic motivation. Like, extensive reading, it involves 'fluency' over 'accuracy', it can provide students with some choice and control, and can give them some satisfaction.

This idea of developing intrinsic motivation in the learner aims more at mastery rather than performance goals. It is long-term when compared to the motivation of classroom methodology, but still short-term if compared to the ultimate goal of becoming fluent in the target language. The associated cognitions are various, ranging from immediate satisfaction to expectancy of later achievement, but it is characterised by choice, challenge, interest and self-determination. The behaviours aimed for would include the decision to do the activity by oneself, persisting at it, returning to it, and finishing it at a chosen level of competence.

So far we have looked at the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and some of the different interpretations of 'intrinsic' and their associated ideas. We have also looked at a couple of suggested ways of increasing intrinsic motivation

with the assumption that this is a 'better' kind of motivation. However, extrinsic motivation should not be regarded, as it often is, as a necessary evil. It has a very important role to play. As has been seen, extrinsic goals may eventually become internalised. In fact they may sometimes be necessary to start off certain behaviours, which then prove to be satisfying and thus become intrinsically motivating. Acquired intrinsic goals, which were originally aimed at for extrinsic purposes, may be as important as, or for some people, more important than, purely, pleasurable 'intrinsic' goals. Extrinsic goals may also be more appropriate in certain situations. What is accepted here is the importance of some intrinsic motivation, especially in the absence of, or sudden removal of, extrinsic goals.

Integrative/Instrumental

It's time to turn our attention to the other major duality in motivation in foreign or second language learning, integrative and instrumental motivation. Gardner (1985) makes an important point when he insists that "second language learning is a social phenomena, and *it is important to consider carefully the conditions under which it takes place.*" (p 2, italics mine.). He has been one of the pioneers, along with Lambert, of research on attitudes and motivation in second language learning. Their contribution to the study of second and foreign language learning covers many areas, which include : the importance of attitude and orientation to study of the target language ; how individual differences in this attitude and orientation are independent of, and may be more important than, differences in aptitude and intelligence in second language learning success ; the understanding that these attitudes towards the language and the community of speakers of that language are developed in the home and supported by the attitudes in the general community; and the obvious fact that language study is very different to study in other academic subjects. Their division of motivation has been so widely accepted by language learning theorists and researchers that they are often the only kinds of motivation which are considered. Ironically, this popularity can be the source of problems,

especially if this duality of integrative and instrumental motivation is applied exclusively and/or inappropriately without carefully considering the conditions, as Gardner has always insisted on. (See the italics in the quote above). If we look at the conditions in Japan, we will find that for a large number of students English is mainly an academic subject. They learn *about* the language at school, not how to *use* the language. Of course, it is a language that they can also use at some level ; most would be at a kind of 'false beginner' or high beginner level. However, Gardner and Lambert's duality of kinds of motivation may not be the most productive to apply to these students, especially from the point of view of their teachers at university or college, after their extrinsic goal of passing the entrance examination has been achieved. At this stage students may seem to be completely unmotivated. Concentrating on their attitudes or integrative or instrumental motivation may be depressing and pointless. Berwick and Ross (1989) give a good account of the social conditions of English language learning of first-year students at colleges and universities in Japan. It suggests that teachers in these situations have an important role to play as counsellors and administrators of short term goals. However, without ever mentioning the idea of extrinsic and intrinsic goals, the impression one gets is that the integrative or instrumental duality is the only way of looking at the issue. Methodological issues are not mentioned with the implication that it's not important to the motivation of students' language learning. Pure intrinsic motivation of the pleasurable kind, e. g., extensive reading, is also not mentioned. This may have been a deliberate limitation in the study to long-term goals, which is the focus of the integrative/instrumental duality. As Gardner (1985) writes "integrative and instrumental orientations represent ultimate goals for achieving the more immedi- ate goal of learning the second language." (p 11). However, I'd like to suggest that by focussing only on the integrative/instrumental view of motivation we limit our view of what we, as language teachers, can do.

This danger of teachers and educators ignoring other valid forms of motivation

is not the only limitation of the integrative/instrumental duality. Gardner and Lambert first proposed that integrative motivation was more important than instrumental motivation. However, there have been different interpretations of what is integrative or instrumental, and different findings from their's, in studies in other countries, in terms of the suggested dominance of integrative over instrumental motivation. It has also been suggested that there are differences in studying a language as a second language and as a foreign language. In addition, valid arguments exist for the special case of English as an international language, where integration into a culture or community would be a completely different concept than for any other language. The 'community' here for many is not limited to the native speakers of the English speaking world, but to anyone they need to communicate to or wish to communicate with.

Cook (1991) mentions three goals which have been found which do not seem to fit this duality. These are travel, seeking new friendships and acquiring knowledge. Dornyei (1990) also points to these and other objections against this limitation of motivation into two categories. Firstly, he refers to one other major motivation, an assimilative motivation, which has been proposed as different to integrative motivation. Then following Gardner's insistence on the role of contextual factors in language learning, he tries to find the applicable parts of Gardner's duality noting the different contexts: Gardner's original SLA, second language acquisition, environment, and his FLL, foreign language learning, context in Hungary. His findings may be relevant for some situations in Japan. He claims two other motivational factors, which are part of general motivational psychology, but have been ignored by language learning theory. In his study these were: the need for achievement, and attributions about past failures. This need for achievement, I feel, can also be interpreted as an intrinsic motivation, but we should resist doing this as Dornyei's point is like mine, that the classification of kinds of motivations comes with the danger of missing important information which doesn't fit the classification.

Dornyei also introduces the idea of level of proficiency as being an important factor in the kind of motivation which is most 'successful'. He suggests that to get past the intermediate level, that is to really 'learn the language', one needs to be integratively motivated. This is interesting given that Gardner seems to assume that this, 'really learning the language', is the only goal of language learning. If one doesn't reach this absolute level one has not achieved the goal of language learning. In this sense Dornyei's findings are similar to Gardner's. On the other hand, Dornyei also proposes, that "learners with a high level of instrumental motivation and need for achievement are more likely than others to attain an intermediate level of proficiency in the target language." (p 70). This, I feel, is a very important finding, and an obvious consideration. Language learning is not an absolute, 'all or nothing', achievement. One's ultimate goal, as Gardner puts it, can be achieved at varying levels of the target language. This is so, whether we think of goals as intrinsic or extrinsic, mastery or performance, instrumental or integrative. One of the main roles of teachers is to help students set achievable goals, long-term and short-term. Gorsuch (1991) suggests one way of helping students do this. College and university teachers and course designers should go even further by building mastery goals into their programs to balance the performance goals that already exist in terms of the grades students receive.

As a way of looking at the implications for Japan of some of the main points of motivation as discussed above, reference will be made to two published accounts of English Language Teaching and Learning in Japan. Firstly, Ishida (1992) covering a lecture by John Foley from the British Council, reports his opinions on 'What's Wrong With English Teaching in Japan'. These opinions included the psychological problems of 'lack of motivation', 'self-consciousness' and 'determination'. His 'lack of motivation' is seen from an interpretation of the social context of Japanese society as very closed, and the negative or ambivalent attitudes that this may

engender. He takes a sociopsychological perspective of motivation similar to Gardner's. His meaning of determination and self-consciousness, I think, refers to students focus' on performance goals in the classroom and their fear of making mistakes in the language. He also suggests possibilities for change at many levels, including methodology, textbooks and class sizes, but the psychological problems seem to be the deepest and most difficult to change. It shows the gap, especially in sociopsychological theory, between understanding the problem and producing practical ideas for change.

The other analysis of English Language Teaching and Learning in Japan is that of Reischauer (1988). He also looks at the difficulty Japanese have in learning a foreign language. He points to Japan's "isolationist attitude of feeling themselves to be unique," (p 60) the advancement of Japanese culture and the linguistic differences. His main point, though, is addressed to young people. In a sense he is telling them to become more integrated into the world community by becoming world citizens. He tells young Japanese to find out how they can play an active role in helping or providing aid to foreign countries. He stresses the need to be able to speak English in order to do this. This is, I believe, another very important point for language teaching. The recent popularity of Global Studies suggests that language teachers are in need of appropriate materials and ideas with which to motivate students, by giving them a very important reason for learning English. Even if they don't feel driven to participate actively, the information students can receive from Global Education materials should provide satisfaction for students' curiousity, and feelings of wanting to learn 'something', other than aspects of the language, through English. The trend towards 'content' teaching provides this.

In summary, the ideas and theories about motivation and the research studies referred to are varied and sometimes confusing. They do provide some understanding of the phenomenon of motivation from different viewpoints. There is a danger

though of missing valuable ideas if one is not open in one's mind towards different ways of viewing it. The various theories from general psychology are too numerous to apply together, and the research and ideas in social psychology and language learning provide understanding on a level often difficult to apply in practical teaching situations. Educators need to look carefully at their particular situations and use some intuition about the needs or wants of their own students.

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