

A Critical Appraisal of Language Learning Motivation Theories*

Faris Keblawi

Al-Qasemi Academy

Research into second language learning motivation (LLM) has recently proliferated in many directions reflecting a growing appreciation of its role in the learning of other languages. But despite the plethora of research in the field, researchers are still pondering the very basic questions which have perplexed pioneer researchers in the field. This paper sheds light on the complexity of the concept of LLM through examining its multifaceted aspects and through critically appraising the *socioeducational model* and other three sets of major theories that have been developed for the purpose of understanding how the concept works and what affects it. The theories reviewed here are *the self-determination theory*, *goal theories* and *attribution theory*. Towards the end, the paper discusses some innovative perspectives on LLM that should be considered in order to arrive at a more satisfying understanding of the concept.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that motivation plays a dominant role in educational settings and without it little if any learning can occur. Lack of motivation is one of the most challenging educational maladies for which teachers, educators and scholars seek effective remedies. But despite its unchallenged centrality in psychological and educational research, there is still little agreement on the nature of motivation and on how it relates to the myriad of concepts that has been linked to it. In addition, the concept has been subjected to multivalent interpretations that are largely affected by different cultural contexts. The complexity of motivation becomes less surprising if one recalls that it endeavours to 'explain nothing less than the reasons for human behaviour' (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006).

In the case of researching language learning motivation (LLM) in formal second and foreign language learning settings, it proves difficult to arrive at reasonable comprehension of how the concept works without appreciating the contributions of

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the many disciplines within which it was researched. Such disciplines include general, cognitive and social psychology; general, social and educational theories; in addition to sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and neurological theories. The problem, as Dörnyei (1996) asserts, is not the lack of theories to explain motivation but rather the abundance of approaches, theories and models.

Researchers still do not agree on what components make up motivation and the different roles that these components play—individual differences, situational differences, social and cultural factors, and cognition (Renchler, 1992; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998). McDonough (1981:143) refers to the term ironically, calling it a *dustbin* that is used to 'include a number of possibly distinct components, each of which may have different origins and different effects and require different classroom treatment'. Dörnyei (2001:7), though less ironical but equally sharp, maintains that researchers disagree about everything that relates to the concept of motivation; viewing it as no more than an obsolete umbrella that hosts a wide range of concepts that do not have much in common. A brief look at the history of the concept of motivation will offer a threshold for understanding the concept.

The origin of the concept

At its beginnings the concept was examined and understood within a behavioural framework trying to understand 'what moved a resting organism into a state of activity', with heavy reliance on concepts such as instinct, drive, need, energisation, and homeostasis (Weiner, 1990). It was considered too complex to investigate directly, and much experimental research conducted on animals was generalised to humans. Reward systems were the backbone of the approach for motivating individuals to show the desired behaviour (Williams & Bruden, 1997). This mechanical system of reward and punishment showed little relevance to educational settings and ignored the possible cognitive processes that individuals undergo; and thus, alternative understandings of motivation had to emerge.

New insights into the nature of motivation were brought about by the cognitive revolution that started in the 1960s. By the seventies it rendered irrelevant the

behavioural mechanical approaches to motivation which lost support in philosophy and proved ineffective (Locke, 1996). In the *cognitive developmental theory* laid down by Piaget, motivation is perceived as ‘a built-in unconscious striving towards more complex and differentiated development of the individual’s mental structures’ (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). With the advance of the cognitive approaches the field became more relevant to educational psychologists and the cognitive shift led to concentration on the individual’s role in his or her own behaviour (Weiner, 1994). In other words, there has been a shift toward focusing on *why* students choose to engage in academic tasks instead of focusing on what they do and the time they spend doing so as has been the case with the behaviourist approach (Rueda & Dembo, 1995). Concepts such as goal and level of aspiration, as well be discussed below, replaced the unconscious concepts of drive, instinct and the like. Individual differences were more highlighted with the introduction of psychological concepts like *anxiety*, *achievement needs* and *locus of control*. More cognitive concepts were developed during the seventies and eighties like *self-efficacy*, *learning helplessness* and *causal attributions*. However, the cognitive revolution in psychology was late to influence research on LLM since research in the field has developed independently. Up to the nineties, research into LLM was dominated by the *socioeducational model* developed by Gardner and associates.

The Socioeducational Model

Social psychologists were the first to initiate serious research on motivation in language learning because of their awareness of the social and cultural effects on L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2003). This interest was reflected in the appearance of a number of models that stressed the affective aspect of language learning including Krashen’s (1981) *Monitor Model* and Schumann’s (1986) *Acculturation Model*.

However, the most influential model of LLM in the early sixties through the eighties of the previous century was the one developed by Gardner and associates. The model came to be known as the *Socioeducational Model*. According to its founder, *Motivation* is a ‘combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable *attitudes* towards learning the language’ (Gardner, 1985:10). In his model, Gardner talked about two kinds of motivation, the *integrative* and the

instrumental, with much emphasis on the former. The *integrative motivation* refers to learners' desire to at least communicate or at most integrate (or even assimilate) with the members of the target language. The *instrumental motivation* refers to more functional reasons for learning the language such as getting a better job, a higher salary or passing an examination (ibid).

However, it was the integrative motivation that was most stressed by Gardner and it was in fact the backbone of his model (see figure 1). The role of attitudes towards the learned language, its speakers and the learning situation are all considered parts of the integrative motivation. In fact, the *integrative* aspect of the model appears in three different components: *integrative orientation*, *integrativeness*, and *integrative motivation*.

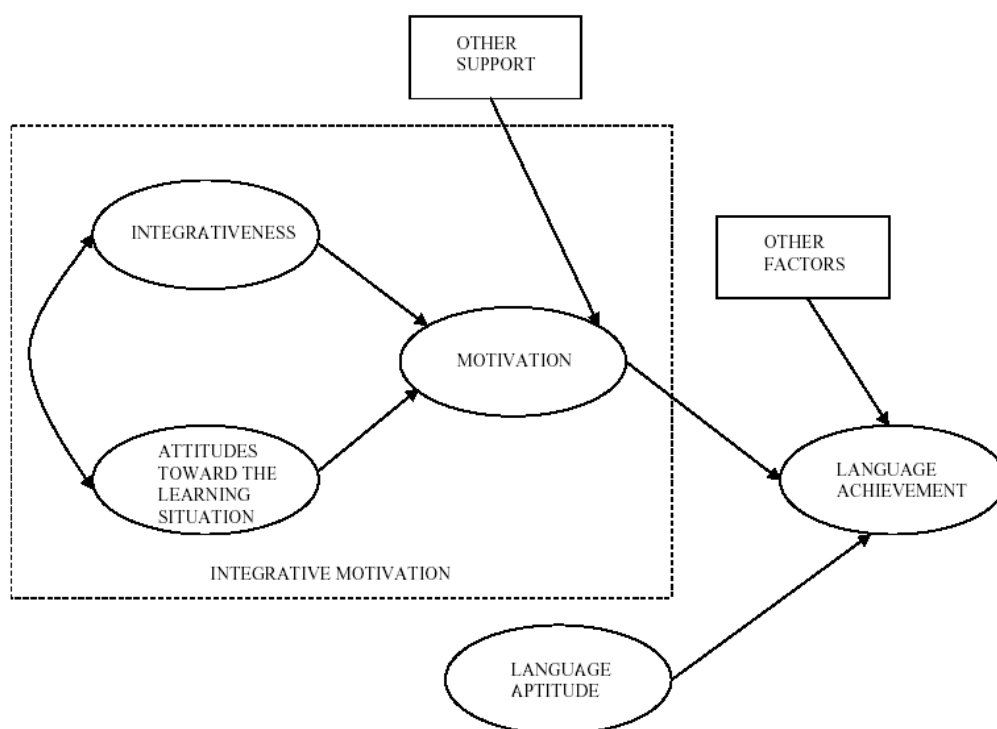


Figure 1 - A simple representation of the socioeducational model

Adopted from Gardner (2001b). The dotted square represents the borders of the integrative motivation

Masgoret and Gardner (2003) performed a comprehensive meta analysis on the studies conducted by Gardner and associates. The meta-analysis related to 75 studies of which 70 were correlational and only five were experimental. Masgoret and

Gardner demonstrated that the correlation between attitudes towards the learning situation, integrativeness, motivation, integrative orientation, and instrumental orientation, are all positively related to achievement in a second language. Masgoret & Gardner's conclusion remains, however, limited since most of the research they analysed and most of that in the field in general is correlational and the number of laboratory studies was limited; hence, drawing causal relationships between the concepts is not possible.

Limitations of the socioeducational model

It is possible to point at a number of serious limitations of the socioeducational model that has been outlined by many researchers in the field despite appreciating its contribution in researching and understanding LLM (e.g. Dörnyei, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; and Keblawi, 2006). Most criticism has been directed to the concept of integrative motivation.

- The socioeducational model focuses heavily on the integrative motivation and assigns a meagre role to the instrumental motivation or other types of motivation despite their importance.
- The concept of integrative motivation has been defined and applied in different ways and its components have varied. For example, the orientation to travel was considered instrumental by some but integrative by others.
- The very idea of 'integration' into the community of the target language poses serious hazards to learners' identity since successful learners are seen as those who relinquish their original identity and adopt a new one.
- Most research that was based on the socioeducational model was correlational and it falls short of establishing causal relationships between achievement and the different motivation variables investigated.
- In contexts in which the language is learned without direct contact with the speakers of the target language, the integrative motivation is rendered irrelevant since there is no social interaction with speakers of the target language.

- The model has little relevance to the formal learning context as it assigns a marginal role for teachers, materials, method and the like.

Despite the criticism on the socioeducational model and its concept of integrativeness, it is possible to see the relevance of the model as it continues to be considered by some scholars in the field (e.g. Dörnyei 2001, Lamb, 2004; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic; Kebabli, 2006). Some researchers made innovative insights into the concept claiming that with certain widely used languages and under certain circumstances, the integrative motivation can still play a crucial, though different role. For example, Kebabli (2006), found that in the case of Arab learners of English in Israel, some successful learners expressed a desire to terminate their 'attachment to the third world' and believed that English would be a useful tool for attaining this goal. In other words, they wanted to join the prestigious club of speakers of English around the world. In such contexts, English as Kachru (1986) argues, becomes not only a medium of communication, but provides a further global dimension to learners' identity.

Expanding the concept of *language* learning motivation: The cognitive revolution

The cognitive revolution in psychology gave birth to a respectable set of cognitive psychological theories on motivation. Three of these theories are currently prominent and are relevant, in different degrees, to LLM. They include *the self-determination theory; the attribution theory, and goal theory.*

The Self Determination Theory

The self-determination theory developed by Deci and associates postulates that '[t]o be self-determining means to experience a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's own actions' (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989:580). This is referred to as *autonomy*. The theory distinguishes between two kinds of motivations: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. The first refers to an individual's motivation to perform a particular activity because of *internal* rewards such as joy, pleasure and satisfaction of curiosity. Whereas in *extrinsic* motivation the individual expects an *extrinsic* reward such as

good grades or praise from others. In line with the notion of *autonomy* and *intrinsic motivation*, the self-determination theory offers a very interesting look at motivation by setting a different agenda for language teachers. Rather than focusing on how people (e.g. teachers in the classroom) can motivate others, the focus should be on ‘how people can create the conditions within which others can motivate themselves’ (ibid). Another concept that is fundamental to the self-determination theory is the concept of *amotivation* (Deci & Ryan, 2000:237). *Amotivation*, or *learned helplessness*, is the situation in which people lack the intention to behave. They see no relation between the efforts they make and the outcomes they get. This happens when they lack self efficacy or a sense of control on the desired outcome. In this case, the learner has no goal and thus possesses neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to perform the activity.

The intrinsic and extrinsic motives are classified into different subcategories. The intrinsic motivation (IM) could be one of three kinds: IM-Knowledge (the pleasure of knowing new things), IM-Accomplishment (the pleasure of accomplishing goals), and IM-Stimulation (the pleasure sensed when doing the task). The extrinsic motivation is classified along a continuum of three categories according to the extent to which the goals are self-determined (see Deci & Ryan, 2000; Noels, 2001b) *External regulation* refers to actions that individuals pursue and that are determined by sources that are external to the individual, such as tangible benefits and costs. If learning the language is made for such an external incentive and this incentive is removed the activity of learning will halt. The second, less external regulation, is *introjected regulation*, which refers to activities performed due to some external pressure that the individual has incorporated into the self. This is still not a self-determined activity since it has an external rather than an internal source. An example is a person who learns the language in order not to feel ashamed if he does not know it. At the end of the continuum, resides the *identified regulation*. Individuals who possess such a regulation are driven by personally relevant reasons, such as that the activity is important for achieving a valued goal. Individuals who learn an L2 because they think it is important for their educational development, for example, all fall within this category.

Noels and colleagues were focused on utilising the self-determination theory in researching LLM. Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand (2000) conclude after presenting the outcomes of some studies that there is some evidence that the distinction between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation has the utility to explain differences in outcomes. Other studies conducted by Noels and colleagues (Noels, 2001; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999, 2001) demonstrated that the intrinsic motivation is enhanced when teachers allow more autonomy to learners, are less perceived as controlling by them, and provide encouraging feedback. In their study, Noels et. al. (2000) demonstrated, among other things and using factor analyses, that the different subscales in the self-determination theory can be statistically distinguished and they reflect a self-determination continuum. In a later study, McIntosh & Kimberly (2004) found, among other things, a significant and positive association between *need for cognition* and self-determination in L2 learning. They concluded that ‘people who enjoy effortful thinking for its own sake also take an L2 for self-determined reasons (i.e., out of choice and pleasure)’.

However, Noels and her associates’ claims on the existence of a self-determination continuum face serious flaws. On the one hand, the distinctions that they make between the different extrinsic regulations and the different intrinsic motives are not theoretically clear. In addition, new recent research within the frame of the self-determination theory suggest that such a continuum does not exist (Vandergrift, 2005). Vandergrift found that ‘no distinct simplex pattern, reflecting a continuum of increasing self-determination [was] apparent’ and concluded that the self-determination framework as theorized by Noels and colleagues cannot be generalised for adolescent learners. Such a generalisation can only be made as to the broad categories of *extrinsic motivation*, *intrinsic motivation* and *amotivation*.

Examining the same motivation framework and challenging the very fundamentals of the self-determination theory, Vohs et. al. (2008) found that offering too many choices to individuals may lead to negative effects on self-regulation. It was found for example, that this might lead to less self regulation, less willingness to engage in an activity and less persistence on performance.

Goal theories

Goals are fundamental to the study of motivation but the definition of *goal* is not spared any complexity. Originally, the concept of goal has replaced that of need which was introduced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Dörnyei, 2001). There are four mechanisms by which goals affect individuals' performance:

- Goals serve a directive function as they direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from irrelevant activities
- Goals have an energising function and they help individuals regulate their effort to the difficulty of the task.
- Goals positively affect persistence.
- Goals affect action indirectly by leading to the arousal, discovery, and/or use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies.

(Locke & Latham 2002:706-7)

There are two goal theories that have been particularly influential in the study of motivation: the *goal setting theory* and the *goal orientation theory*. The goal setting theory was mainly developed by Locke and Latham (1990) within industrial and organizational psychology with frequent references to workplace settings (Pagliaro, 2002). According to the theory, people must have goals in order to act since human action is caused by purpose and for action to take place, goals have to be set and pursued by choice (Dörnyei, 1988). The theory suggests that goals have two aspects: internal and external. They are ideas (internal aspect), and they refer to the object or condition sought (external). Ideas serve as guides for obtaining the goals (Locke, 1996). The goal-setting theory suggests that there are three main characteristics of goals that cause them to differ: *difficulty*, *specificity* and *commitment*.

The strength of the goal setting theory is established on three fundamental ideas (Locke, 1996):

- it is philosophically sound for it is in line with the philosophical theories that assumes individuals' control of their actions;
- it is in line with the introspective evidence revealing that human action is normally purposeful; and
- it is practical

Early research on motivation that was conducted within the goal setting framework found, among other things, that goal-setting and performance are related; that goals affect the performance of the task, the energy expended, the strategies used and its duration and maintenance (see a review in Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). Within academic settings, a review made by Covington (2000) showed that the interaction between the social and academic goals that students bring to the classroom significantly affect the quality and duration of students' learning.

A number of researchers on LLM such as Oxford & Shearin (1994) and Dörnyei (1994) have embraced the goal setting theory in some of their works. Dörnyei incorporated the goal setting theory into his 1998 model on LLM. The appeal of the theory is not without genuine reasons. It offers measurable parameters and the possibility of autonomy for the student (Pagliaro, 2002). However, Pagliaro warns against a careless application of the theory that has developed within a workplace context on language learning. In the former context, work is needed for living whereas in the latter students are not subject to these needs.

Since mastering a language is not a goal to be achieved within a short time, Dörnyei (1994) suggests that planners set subgoals (*proximal subgoals*) that can be achieved within a short time. Such subgoals might have a powerful motivating function for they also provide learners with feedback on their progress. They can, once achieved, increase self-efficacy and motivation. Van Lier (1996:121), cited in Pagliaro (2002:20) warns against an exclusive focus on goals since concentration only on future goals, particularly the long-term goal of mastering the language, might distract teachers' attention from the fact that learners' intrinsic enjoyment and innate curiosity are both vital sources of motivation.

Unlike the *goal-setting theory*, the *goal orientation theory* was developed in a classroom context in order to explain children's learning and performance (Dörnyei, 2001). According to this theory, an individual's performance is closely related to his or her accepted goals. An important contribution of the theory resides in its distinction between two types of goal orientation (Ames & Archer, 1988; Ames, 1992): *performance vs. mastery (or learning)* orientations. Learners possessing the first orientation, are primarily concerned with looking good and capable, those possessing

the second are more concerned with increasing their knowledge and *being* capable. A rather interesting distinction is suggested by Dweck (1985:291), 'Put simply, with performance goals, an individual aims to look smart, whereas with the learning goals, the individual aims to becoming smarter'. A strategy called the *attunement strategy* based on the goal orientation theory in which teachers negotiate and discuss with students all aspect of the work proved successful in increasing language learners' motivation in primary schools in Netherlands and England (Hasting, 1992 in Williams & Burden (1997).

Attribution Theory

The attribution theory of student motivation was largely influential in the 1980s (Dörnyei, 2003). The uniqueness of the theory stems from its ability to link individuals' achievements to past experiences through the establishment of *causal* attributions as the mediating link (ibid). The theory does not look at the experiences that people undergo but at how they are *perceived* by the people themselves (Williams & Burden, 1997:104). In a broad brush, the theory hypothesises that the reasons to which individuals attribute their past successes or failures shape to a great extent their motivational disposition (Dörnyei, 2001). In a school context, learners tend to ascribe their failure or success (*locus of causality*) to a number of reasons: *ability* and *effort*, *luck*, *task difficulty*, *mood*, *family background*, and *help* or *hindrance* from others. The previous can be placed on a continuum of *internal* vs. *external* reasons depending on whether the individuals see themselves or others as the *causes* of their actions. *Locus of control*, on the other hand, refers to peoples' perception of how much they are in *control* of their actions. In a classroom environment, the importance of the kind of attribution is of special significance. If, for example, learners attribute their failure to a lack of ability (*internal cause* over which they have no control), then their motivation to learning the language is likely to decrease or even vanish completely. If, on the other hand, they believe that their failure is the result of their laziness or lack of effort (*internal cause* over which they have *control*), then they have good chances to increase their motivation if they double their efforts.

However, research implementing aspects of the attribution theory has been limited despite its recognized importance, partly as, Dörnyei (2003) points out, because it does not easily render itself to quantitative research. Dörnyei summarises the findings

of some qualitative studies that were conducted by Ushioda (1996b, 1998) and by Williams and Burden (1999). The first found that maintaining a positive self concept and belief in personal potential in the face of negative experiences depended on two *attributional reasons*: success attributed to personal ability or other internal factors (e.g. enough effort) and failure to temporarily shortcomings that can be overcome (e.g. lack of effort or time to spend). The latter found differences between ages: 10-12 years old attributed success mainly to listening and concentration, older learners mentioned a variety of reasons including ability, level of work, circumstances and the influence of others.

More Challenges to motivation theories

The majority of challenges discussed above were specific to each one of the theories. Attention is now given to further challenges for LLM theories that might be common to all of them. These challenges stem from the inability of the models above to account for new insights into LLM that many scholars and researchers in the field has drawn attention to.

Overlap between theories and constructs

One of the main and immediate challenges that encounter researchers in field of LLM is the evident overlap between the plethora of constructs that make up the different motivation theories. Researchers should recognise the interrelations and intrarelations among the different motives and their components. The focus here will be on highlighting the similarities among these constructs, which have been blamed for the inconsistencies found in LLM research.

One of the similarities that has often been highlighted is that between the *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation (from *the socioeducational model*), on the one hand, and the *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation (from *the self-determination theory*) on the other hand with some researchers seeing no difference between them (e.g. Soh, 1987). Both the *integrative* and the *intrinsic* motives refer to motives that involve enjoyment and inner satisfaction. Gardner (1960) notes ‘integratively oriented ... enjoy the foreign speech sounds, grammatical rules, etc.’. The *instrumental* and *extrinsic* motives involve behaviour that is driven by forces external to the individual. Still, however,

the differences between the integrative and the intrinsic are more evident than those between the extrinsic and the instrumental.

The goal orientation theory and attribution theory have much in common as the main constructs in the two theories can be easily linked. It is possible to see that the constructs of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation in the *self-determination theory* correlate with constructs of *task goals* and *ability goals* in the goal-orientation theory respectively. Both intrinsic motivation and task goals relate to deeper and more durable learning; whereas, extrinsic motivation and ability goals are said to yield less profound learning. The two concepts again correlate in one way or another with the *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation respectively. In a similar line, the link between *the goal-setting theory* and the *self-determination theory* can be found in the construct of *autonomy* in *the self-determination theory* and the concept of *commitment* in the *goal setting theory*. *Commitment*, according to the *goal-setting theory* can be best yielded when the individual is *convinced* of the importance and attainability of the goals. It can be said that *autonomous* individuals are those individuals who are *convinced* of the significance of their actions. Another similarity can be found between *commitment* to attainment of goals in goal theory and *motivation intensity* in the socioeducational model as both refer to individuals' desire to sustain their efforts in order to achieve their goals or the outcomes they expect from themselves or others expect from them.

Furthermore, components from *the attribution theory* can be linked to the *self-determination theory*. When the behaviour is self-determined, individuals perceive the *locus of causality* to be *internal*. When, on the other hand, the behaviour is controlled, the locus of causality is *external*. In this sense, the more the behaviours are perceived as self-determined the more are the chances individuals feel they have control over them.

But, as has been hinted above, it should again be emphasised that constructs *within* the same theory or model can also overlap. There are many instances, for example, in which the boundaries between instrumental and integrative motives from the socioeducational model are difficult to draw. In a similar vein, one finds that what is seen intrinsic by some individuals or researchers might be perceived extrinsic by

others. As will be highlighted later, the perception of the differences among the constructs can be quite subjective and might also be context-bound. Thus, the line being followed by some researchers to delineate acute borders among the different motives (e.g. Gardner and associates) and within each motive (e.g. Noels and colleagues) proves an elusive task, though it does not mean that these motives are identical.

Context-bound definition of motivation

Some researchers have justifiably noted that the perception of the concept of motivation, as is the case with many other psychological and social concepts, is context-bound. McGroarty (2001), stressing the cross-cultural variation in the understanding of fundamental psychological categories, tells the story of the psychologist Danziger who tried to co-organize a seminar on motivation with an Indonesian colleague at an Indonesian university. His attempts went in vain because of huge discrepancies that emerged between them on the understanding of the nature of motivation. Danziger (1997:1) recounts, ‘the phenomena that I quite spontaneously grouped as “motivational” seemed to him to be no more than a heterogeneous collection of things that have nothing interesting in common’. Indeed the concept of motivation, its components and how it works can be differently understood in different cultures that stress different values (e.g. Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005).

Within research following the socioeducational model, it was found that the instrumental and the integrative orientations are not composed of the same components in every context. The components do actually vary from one multicultural setting to another as has been demonstrated by a number of studies (e.g. Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Noels & Clément, 1989). Clément and Kruidenier (1983), for example, found that *travel* and *friendship* were major orientations for their participants to study the target language and they concluded that researchers on LLM should consider the effects of the different contexts in which learning takes place. Skehan (1991) has reached a similar conclusion.

Multiplicity of motives

The theories and models described above make two latent assumptions. The first is that learners can be driven by one motive at a time and the second is that a contextual stimulus can trigger only one type of motivation. Keblawi (2006), confirming Oxford's (1994) assumption that learners can be simultaneously driven by different motives, argues that learners might have *mixed motives*. Statements like 'I like the language and it is also important' are often articulated by learners. Such statements imply the existence of both intrinsic and extrinsic motives. It cannot be assumed that one type of motivation, however stimulating it might be, is enough for fully motivating learners. For example, to 'foster sustained learning, it may not be sufficient to convince students that language learning is interesting and enjoyable; they may need to be persuaded that it is also personally important for them' (Noels, et. al, 2000). Having a variety of motives available for the learner is preferable to having only one because at different times learners can benefit from the different motives as their moods, thoughts and their perception of their surroundings can change from one time to another.

The second assumption is inaccurate as well. A certain stimulus might trigger different motives at a time. For example, a statement of the kind 'I study English because I want to pursue my high studies' can involve instrumental aspects (boosting one's chances of a better career), intrinsic ones (feeling the satisfaction of knowing things and of being an educated person) or achievement motivation (getting high marks that enables one to get access to a university) (Keblawi, 2006). The kinds of motives triggered depend on the intention of the learner.

Motivation dynamicity and contextuality

The major theories reviewed here assume as well that motivation is static since they do not address change in motivation. Again Keblawi's (2006) study confirms Oxford's (1994) claim that motivation might change over time and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998:65) perception of motivation as 'dynamically changing cumulative arousal'. Keblawi found that many learners stressed that their motivation was not the same at all times as it changed in accordance with the ways in which they perceived the context where learning took place and on their moods as well. That is to say sometimes they feel more motivated and less at others. This view contradicts the

positivist approach which assumes that motivation is static and the other theories that stem from it. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the critical approach to social psychology (see a review in Rogers, 2003) which assumes that individuals' *attitudes* are not necessarily static and they can change from one context to another. Following a similar line, it can be postulated that individuals' motivation can be context dependent as well.

It is possible to differentiate between two kinds of contexts that might affect learners' motivation: the general learning context and the more specific one. The former refers to the sociolinguistic, socio-cultural and socio-political status of the language and its speakers in addition to the needs for learning it. Some of these aspects have been addressed by models that stress the social aspects of language learning like Gardner's socioeducational model and Schumann's acculturation model. The different cultural and social contexts in which learning an L2 takes place might significantly affect how motivation is understood, how it operates and how language learning occurs (e.g. Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Noels & Clément, 1989; Watkins, et. al. 2002). One of the contextual differences that has often been highlighted is that between learning an L2 as a foreign language and learning it as a second language. Second language acquisition usually involves learning an additional language in a context in which it serves as the main medium of communication whereas foreign language learning involves learning an additional language in a context where it is not so. A foreign language learner (e.g. an Arab speaker in Israel learning English) has little exposure to the target language and its speakers and thus has little input from the learned language than an second language learner learner (e.g. the above learner learning English in an English speaking country). This distinction, for example, is quite relevant to the concept of the integrative motivation since it is more relevant to studying a second rather than a foreign language.

Yet, one of the most important developments in the study of L2 learning was the increasing awareness of the effects of the *immediate* learning context. This trend was a direct outcome of the cognitive revolution in the understanding of LLM. Here teachers' role, in particular, the general school climate, the learning materials and the relationships among language learners are seen as crucial elements that affect language learning. This interest in what happens in the formal learning context

necessitates a separate discussion that is beyond the scope of this study. A thorough discussion of some of these immediate contextual elements can be found in Dörnyei (2001) who also developed with another associate a LLM that takes such elements into consideration (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998).

One further observation on LLM is that learners might have different levels of motivation to study different aspects of the target language (Keblawi, 2006). Some learners might be more motivated to enhance their speaking skills but may show little interest in reading. An academic for example, might be more interested in developing his writing skills but less concerned about his listening ability.

Strongly related to the learning context is the concept of *language learning demotivation*. Roughly speaking this concept refers to the many contextual factors that are external to the learner (e.g. negatively perceived teachers, materials and methods) and cognitive forces that are within the learner (e.g. beliefs about and perceptions of the language) that might negatively affect his or her motivation. Such forces might erode motivation and may eventually lead to its total loss. For some recent references to this concept see Falout & Maruyam (2004), Dörnyei (2005), and Keblawi (2005).

Motivation circularity and the notion of resultative motivation

In his LLM model, Gardner (1985) considers motivation as the independent variable and achievement in the target language as the dependant variable (see figure 1 above). The higher an individual is motivated, the higher are his or her achievements. Gardner (2000) attempting to establish statistical evidence through complicated statistical procedures contends, 'it seems logical to conclude that the differences in integrative motivation are responsible for the variation observed, even though correlation does not mean causation' (p. 21). Similarly, the other theories on motivation assume as well that motivation is the antecedent of achievement.

This notion, is at best, partially correct and it has been challenged by a number of scholars and by a number of empirical findings. For example, Dörnyei (2001:198) expresses caution as to the relationship between LLM and achievement for a direct

cause-effect cannot be assumed between the two. The relationship can at best be indirect since *motivation* is the antecedent of *action* rather than of *achievement* itself. Dörnyei and Otto's (1998) cyclic model assumes that the relationship between motivation and achievement is not linear since the positive feedback that one gets after achieving his or her goal might lead him or her to pursue a new goal. There are, in addition, a host of other factors that affect motivation, such as learners' ability, learning opportunities, and the instructional quality of the learning task.

Williams (1994:78-79), presenting a constructivist approach, contends that it is impossible to establish whether motivation leads to successful achievement or whether success leads to higher motivation, or whether it is a mixture of both, or whether both are affected by other factors. In fact, there has been a title given to motivation that results from success in language learning and it is referred to as the *resultative motivation* (Ellis, 1997:75). However a word of caution is necessary here since learners' success alone is not a guarantee for increased motivation. Learners who strive for mastery goals are more likely to benefit from their success than learners who strive for performance goals (Dwick (1986 in Dickinson, 1995). From an achievement theory perspective, (see a review in Oxford & Shearin, 1994) the need for achievement can *itself* be the *motive* for choosing to do things. In addition, the relationship between motivation and achievement can vary because of the different contexts in which the learning takes place (Csella, 1999).

Empirical research give evidence to the dual relationship between the motivation and achievement. Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt & Shohamy (2001) and Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, & Shohamy (2004) found that Jewish students who learned Arabic showed more positive attitudes towards Arabic and its speakers and were more motivated to study it despite the much political tension between Jewish and Arabs. Similar result were found by Janssens & Mettewie (2004), though in a different learning context.

Conclusions and future trends

This paper has attempted to shed light on LLM through reviewing some of the most influential theories and models in the field. The three main theories that have been

reviewed are the *self-determination theory*, *goal theories* and *attribution theory* in addition to the *socioeducational model*. In this review, regard has been given to the way in which these theories perceive motivation and to some of the main findings reached by a number of scholars who implemented them.

Following this review, it has been possible to draw attention to some important conclusions on LLM that researchers should consider. In the first place, researchers should clarify to themselves and to their readers their perception of motivation theoretically and operatively. Second, when researching issues related to LLM, scholars should be aware that the findings they reach are limited by time and space and cannot be generalised to different contexts. Researchers in the field should also take into consideration the new perspectives on motivation which suggest that it is complex, dynamic and circular.

Some of the above conclusions have serious ramifications not only to the way motivation should be understood, but also to the way it should be researched. Questionnaires with Likert items that checked learners agreement on a number of statements regarding their LLM can only give a partial picture of learners' true motives. It is difficult for such research tools to address issues like circularity and contextuality of motivation. Incorporating qualitative tools, as some researchers have argued (Dörnyei , 2001; Ushioda 1996b, 1998; Kebabli, 2006), can offer additional insights into the different layers of LLM.

The discussion above showed that there are still many areas of LLM that warrant further investigation. It has also been demonstrated that there are some latent assumptions about motivation which cannot be taken for granted anymore. Research into LLM remains, thus, a fertile area that is likely to accompany us for generations to come, posing more perplexing questions that researchers will have to tackle in order to arrive at a more satisfactory understanding of the concept.

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