

Conceptualizing College Students' EFL Learning Motivation in Taiwan ¹

台灣之大學生英語學習動機之研究

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Abstract

This study aims to conceptualize a sample of Taiwanese college students' EFL learning motivation by identifying the motivational components in relation to the students' actual language use fields, desired proficiency, actual proficiency, and motivational intensity. Seven hundred fifty-seven students from one public university participated in the study. A questionnaire was developed to measure these students' motivational orientations, actual language use fields, attitudes towards the target language and culture, desired proficiency level, possible proficiency level, and motivational intensity. The students' scores of the Motivational Orientations and Language Use Fields subscales were factor-analyzed. The extracted factors from the Motivational Orientation subscale were defined as the students' motivational orientations (see Dörnyei, 1990; Schmidt et al., 1996). The Language Use Fields subscales were factor-analyzed to determine the underlying factors of the students' language use. Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the relationships among the variables. The results showed that 7 significant motivational orientations were identified and were theoretically subsumed under 4 different categories: 1) Intrinsic Motivation, 2) Integrative Motivation subsystem, 3) Instrumental Motivation subsystem, and 4) Need for Good Performance in English Class. Students' English use fields were divided into five different fields: 1) Entertainment, 2) Classroom Requirements, 3) Going Abroad and Communicating with Foreigners, 4) Reading for Information, and 5) Computers and the Internet. It was found that students' intrinsic motivation plays an important role in language learning, which is consistent with previous studies on intrinsic motivation.

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中文摘要

語言學習動機之心理建構理論過去有學者以單一建構(如 Krashen, 1981; Schumann, 1986)或雙因子(如 Gardner, 1985)的模式討論及敘述。近年來一些學者認為語言學習動機是多因子建構(multifactorial construct),所以在研究動機時應該涵蓋社會、認知以及情意等因素(如 Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Schmidt et al., 1996);這些學者並且在不同的學習環境中研究發現了一些影響動機的因素。同時這些學者也指出動機的因素和內涵以及重要性可能因地而異,不能一概而論。本研究主要探討國內大學生 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) 學習動機的因素以了解學生動機的結構。此外,本研究要確認動機因素與學生語言的使用、英文程度和動機強度之間的關聯性。受測者為 750 位北部某國立大學一至四年級各系的大學生。此研究發展出一份適用於該校學生使用的問卷。問卷量表包涵六個分量表:動機、語言使用領域、態度、動機強度、希望之英文程度、以及可能達到的英文程度;前二個分量表以因素分析之統計方法確認學生的動機因素以及英語使用領域之因素。探討這兩組因素之間的相關程度便有助於我們了解學生的動機因素。此外,研究者亦計算了動機因素和英語程度以及動機強度之間的相關程度以探討各動機因素之重要性。研究結果顯示,學生的外語學習動機可明顯區分為七個不同的因子;而這七個因子可納入四個不同的領域:1)內在動機,2)融合動機,3)工具動機,以及4)需要在英語課有好的表現。學生在實際使用英文上可分為五大領域:1)娛樂,2)課堂要求,3)出國或與外國人溝通,4)閱讀新知,5)電腦網路。另外結果還顯示學生的內在動機的重要性,此一結果與先前的諸多研究結論相符。

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INTRODUCTION

Instead of viewing L2 (second/foreign language) motivation as a single construct (Krashen, 1981; Schumann, 1986) or a dichotomous construct (Gardner, 1985), a number of recent researchers have claimed that L2 motivation is a multifactorial construct that involves social, cognitive, and affective factors (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Schmidt et al., 1996). Researchers have cautiously pointed out that the results obtained from previous studies may not be generalized to unexamined language learning contexts since L2 motivation construct may vary from one learning context to another. Many studies have identified several factors that motivate students to learn the target language in a variety of learning contexts.

Clément & Kruidenier (1983) investigated 871 Grade 11 students who were learning different L2 such as French, Spanish, and English, and identified several meaningful motivations, e.g., friendship, travel, knowledge, etc. Dörnyei (1990) investigated the motivational construct of 134 adult EFL Hungarian learners and concluded that the EFL motivation involved 4 different dimensions: Instrumental motivational subsystem, Integrative motivational subsystem, Need for achievement, and Attribution about past failures. Another study conducted in Hungary (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994) that investigated 301 EFL learners in a secondary-school indicated 5 different motivational factors: Xenophilic orientation, Identification orientation, Sociocultural dimension, Instrumental-knowledge dimension, English media factor. There have been some other studies on L2 motivation conducted in different contexts and have successfully identified a variety of motivational factors: Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy (1996) in Cairo, Egypt which investigating 1464 adult EFL learners of English; Morris (2001) in Puerto Rico which investigated 204 first-year high school EFL learners; Ely (1986) in California which investigated 75 first-year students of Spanish; Nikolov (1999) in Hungary investigating 84 EFL child learners; Warden & Lin (2000) in Taiwan investigating 442 technological college students; Belmechri & Hummel (1998) in Quebec City, Canada, investigating 93 francophone Grade 11 high school students; Kang (2000a, b) in Korea, investigating 234 9th and 192 10th grade EFL students, respectively.

These studies tend to share two assumptions in common. First, it is assumed that L2 motivation is context-specific. In other words, the exact construct of L2 motivation should be dependent upon the specific social-cultural context in which the L2 is learned. Second, traditional Gardnerian dichotomous view of motivation (i.e., the interplay of integrative and instrumental orientations) tends to be too parsimonious to include other important motivational factors. In accordance with the recent research trend, this study therefore aims to conceptualize the motivational construct of a sample of Taiwanese college students who are leaning English as their foreign

language.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivational construct of a sample of college students in Taiwan. Since the results obtained from previous studies should not be applied to the students in the present study, a motivational/attitude questionnaire was developed and administered to a group of college students from one university in Taiwan. The statistical package SPSS for Windows Version 9.0 was used for data analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed on the questionnaire items. Nine factors were extracted as the motivational orientations and five areas were identified in students' actual language use. The nine motivational factors were correlated with the students' actual language use fields, desired proficiency, actual proficiency, and motivational intensity.

Subjects

The subjects were 757 college students from 19 EFL classes in a public university. These students were taught by 11 different teachers when they participated in the study. The subjects' genders and years were mixed. The numbers of male and female subjects were 582 and 171 (3 missing), respectively. Among the subjects, 298 were the first-year students, 157 were the second-year students, 157 were the third-year students, and 145 were fourth-year students. The majors of the subjects covered all the departments in the university. Most of the subjects were from the engineering field, which reflects the general situation in the university.

Instrument

A motivational/attitude questionnaire was developed for the current context and was administered to the subjects. The questionnaire items were written in Chinese to ensure students' comprehension about each item. Most of the administrations of the questionnaire were carried out by the researcher. It took about 20 minutes for the students to fill out the questionnaire.

The items of the questionnaire used in the study were adapted from two major sources: 1) a number of published questionnaires² and 2) more than 200 essays written by students to describe their EFL learning experiences. In the essay, each student described their experiences in terms of the following aspects: 1) reasons for learning English, 2) goals of learning, 3) difficulties and joys of learning, 4) the fields of their using English, and finally 5) general reflections about learning English.

The major sections of the newly designed questionnaire used in the study included 1) students' background information, 2) desired proficiency level of English, 3) most possibly achieved proficiency level, 4) motivational orientations, 5) attitudes toward the target culture and language, 6) motivational intensity, and 7) English use fields. Section 2 and 3 each consist of a single-item that asked students to rate their desired and possible proficiency respectively at a scale ranging from 1 indicating very low proficiency level to 6 indicating native-like. The lengths of the other sections are 42 items for Section 4, 11 items for Section 5, 21 items for Section 6, and 17 items for Section 7. The internal consistency alphas of the sections are all fairly appreciable, with Section 4 being .87, Section 5 .81, Section 6 .91, and Section 7 .87 (in all cases, $n \geq 740$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Factor Analysis of Students' Motivational Orientations

Factor analysis was performed on the sections of Motivational Orientations and English Use Fields in order to extract the latent factors. The analysis used the traditional minimum-eigenvalue criterion of 1.0, principle component analysis, and varimax rotation. Nine factors from the Motivational Orientations subscale were extracted, which accounted for 56.80% of the total variance. The factor structure and loadings of the questionnaire items are summarized in Table 1.

² Ames & Archer, 1988; Chen, 2000; Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994; Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Dörnyei, 1990; Dörnyei, Nyilasi & Clément, 1996; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Genesee, Rogers & Holobow, 1983; Lin & Warden, 1998; Liu, 1999; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1988; Noels & Pelletier, 1999; Noels, Pelletier & Vallerand, 2000; Pierson, Fu, & Lee, 1980; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Warden, & Lin, 2000; Wen, 1997

Table 1. Factor Loadings of Motivational Orientations

	Loadings
<i>Factor 1 = Intrinsic motivation</i>	
14. Bad learning experiences	.76
5. Learning English is a burden.	.75
27. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak English.	.68
24. I have given up learning English.	.64
26. I really like learning English.	.63
28. I am confident in learning.	.61
4. Sense of achievement	.56
11. Learning English is an interesting challenge.	.47
<i>Factor 2 = Interest in Foreign Languages, Cultures, and People</i>	
12. To participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	.70
18. To talk to people from different cultures	.65
23. To make friends with foreigners	.64
37. To travel around English-speaking countries	.60
33. To better understand and appreciate art and cultures of English speakers	.55
15. Entertainments	.35
<i>Factor 3 = Implied Value with English</i>	
2. There would be a serious gap in my life if I couldn't learn English.	.61
38. It will permit me to become an influential member of my community.	.57
35. The English language sounds very nice.	.55
45. To show that I am a modernized citizen	.50
1. A better life	.50
39. I am interested in learning something new.	.43
<i>Factor 4 = Requirements</i>	
36. To fulfill others' expectations	.65
34. Requirements	.62
47. People around me are learning English.	.51
8. Examinations	.51
30. It's not necessary to learn English well.	-.48
<i>Factor 5 = Desire to Integrate into the Target Community</i>	
25. To think and behave like an English speaker	.80
22. To make others think that English is my mother tongue	.78
31. To immigrate to English-speaking countries	.51
<i>Factor 6 = Technology and Knowledge</i>	
7. English proficiency allows me to learn about the current intellectual trends of the world.	.70
46. Computers and the Internet	.67
48. English is useful in my daily life.	.50
16. To learn more about what is happening in the world	.44
6. English will make me a more knowledgeable person.	.41
<i>Factor 7 = Need for Good Performance in English Class</i>	
19. To obtain good course grades in English class	.74
20. I will study harder when I do a good job in exams.	.63
40. I study hard in English class because I want to obtain high scores.	.62
17. To outperform others in my English class	.52
<i>Factor 8 = Need for Studying Abroad</i>	
32. To pass GEPT or TOEFL	.69
21. To study abroad	.63
<i>Factor 9 = Need for Future Career</i>	
3. English proficiency is highly valued by the society.	.71
13. It will someday be useful in getting a good job.	.63
10. America and Britain are strong countries.	.36

Factor 1 of motivational orientations concerns students' competence, interest, efficacy, sense of achievement, and emotions about learning English and therefore, this factor can be termed *Intrinsic motivation*.

Factor 2 involves items that ask students about their interests in different cultures, making friends with foreigners, traveling in English speaking countries, appreciating arts of the target culture, and using English in entertainment. This factor therefore can be labeled as *Interest in Foreign Languages, Cultures, and People*.

Factor 3 of motivational orientations includes items that reflect students' intrinsic interest in learning English which may be very likely associated with implied values of learning English. This factor can be referred to as *Implied Value with English*.

The fourth motivational factor loads on 5 items, which indicate that students learn English because of social pressures or examinations. This factor can be labeled *Requirements*.

The fifth motivational factor has high loadings on three items. The factor involves a desire of integrating into the target community. Therefore, it is labeled *Desire to Integrate into the Target Community*.

The sixth motivational factor loads distinctly on 5 items and is labeled *Technology and Knowledge*, which is considered as the typical motivation orientation for the students in this engineering university. The factor suggests the students' need of English in academy, technology, computers, and the Internet.

The seventh factor can be referred to as *Need for Good Performance in English Class*. The four items clustering together show that students study English because they need to obtain high grades or that they have to outperform classmates in English class.

The eighth factor heavily loads on the two items showing that students study English in order to pass the proficiency tests and study abroad. This factor can be labeled as *Need for Studying Abroad*.

The ninth factor is predominated by 3 items which suggest the tendency to study English for the students' career need in the future. This factor is therefore defined as *Future Career*.

Factor Analysis of Students' English Use Field

The exploratory factor analysis on the English use fields extracted 5 different factors which accounted for 61.87% of the total variance. The factor structure and item loadings are summarized in Table 2.

Factor 1 emphasizes that students use English in listening to popular music, watching movies, singing English songs, and listening to broadcast. Therefore, it can be labeled as *Entertainment*.

Factor 2 loads on 5 items which indicate that students use English in the classroom activities, writing homework, teaching others English, communicating with peers, and reading literature works. This factor can be labeled as *Use for Class Requirements*.

Factor 3 can be referred to as *Going Abroad and Communicating with Foreigners*. It deals with the 3 items stating that students use English in traveling and studying abroad, making friends with foreigners, and preparing for proficiency tests such as TOEFL.

Factor 4 can be labeled as *Reading for Informational Purposes*. The 3 items of the factor highlight students' reading skills which are used in obtaining information from textbooks, research papers, technical reports, newspapers, and magazines.

The last factor, Factor 5, is the typical field in which these students would have to use English. It has high loadings on 2 items which show that the students use English in computers and the Internet as well as in playing on-line games. Therefore, this factor can be termed as *Computers and the Internet*.

Table 2. Factor Loading of the Language Use Fields

Factor	Item	Loadings
<i>Factor 1 = Entertainment</i>		
	9. Listening to pop music	.84
	7. Watching movies	.76
	22. Singing English songs	.64
	8. Listening to English broadcast	.58
<i>Factor 2 = Class Requirements</i>		
	26. Using English in class	.72
	24. Doing one's homework	.71
	23. Teaching others English	.69
	15. Communicating with Taiwanese friends	.54
	3. Reading literature work in English	.43
<i>Factor 3 = Going Abroad and Communicating with Foreigners</i>		
	4. Traveling or studying abroad	.83
	11. Making friends with foreigners	.77
	18. Preparing for TOEFL and the like	.58
<i>Factor 4 = Reading for Information</i>		
	13. Read originals	.82
	2. Reading technical papers and books	.72
	14. Reading newspapers and magazines	.46
<i>Factor 5 = Computers and the Internet</i>		
	17. Using computers and the Internets	.84
	16. Playing computer and on-line games	.79

Intercorrelations of Motivation Orientations and English Use Fields

Table 3 summarizes the correlations between motivation orientations and English use fields. As can be observed, these two sets of factors are generally correlated (35 out of the 45 coefficients are significant). However, this result is different from Dörnyei (1990) in which only 7 out of 28 coefficients are significant. The disagreement of results may be attributed to the different nature of the participants in the two different studies. In Dörnyei (1990), the participants were young adults in a language school who voluntarily spent extra time and money in learning EFL, while the students in the present study were learning EFL as a required course in the university. The college students in the present study can be more homogenous in terms of their educational and social background; they may have to use English in similar situations and fields. This may also explain why high correlations between motivational orientations and English use fields cannot be expected. As can be seen in Table 3, the highest correlation coefficients are only moderate; many coefficients are low.

Table 3. Correlations between Motivation Orientations and English Use Fields.

	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5
M1	.46**	.43**	.33**	.32**	.06
M2	.46**	.36**	.38**	.23**	.10**
M3	.37**	.38**	.31**	.28**	.09**
M4	-.13**	-.13**	-.05	-.08*	.06
M5	.20**	.18**	.24**	.10**	-.06
M6	.24**	.24**	.18**	.28**	.06**
M7	.15**	.14**	.15**	.08*	.03
M8	.25**	.14	.31**	.18**	.01
M9	.05	.00	.07	.02	.01

Un=Factor n of English Use Fields, for example, U1=Factor 1 of English Use Fields; Mn=Factor n of Motivational Orientations, for example, M1=Factor 1 of Motivational Orientations; *p<.05; **p<.01

In addition, Table 3 shows that the motivational factor *Requirements* generally correlated negatively but slightly with students' actual language use. This suggests that requirements motivation does not help students actually use the target language.

As students are required to learn English by others, they may not be so willing to use the language when the requirements do not exist.

Another motivational factor *Need for Future Career* has an orthogonal relationship with students' language use. A possible explanation is that this motivation is a very general component. It cannot be expected to highly correlate with any particular fields.

Correlations between Motivational Orientations and Other Student Variables

Table 4 summarizes the correlations between the 9 motivational orientations and the 4 student variables, i.e., motivational intensity, attitudes towards the target culture and language, desired proficiency level, and possible proficiency level. As can be seen in the table, motivational orientations generally are significantly correlated with the student variables.

Factor 1, *Intrinsic Motivation*, has the highest correlations with Motivation Intensity and Desired/Possible Proficiency Level, suggesting its prominent importance among the 9 factors. Thus, the common view that intrinsic motivation is favorably linked with a higher level of effort and attainment is partly conformed by the present finding. Factor 4 *the Requirement Motivation*, however, negatively correlates with all the student variables, which suggests that requirement motivation may not be emphasized by teachers.

Table 4. Correlations between Motivation Orientations and Other Student Variables

	MI	Attitudes	Desired	Possible
M1	.72**	.35**	.40**	.52**
M2	.53**	.46**	.31**	.37**
M3	.58**	.54**	.30**	.35**
M4	-.31**	-.05**	-.19**	-.17*
M5	.26**	.18**	.18**	.22**
M6	.44**	.33**	.17**	.22**
M7	.20**	.15**	.15**	.08*
M8	.17**	.11	.28**	.21**
M9	.07	-.02	.04	.01

MI=Motivation Intensity; Attitudes= Attitudes toward the Target Culture and Language; Desired=Desired Proficiency Level; Possible=Possible Proficiency; Mn=Factor n of Motivational Orientations, for example, M1=Factor 1 of Motivational Orientations; *p<.05; **p<.01

Conceptualizing the Motivational Structure of the Students

Correlating the 9 extracted motivational orientations with the students' language use fields (see Table 3) and with other student variables (see Table 4) would help us to conceptualize the motivation construct of the students in the current study. This construct is schematically represented in Figure 1 which shows that the students' foreign language learning motivation consists of 4 components, i.e., *Intrinsic Motivation*, *Integrative Motivation Subsystem*, *Instrumental Motivation Subsystem*, and *Need for Good Performance in English Class*.

As can be seen in both Table 3 and Table 4, among the 9 motivational orientations, *Requirements* and *Need for Future Career* seem to contribute little to students' actual language use, motivation intensity, and proficiency levels. The other 7 motivational orientations, however, contribute significantly to students' EFL motivation in the present study. Therefore the 7 orientations constitute the motivational structure. These factors can be theoretically subsumed into the 4 motivational components.

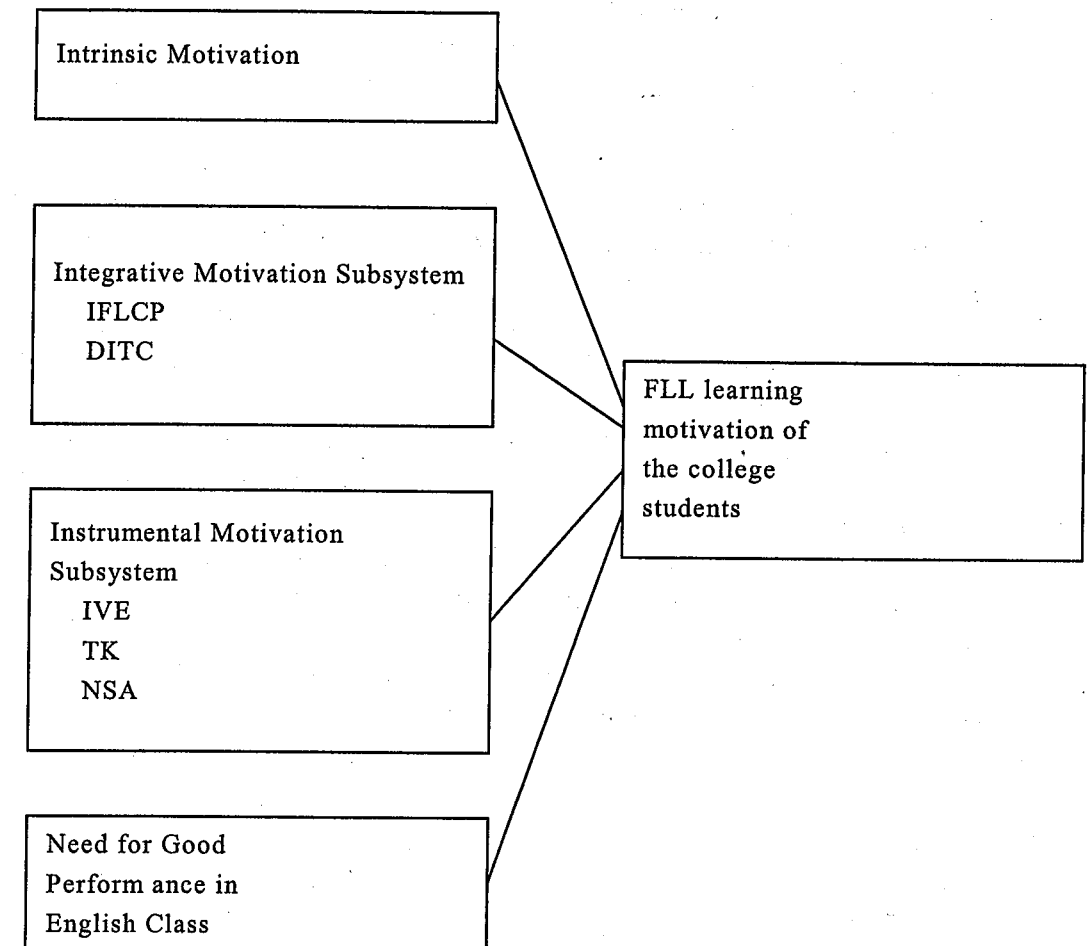
The first component refers to *Intrinsic Motivation* which theoretically is independent from other motivational factors. Gardner (1985) claimed that both integrative and instrumental motivations actually in nature are extrinsic motivation in that learners of both types of motivation learn the language in order to pursue the goals outside the learning itself.

The second and third components are referred to as *Integrative Motivation Subsystem* and *Instrumental Motivation Subsystem*. According to Gardner (1985), integratively motivated students are those who study the target language in order to be able to identify with the target community, or those who study the target language because they are interested in the culture of the target community. The two orientations, *Interest in Foreign Languages, Cultures, and People*, and *Desire to Integrate into the Target Community*, can therefore be subsumed within the *Integrative Motivation Subsystem*.

On the other hand, instrumental motivation emphasizes the utilitarian purposes of learning the target language. The three orientations, *Implied Value with English, Technology and Knowledge*, and *Need for Studying Abroad*, can be logically subsumed within the category of *Instrumental Motivation Subsystem*.

Finally, the last orientation, *Need for Good Performance in English Class*, can be dependent from the previous three categories. Dörnyei (1990) argued that foreign language learning is composed of many academic achievement situations. Students in the foreign language learning context need good performance to survive the academic pressure. *Need for Good Performance* is regarded as a typical motivational component in this kind of context.

Figure 1. Schematic representation of the conceptualized motivation construct of the college students



Note: IFLCP=Interest in Foreign Languages, Cultures, and People; DITC=Desire to Integrate in to the Target Community.; IVE=Implied Value with English; TK=Technology and Knowledge; NSA=Need for Studying A broad

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