From Theory to Practice: The Pedagogic Application of Major L2 Motivation Theories in an IB School

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Article Info

Abstract

Motivation is believed to play a vital role in successful second language (L2) learning. Over the past five decades, L2 motivation theory has evolved significantly from static to more dynamic perspectives. This article reviews the four major second language (L2) motivation research phases (i.e., the social psychological period, the cognitive-situated period, the process-oriented period and the current socio-dynamic period); and contemplates the application of some motivational models that are relevant to a specific pedagogical context in an International Baccalaureate (IB), bilingual school in Indonesia, such as such as the instrumental motivation, the process-oriented model, the L2 Motivational Self System, and motivational teaching practices.

Keywords: L2 motivation, second language learning, motivation theories, international baccalaureate (IB) school
INTRODUCTION
Over the past decades, there has been a large body of research reporting the great contribution of motivation to the successful attainment of a foreign language. Research in motivation commonly investigates such questions as what drives an individual to make a particular choice, to take action, and to persevere in that action (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Over the past fifty years, the perspective of L2 motivation theory has experienced a significant transition: from a static to a more dynamic one. According to Dörnyei (2005), there are four significant phases in the research of motivation in second or foreign language learning: (1) the social psychological period, (2) the cognitive-situated period, (3) the process-oriented period and (4) the current socio-dynamic period.

The paper aims to critically review the development of L2 motivation research and discuss the relevance of L2 motivation models in a specific pedagogical context. It begins with the historical evolution of L2 motivation theory and reports some of the significant research key findings. Furthermore, the paper presents the motivation framework and strategies that are relevant or that have been implemented in a pedagogical context such as the instrumental motivation, the process-oriented model, the L2 Motivational Self System, and motivational teaching practices.

THE CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION: FROM STATIC TO DYNAMIC
The social-psychological period
During this period, research in L2 motivation witnessed a considerable number of investigations that were predominantly inspired by the work of social psychologists, Gardner and Lambert (1972) along with their associates within bilingual Canadian context. These researchers generally embrace the social psychological approach in which they believe that the success of an L2 learner is influenced by his/her attitude towards the target language and its community. Thus, it is argued that social context and attitudes towards the L2 and its community are very fundamental to understand a language learner’s motivation. Moreover, in their earlier study in 1959, these researchers had discovered that attitude and motivation served as the two key factors that were strongly associated with an L2 learner’s achievement; this finally led to their publication in 1972 from which the proposition and studies of L2 motivation were fashioned for the following 20 years (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In his book, Gardner (1985) states that an individual is assumed to be motivated when he/she first “displays some goal-oriented activity, and second, that person expends some effort” (p. 50). He elaborates three components a motivated L2 learner should have: “attitudes toward learning the language, desire to learn the language, and motivational intensity or effort” (p. 53). It is important to note that in his motivation theory, Gardner (1985) draws on the relationship between motivation and orientation—a goal that stimulates motivation. As a result, he later proposed two types of orientations that have been ubiquitously used in the field of motivation: integrative and instrumental orientations.

Integrative orientation refers to a positive disposition towards the target language community and the desire to learn the language in order to integrate with or belong to such a community. On the other hand, an instrumental orientation arises from the desire to learn the language to attain practical goals such as having a good career and a prospective income (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In addition to the elaboration of his theory, Gardner develops the construct of integrative motive which he defines as “a motivation to learn a language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language.” (Gardner, 1985, pp. 82-83).
During the same period, other social psychological concepts of motivation also emerged. The socially defined construct of linguistic self-confidence theorized by Richard Clément and his associates was the second prominent research on motivation. According to Clément (1980), when an L2 learner is in or a part of a multilingual community that lives together, he/she will be encouraged to seek contact with the target community members that allows him/her to use the target language. If the quantity and quality of the contact with the target community are considerably frequent and allow the learner to use the language with a level of low anxiety, his/her linguistic self-confidence will grow (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996). Clément et al. (1994) further extended that such constructs could also be applied in foreign language learning; even though a learner has limited direct interaction with the L2 community, the media would allow them to be extensively exposed to L2 culture. Accordingly, studies on motivation in similar multicultural contexts were performed by Schuman who came up with his acculturation theory—the integration of the L2 learner with the L2 community—that was further developed by Clément and Noels into situated identity theory (Schuman, 1978; Clément & Noels, 1992, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

From the aforementioned descriptive summary, Gardner’s theories seem to be predominant and they have inspired other researchers to develop further research whose findings inform our understanding of motivation in second language acquisition. However, despite their distinguished influence, these theories are not free from strong criticism. One of the criticisms came from Dörnyei (1994) who argued that the overlapping use of terminologies—integrativeness, integrative orientation, and integrative motive/motivation—in such constructs has led to confusion that may impede interpretation. The second criticism is on the transferability of integrative motivation. It has been widely known that these motivational constructs were theorized by Gardner and his colleagues while they were working in Canada, an ESL setting where the interaction between language learners and the L2 community is more likely to happen. Thus, the transferability and generalizability of integrative motivation are problematic particularly in the EFL contexts that provide very limited opportunities for the learner to have contact with the L2 community and to experience the culture. Therefore, in the case of foreign language learning, Dörnyei (1990) suggests that instrumental motivation prevails over the integrative one and it is more likely to promote successful learning. Despite the controversy over Gardner’s motivation concepts, it is worth noting that such concepts have robustly overshadowed as well as enriched the literature of L2 motivational research for many decades, and in fact have inspired other researchers to further extend the research into new foci and/or through different perspectives.

**The cognitive-situated period**

Early 1990 marked a turning point for motivation research where its endeavors moved beyond Gardner’s (1985) theory of motivation. Unlike the social psycholinguistics period which primarily focused on the L2 learners’ feelings and attitudes towards the L2 and its communities, research in the cognitive period attempted to bring back the emphasis of motivational psychology mainly on cognitive aspects analyzed in more situated learning contexts. The belief that “motivational sources closely related to the learner’s immediate classroom environment have a stronger impact on the overall L2 motivation than had been expected” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 47) has consequently given birth to the cognitive-situated period. However, this does not mean that key findings obtained in the social psychological research were rejected; they were broadened by integrating the cognitive viewpoints.
Two of the prominent researchers who initiated a call to further extend the theoretical framework of the L2 motivation research by exploring it from various perspectives were Crookes & Schmidt (1991). Striving to go beyond the predecessors of motivation theory, these two authors adopted Keller’s motivation design to produce a four-component framework (interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction) that placed the emphasis on classroom-based approaches (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; MacIntyre, 2002).

Another significant work contributing to the cognitive-situated period came from Dörnyei (2002). He proposed a conceptualization of motivation in three different levels:

1) The language level: this is the broadest level of the construct that includes L2-related components—such as the language, community, culture, and advantages gained from the language proficiency—which are heavily drawn from Gardner’s (1985) integrative and instrumental concepts of motivation.

2) The learner level: this level involves the learner’s personality traits such as the need for achievement and self-confidence.

3) The learning situation level: this level takes into account the specific learning motives in the classroom: a) Course-specific (components related to, for example, syllabus, instructional materials, and methods); b) teacher-specific (components related to teacher’s personality and interaction with students); c) group-specific (components related to classroom system and learner group).

Corresponding to the expanded theoretical frameworks of motivation in classroom contexts, during this period, more investigations of L2 motivation were conducted and even constantly developed, particularly research on task-based instruction. Dörnyei (2002) argues that the process of language learning will be more easily understood through analyzing the language learning task.

In this period, due to the educational shift, motivation was seen as a situated construct deriving from educational psychology. Building on Gardner’s integrative and instrumental orientations, further research on L2 (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei, 2009) looked more at the target language, language learner’s needs, and language learning experience. Finally, understanding L2 motivation gradually became less difficult since a task-based framework was used to measure it.

**The process-oriented period**

By the end of 1990, we could see how motivational psychology has impacted our understanding of L2 motivation to a more situated, educational-based approach. Dörnyei (2011) claims that the shift to this approach as well as the increasing belief in language learning task motivation centered the attention on motivation construct as an ongoing process and has consequently led to a more explicit examination of the dynamic nature and temporal dimension of L2 motivation. In order to understand the “dynamic interface between motivational attributes and specific language behavior” (Dörnyei, 2005, p.81), we need to take on a process-oriented approach; this is the third phase of L2 motivation research that accounts for learners’ fluctuating motivational state. Thus, this approach views learning motivation not as a static attribute but as a dynamic nature that can be seen from learner motivation that changes even in a short period of L2 class, let alone throughout a lengthy L2 learning process (Dörnyei, 2001b, 2005).

Seeing the lengthy process of the L2 learning process, the importance of temporal change in learner motivation has grown noticeably in the second language acquisition field (Dörnyei, 2005; Pawlak, 2012). Two of the researchers who placed the motivation tenets from such a
point of view were Williams and Burden (1997). They put forward two concepts: motivation for engagement, for example, choices, intentions, and decisions; and motivation during engagement which covers the feelings and behaviors during the learning process. Being on the same page, Ushioda (1994, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) called for researchers to explore via qualitative research the temporal aspect of L2 motivation and how L2 motivation evolves in a learner’s learning experience. This initiation resulted from the predominant quantitative study in the social-psychological period which tended to measure motivation by analyzing patterns and connections from bigger data in order to make generalizations.

Accordingly, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, pp. 65-66) proposed what they claimed to be the most complete process model of motivation within a unified framework in which they synthesize various types of research lines. The framework consists of first, action sequence, the behavioral process that can be illustrated through this scheme: wishes and desires — goals — intentions — action — goal accomplishment — evaluation. The second is motivational influences that serve to feed the behavioral process. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) argued that the process model attempted to portray the temporal nature of L2 motivation, thus the action sequence is split into three phases: pre-actional (choice motivation), actional (executive motivation), and post-actional (evaluation).

Nevertheless, though Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) claimed the model as the most complete framework, Dörnyei (2005) acknowledges two drawbacks. First, the model is seemingly able to determine when an L2 learning process starts and concludes, while it is less likely to do so in a classroom context where multiple learning processes of other subjects concurrently take place. Second, the model assumes that the L2 learning process happens rather exclusively, neglecting the fact that it actually coincides with other subject learning processes; thus, it fails to embrace the complexity and dynamic nature of the learning process or the learning goals from which learning behavior is crystallized.

In this period, L2 motivation is seen as a lifetime process that constantly changes over time. Several new components that have meaningful impacts on L2 motivation and motivation have been found. Furthermore, researchers put more interest in language learners and their specific circumstances and this is suggested to be best conducted through the qualitative method. As a result, research inquiry on the temporal nature of L2 motivation has started to investigate the global changes in motivation, how such changes evolve throughout the learner’s life and how the learner should regulate him/herself in order to maintain the L2 motivation during the learning process. In the end, realizing that his work is still far from complete as it lacks sensitivity to the motivation complexity, Dörnyei prompted to reconceptualize the motivation construct through a more complex and dynamic perspective (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

L2 motivation theories in the socio-dynamic period
The socio-dynamic period is assumed to be the most current phase in the history of L2 motivation research. Evolving from or somewhat merging with the process-oriented period, some factors such as the complexity of interrelated motivational factors, the influence of situated perspective that pushes the integration of motivation and social context, as well as the inevitable advancement of English as a global language, are believed to be the factors that substantiate the retheorizing of L2 motivation toward a more socio-dynamic perspective. In addition, the socio-dynamic’s view of the conceptualization of L2 motivation underlines the considerations of the complexity of language use and language learning that are happening now in the globalized world (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, MacIntyre & Henry, 2015; also see Lamb, 2017).
As a response to fill the absence of more sufficient models that can capture the multifaceted and dynamic nature of L2 motivation, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) came to offer his most comprehensive model of L2 motivation called L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). Dörnyei argues that the construct stems from two substantial theoretical developments: Gardner’s concept of integrativeness and the findings of a psychological empirical study on the self. The L2MSS comprises three components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. This theory appears to be one of the most relevant motivation concepts to the teaching context, and due to space constraints in the paper, it will be further discussed in the pedagogical application section.

DISCUSSION OF PEDAGOGIC APPLICATION OF L2 MOTIVATION THEORIES IN THE BILINGUAL SCHOOL

Overview of the institution

The pedagogical context is a private bilingual school located in the eastern part of Jakarta. The school was established in 2012 and in 2014 it was authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The school offers the IB continuum: Middle Years Program (MYP) and Diploma Program (DP) while the Primary Years Program (PYP) is offered at a different site of the school. The MYP is a five-year program comprising 10 core subjects, which among others are Language Acquisition (LAcq) and Language and Literature (LL). LAcq is studied in Year 6 until Year 7, while LL is in Year 8 until Year 10. Although this is a bilingual school where English and Indonesian are the media of instruction, 8 out of 10 subjects are taught in English and almost all students prefer to use English to converse with peers and teachers both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, the school assignments are project-based and students are assessed against criteria completed with descriptors for each level of achievement. Furthermore, MYP students are actually prepared to go on to the very demanding Diploma Program followed by IB exams and some career-related programs or apprenticeships.

The relevance of motivation concepts and strategies

a. Instrumental Motivation overriding Integrative Motivation

IB programs are central to international mindedness. It means that they aim to develop internationally minded learners by providing them with plenty of opportunities that allow them to engage with as well as to nurture the inquiry into a wide range of local and global issues enriching their experience as a global citizen (see www.ibo.org). IB programs promote multilingualism because they believe that the ability to communicate in more than one language “provides excellent opportunities to develop intercultural understanding and respect,” (IBO, 2017). Thus, language education plays a central role and takes a symbolic place in the curriculum. In line with this, language learning in this school allows students to engage with hands-on, real life and meaningful learning experiences through various rich authentic materials related to global events and phenomena. This exemplifies the rise of global English. In this case, the English language is no longer seen as exclusively belonging to native American, British or any other Anglophone communities and students' motivation to be part of the L2 community does not seem to exist. This is in line with Lamb (2004) who states that “in the minds of learners, English may not be associated with particular geographical or cultural communities but with a spreading of international culture incorporation… business, technological innovation, consumer values, democracy, world travel and the multifarious icons of fashion, sport and music” (p. 3). Therefore, integrative motivation is not relevant to the students’ L2 motivation in this IB school.
On the contrary, students in this school exhibit instrumental motivation. The reasons parents send their child(ren) to study in an IB school is mostly because they want them to continue their education abroad, have a learning experience, and obtain the IB Diploma certificate. This is like a ‘passport’ with which they will gain some practical advantages in the future. Furthermore, the certificate would allow them to choose a foreign university without having to do A-level or similar foundation programs as one of the common requirements for international students. Ultimately, having completed higher education and obtaining degrees from foreign universities is believed to pave the path for better future endeavors such as excellent careers and higher salaries. In this way, this shows their instrumental motivation.

b. The Process Model

The three-phase motivated behavioral process seems to overshadow some programs in the school. For example, at the beginning of every academic year, students and parents are invited to a goal-setting session. In this session, students have the opportunity “to identify their areas for growth and strategies to improve their learning performance by involving the roles of their teachers and parents.” (School Parents Handbook, 2018, p. 32). Students are encouraged to identify a bigger goal that is broken down into a few sub-goals that they want to achieve throughout the year, what actions they will take, and discuss what or how they think their parents and teacher can help to achieve the goal—these are recorded in a special form and kept by the teacher. This session corresponds with the pre-actional phase of the process model.

Furthermore, after three months or at the end of term 1, students and parents are to attend a three-way conference. As an ongoing process, in this conference, students reflect on what they have done and whether they consistently work toward achieving the goal. They also evaluate how parents, teachers, and/or peers have influenced them this far. Referencing Dörnyei’s (2001a) motivational teaching framework, this opportunity seems to promote a self-motivating strategy. At the end of term 2 (after 6 months), parents are invited to the parent-teacher conference to “evaluate students’ learning and behavior development.” (School Parents Handbook, 2018, p. 32). In addition to the action control strategy, at the end of term 3 (after 9 months), students will have to do a student-led conference that involves only the student and parents. As its name suggests, students take pride in leading the conference where they share their learning process and demonstrate their understanding of the learning by showcasing their completed work or portfolio. Furthermore, at the end of the conference, parents are encouraged to give feedback to their child(ren) about their performance. These conferences are in conjunction with the actional phase of the process model and they very well portray the three basic processes: subtask generation and implementation, appraisal, and action control.

Finally, the end of term 4 is the time when students, by referring to the level of achievement and feedback that is unique to the student in the progress report, evaluate their actions throughout the year toward reaching the goal. The goal-setting form is returned and students are to compare the initial expectations and plans with what they have actually done in reality. Students are encouraged to reflect on what they should have done better and will have to do for their future learning. These records will later be transferred to the teacher in the next grade level to assist the respective students in identifying their goals. Therefore, this final conference is in line with the post-actional phase of the process model.
In conclusion, the practical implication seems to work well in this pedagogical context. We believe that the learning process is dynamic and complex, and it takes years to learn a language. Hence, during the vertical (the same subject among grade levels) and horizontal (different subjects within grade a level) planning, language teachers and other subject teachers will sit next to one another to share students’ progress and their goal-setting records.

c. **L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS)**

Dörnyei’s (2009) L2MSS is the third motivation construct that has significance to language learners in this pedagogical context. The first component of this model is the *ideal L2 self* which is centered around the skills and abilities the learner desires to possess and its effects on their desire to learn the L2 to diminish the gap between the actual and ideal self. The second is the *ought-to L2 self* which is related to the qualities that the learner is expected to have in order to avoid possible adversities. For instance, a learner is motivated to study an L2 to pass an exam and make their parents proud. The third component is the *L2 learning experience* which refers to the real impact of the learning environment on the learner’s L2 motivation, for example, teacher-student or peer interactions. Dörnyei (2009) argues that both self-guides correspond to instrumental motives. Therefore, this confirms the relevance of this concept to students in the IB school which has been previously described in part a to be instrumentally motivated.

Following that, it is necessary to briefly describe an event that exemplifies the implication of such a concept in the school. *Career Chat Day* is an annual event where students have the opportunity to meet and chat with guest speakers who come from diverse professional backgrounds including start-up company CEOs, designers, entrepreneurs, artists, authors, engineers, white-collar professionals, etc. During the event, the guest speakers share their learning trajectory and emphasize the importance of the English language from which they gain practical benefits that finally bring them to where they are now. Through this event, students are hoping to get clear ideas about the many professions the world has in store for them and it can help them identify their L2 ideal selves early in their teenage years.

d. **Other Motivational Strategies**

In his practical book, *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, Dörnyei (2001a) presents a comprehensive account of factors impacting student’s classroom motivation, including “methods and techniques to generate and maintain the learner’s motivation” (p. 2) in a framework that is based on his process-oriented model. I have described some of its related components in the previous subsection, and I will discuss another component that I find important to boost students’ motivation in the L2 classroom.

Making the teaching materials relevant for the learners is one of the most important strategies for the language classroom. In their learning both inside and outside of the classroom, students here are closely engaged with technology, particularly with laptops as they are necessitated in the school technology policy. With laptops connected to the internet, students and teachers can explore various authentic materials with which meaningful activities are created. Furthermore, technology and virtual learning communities such as Google Classroom allows students to collaborate online in project-based learning, such as making online questionnaires, creating podcasts, writing movie reviews, online interviews with native English speakers, and so on. A differentiated strategy also gives students the opportunity to select the format of the project and self-regulate toward completing the project. In addition to the relevant materials for language
classrooms, students can choose to participate in Elective English classes such as Creative Writing and Academic Writing. In this class, students have the opportunity to explore English literature and get additional language skills that they feel are important. A quantitative study by Henry et al. (2018) investigating motivational strategies applied by EFL secondary teachers in Sweden reports that activities using authentic materials and involving digital technologies are the most prominent strategies that are believed to be effective in generating motivation in the classroom.

CONCLUSION
This paper has set out a critical discussion of L2 motivation theory that begins with its historical overview and finally a reflection on the teaching context. The discussion shows how L2 motivation has developed over time through different stages where researchers worked to find the most relevant theories to understand L2 motivation. Debates over particular periods resulted in the reconceptualization of the theory. The most recent research in L2 motivation (see Lamb, 2017) has brought our attention to the complex and dynamic nature of L2 motivation that fluctuates through time. Although it is quite challenging to understand the L2 motivation construct, given its significant impact on the achievement of L2 learning, it is very important to incorporate L2 motivation research and motivational strategies into the curriculum and instructional design to prepare language teachers to put motivational teaching into practice.

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