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# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

台灣之國中學生英語學習動機之研究

Conceptualizing Taiwanese Junior High School Students' English Learning Motivation

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## 一、中文摘要

語言學習動機之心理建構 (construct) 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; Dornyei, 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 (motivational components)。同時這些學者也指出動機的因素的內涵以及重要性可能因地而異, 不能一概而論。

此研究主要研究目的有二: (一) 探討國內國中學生 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) 學習動機的結構; (二) 確認學生動機與學生語言使用、英文成就和動機強度之間的關聯性。

參與本研究的學生來自中部二所公立國中。受測者為 900 餘位該校之國中學生。此研究發展出一份合適國中學生使用的問卷。問卷包涵六個分量表: 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。因素分析之結果顯示學生的動機因素有六, 而英語使用領域有五。由於動機因素往往是較抽象的概念因此探討這兩組因素之間的相關程度目的在便於具體了解學生的動機因素。此外, 本研究還探討動機因素和英語成就以及動機強度之間的相關程度。以上相關程度之研究顯示雖然這六個動機因素都扮演重要的角色, 然而其中以學生的內在動機似乎最為重要。

關鍵詞：學生動機、學生態度、語言使用、學生成就、第二語、外語

## ABSTRACT

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; Dornyei, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Schmidt et al., 1996). These researchers have identified several factors motivating students to learn the target language (motivational components) in a variety of learning contexts. Researchers have cautiously pointed out that the results obtained from previous studies may not be generalized to those unexamined language learning contexts since L2 motivation construct may vary from one learning context to another.

This study aims to conceptualize Taiwanese junior high school 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. The participants were more than 900 junior high school students from two public junior high schools. A motivational questionnaire was developed to measure the 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. The Language Use Fields subscales will also be factor analyzed to determine the underlying factors of the students' language use. The results showed that six motivational orientations were identified and five language use field factors are extracted. Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the relationships among the two sets of factors. Correlational analysis was also performed to determine the relationships between the motivational orientations and effort/grades. It was found all the six orientations are important to students' motivation to learn. However, among the six orientations, students' intrinsic motivation appeared to be slightly more important than the other motivational components.

Key words: student motivation, student attitude, language use, student achievement, second language, foreign language

## 二、緣由與目的 (Introduction)

Recent literature in the field of L2 motivation has pointed out that the exact construct of L2 learners' motivation should be best defined in the context in which the target language is learned. In response to the call for more research on L2 motivation studies in different learning contexts, a number of studies have been conducted at various levels and areas in attempt to better explain the nature of L2 motivation.

These previous studies generally have either proposed alternative motivation factors that are different from traditional Gardnerian dichotomous view of motivation, or redefined the major components of Gardner (1985).

Clément & Kruidenier (1983), for example, 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 motivational construct of 134 adult EFL Hungarian learners and concluded that the EFL motivation can involve 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) 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. In other studies, many other factors have been extracted and discussed, although some of the factors may overlap in nature, by definition, or the labels given by the researchers. Only a few of them are listed below due to the space restriction: 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 9<sup>th</sup> and 192 10<sup>th</sup> grade EFL students, respectively.

These studies have been conducted in different social-cultural contexts under the assumption that the nature of L2 motivation is context-specific. In other words, the exact constructs of L2 motivation would vary from one social-cultural context to another. Another underlined assumption guiding the studies seems to be that the scope L2 motivational constructs would go beyond traditional Gardnerian dichotomous view of motivation, i.e., the interplay of both integrative and instrumental orientations, and accordingly these studies have been attempted to adapt concepts and factors that have been commonly discussed in other disciplines. Based on the two assumptions, the present study aimed to investigate the EFL motivation constructs of the junior high school students in Taiwan.

### 三、研究方法 (Method)

A questionnaire was developed and distributed to students at two junior high schools in central Taiwan. More than 900 students completed the questionnaire during

their English classes. Like other public junior high school in the country, English was taught as a required subject in school.

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

The items of the newly developed questionnaire used in the study were adapted from two major sources, 1) a number of published questionnaires and 2) more than 200 essays that students wrote down about 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 newly designed questionnaire consists of the following 7 subscales: 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 were both single-item that asked students to self-rate their desired and possible proficiency at a scale ranging from 1 indicating very low proficiency level to 6 indicating native-like. Subscales 4 to 7 contains 5-point Likert-type items. Table 1 summarizes the reliability coefficients and lengths of the subscales.

Table 1. Lengths and reliability coefficients of the subscales.

Subscale	number of items	Test-retest reliability* (n)	Alpha (n)
Desired proficiency level	1	.72 (68)	-
Possible proficiency level	1	.70 (68)	-
Motivational orientations	35	.81 (68)	.89 (945)
Attitudes (recoded)	16	.76 (68)	.89 (977)
Effort (recoded)	20	.73 (68)	.94 (969)
Language use fields	21	.69 (68)	.91 (957)

Note: \*The retest was administered 2 weeks later from the test;  $p < .01$  for all coefficients.

#### 四、結果討論 (Results and discussion)

##### Students' Motivational Orientations

The statistical package SPSS for Windows Version 9.0 was used for data analysis. 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. Six factors from the Motivational Orientations subscale and 5 factors from the English Use Fields subscale were extracted.

Factor 1 of motivational orientations loads on 10 items that concern students' desire to be identified by the target cultural group and to stay or live abroad. This factor can be termed *Identification and immigration*.

Factor 2 of motivational orientations loads on 9 items that reflect students' extrinsic reasons for learning English which may be very likely associated with implied values of learning English. This factor can be referred to as *Implied Value of Learning English*.

Factor 3, on the contrary, consists of 4 items that reflect student intrinsic reasons for learning English. This factor can be termed as *Interest in Learning and Using English*.

Factor 4 of motivational orientations consists of items that suggest that students learn English because of school requirements and others' expectation. This factor can be termed as *Requirement*.

Factor 5 of motivational orientations includes 6 items showing that students learn English for traveling abroad, communicating with foreigners, and because it is an international language. This factor can be referred to as *International Language*.

Factor 6, the last factor of motivational orientations, is predominated by 3 items suggesting that students learn English for good grades, outperforming others in class, and for General English Proficiency Test. This factor can be named as *Need for Good Performance*.

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the above six factors of motivation orientations. As can be seen, English as an international language is perceived as the most frequent reason for the students to learn the language. However, the table suggests that students are in lack of intrinsic motivation in learning English.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Six Factors of Motivational Orientation

Motivational orientation factors	Mean	SD
1. International Language	3.9	.86
2. Implied Value of Learning English	3.6	.68
3. Requirement	3.3	.72
4. Need for Good Performance	3.2	.81
5. Identification and Immigration	3.1	.77
6. Interest in Learning and Using English	2.7	.88

### Students' English Use Field

The exploratory factor analysis on the English use fields extracts 5 different factors. Factor 1 emphasizes that students use English in listening to popular music, watching movies, singing English songs, listening to broadcast, reading originals in English, and conversation with friends. Therefore, it can be labeled as *Entertainment, Knowledge, and friendship*.

Factor 2 loads on 4 items which focus on students writing for different purposes such as keeping diary, composing essays, email writing, and writing homework assignments. This factor can be labeled as *Limited Writing in English*.

Factor 3 can be referred to as *GEPT, Travel, and Communicating with Foreign Friends*. It deals with 5 items stating that students use English in traveling and studying abroad, make friends with foreigners, and preparing for proficiency tests such as GEPT.

Factor 4 can be labeled as *Computers and the Internet*. The 3 items of the factor suggest that students use English in computers and the Internet as well as in playing on-line games.

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 school tests. Therefore, this factor can be termed as *School Tests*.

Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the above five factors of language use fields. Not surprisingly, Factor 5, School Tests, has the highest mean scores ( $M=3.1$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ). Computer and the Internet has the second highest mean scores ( $M=2.5$ ,  $SD=.98$ ), which reflect that computers have been both popular among the young students.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Five Factors of Language Use Fields.

Language use fields factors	Mean	SD
1. School Tests	3.1	1.14
2. Computers and the Internet	2.5	.98
3. Entertainment, Knowledge, and Friendship	2.4	.89
4. GEPT, Travel, Communicating with Foreign Friends	2.1	.97
5. Limited Writing in English	2.0	.86

Table 4 and 5 summarize the correlation coefficients between students' motivational orientations and other important variables in the current study. As can be seen in the two tables, all the motivational orientations are generally correlated with those other factors in terms of similar magnitude. This result suggests that all the motivational orientations are significant.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix between the two sets of factors.

	Identification immigration	Implied value	interest	Requirement	International language	Need for good performance
Entertainment, knowledge, friendship	.55**	.45**	.47**	.39**	.40**	.34**
Limited writing in English	.43**	.35**	.46**	.36**	.29**	.30**
GEPT, travel, communicate	.44**	.36**	.41**	.30**	.32**	.35**
Computers/internet	.16**	.11**	--	--	.10**	.14**
School tests	.28**	.32**	.21**	.16**	.23**	.32**

Note: \*\*p<.01

However, as can be seen in Table 5, students' interest in learning and using English is relatively more important because it has a stronger relationship with effort and grades than do most other motivational orientations. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies which emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation to learn.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix among the motivational orientations, effort, and grade.

	Identification immigration	Implied value	interest	Requirement	International language	Need for good performance
Effort	.63**	.61**	.72**	.63**	.51**	.41**
Grades	.32**	.35**	.41**	.40**	.28**	.31**

Note: \*\*p<.01

## 五、結論 (Conclusion and implications)

This study has identified five significant motivational orientations of the junior high school students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. According to the study, students' interest in learning the language can be slightly more important

than other motivational orientations. However, it is also found that the students tend to be lack of this essential motivational component.

Students generally agree that they learn English because English would help them with more knowledge, better future, and passing the exams inside and outside school. They recognize English is the international language that would help them to travel abroad and maintain friendship with people from difference countries and to understand foreign life styles and cultures. Requirement and other expectations as well also sever as students sources of motivation to learn English. These finding support the important role that extrinsic motivation play in students' EFL learning.

As for the students' language use fields, it is not surprising to find that students use English neither intensively nor extensively. This can be explained by two factors. First, the junior high students would have limited English proficiency. Second, the students are learning the language in the EFL context in which usually has limited input and output in the target language.

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