Teacher-specific motivational strategies in enhancing adult learners' motivation in second language acquisition: A literature review

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Abstract: *This study explores the role of teacher-specific motivational components in enhancing adult learners' motivation in second language acquisition. Drawing from various theoretical frameworks of motivation, including Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's L2 motivational construct, this research synthesizes existing literature to examine how teachers influence learners' motivational states. The findings highlight the pivotal role of teachers in creating a conducive learning environment, setting up appropriate challenges, and providing constructive feedback.*

Keywords: *Teacher-specific motivation, second language acquisition, language teaching strategies, adult learners*

1. Introduction

The importance of learning second languages has become increasingly significant for Vietnamese citizens in the era of globalization. Among the many factors that influence success in second language (L2) learning, motivation is one of the most critical. Recognized as a complex and multifaceted construct, motivation has been extensively studied, leading to the development of various theoretical frameworks that have evolved over time. This report seeks to synthesize and critically discuss these frameworks, with a particular focus on the role of teacher-specific motivational strategies. The goal is to explore how these strategies can effectively generate, enhance, and sustain motivation among adult learners in second language classrooms, ultimately contributing to their success in acquiring a new language.

2. Findings and discussion

2.1. Motivation in second and foreign language contexts

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) described the evolution of motivation in four stages: the socio-psychological period (1959-1990), the cognitive-situated period (1990s), the process-oriented period (early 2000s), and the socio-dynamic period (current). During the socio-psychological period, Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced the "social-education model," which categorized motivation into integrative and instrumental types. Integrative motivation referred to learners' desire to connect with the L2 community and culture, while instrumental motivation focused on the practical benefits of learning a second language, such as career opportunities.

Gardner (2001) later expanded this model to emphasize the role of aptitude and motivation in second language acquisition (SLA), introducing concepts like "integrativeness" and "attitudes toward the Learning Situation" as key components of integrative motivation. However, Au (1988) criticized Gardner's model for its inconsistencies, particularly concerning the effects of attitudes and motivation on SLA. These critiques led Dörnyei (1994) to propose the "L2 motivational construct," a more comprehensive model that includes three levels: the language level (focusing on the cultural and societal aspects of the L2), the learner level (addressing personal traits and cognitive processes), and the learning situation level (encompassing factors like teacher influence, course content, and group dynamics). In parallel, Deci and Ryan (1985) developed the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), distinguishing between intrinsic motivation, driven by personal goals and interests, and extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards and societal pressures. They expanded SDT by categorizing intrinsic motivation into three types—knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation—and extrinsic motivation into three levels—external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation—

based on the degree of internalization.

The process-oriented period marked a shift in understanding motivation as a dynamic process rather than a static state. Dörnyei and Otto (1998) introduced the "Process Model of L2 Motivation," which outlines three phases: the pre-actional phase (choice motivation), where motivation is generated; the actional phase (executive motivation), where motivation is sustained through the learning process; and the post-actional phase (evaluation), where learners reflect on their progress and outcomes. Despite its comprehensive approach, this model faced criticism for oversimplifying the learning process, particularly by assuming clear boundaries between the phases and neglecting the interactions with other ongoing processes. In response to these limitations, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2005, 2009, 2021) introduced the "L2 motivational self-system," a more recent framework that connects L2 learning to learners' self-concept and identity. This model suggested that by aligning language learning with personal identity and self-motivation, learners could more effectively sustain their motivation and achieve success in acquiring a second language. This approach has been recognized as a significant advancement in understanding and fostering motivation in SLA.

2.2. The influences of teachers' motivational strategies on language learning progress

Motivation is widely recognized as a crucial factor in second language (L2) learning, but the debate over who is responsible for igniting students' passion for learning has persisted. Higbee (1996) argued that teachers played no role in motivating learners; in fact, they might have demotivated students by perceiving them as having poor work habits. This perspective placed the burden of motivation on the students themselves, making them responsible for their success or failure. Conversely, studies by Brophy (1987) and Wilkenson (1992) highlighted the significant role teachers played in fostering motivation and ensuring students' success. Teachers were seen as crucial in maintaining learners' interest and alleviating boredom in the classroom.

Cooper & McIntyre (1998) emphasized the importance of teachers in student success, while Reece & Walker (1997) suggested that teaching strategies directly impacted student motivation. Similarly, Dörnyei (1994) and Kikuchi (2009) underscored the influential role of teachers in supporting second language acquisition (SLA).

They identified various teacher roles, such as facilitator, mentor, and initiator. Oxford and Shearin (1994) proposed techniques for stimulating student motivation, including setting clear goals, providing a supportive learning environment, and encouraging intrinsic motivation. They categorized motivational strategies into pedagogical methods, teacher characteristics, and classroom interactions.

Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) further suggested that teacher-related factors—behavior, characteristics, and teaching style—were pivotal. Krashen (1975) also clarified the teachers' responsibilities in the classroom, which were (1) ensuring the understanding of students in every lesson; (2) assigning the students more tasks (or activities) to practice; (3) rectifying their mistakes cleverly; (4) letting the self-check or peer-review their products; (5) making them enjoy the symbols of their learning success (even the smallest success and the lowest progress). Gilakjani et al. (2012) and Seven (2020) have recognized the constructive role of teachers in learning and have identified key qualities of effective teachers: enthusiasm, encouragement, and the ability to create an enjoyable learning environment.

2.3. Age-related differences motivation and the motivational strategies in ESL context

Motivation in second language learning and the influence of teacher-related factors have been widely explored across various contexts, yet age-related differences in motivation, particularly among adult learners, have received less scholarly attention. This gap has spurred growing interest in developing tailored motivational strategies for adult language learners.

Kormos and Csizér (2008) conducted a comprehensive study examining age-related motivational differences among secondary school pupils, university students, and adult learners. They utilized Dörnyei's (2005) Motivational Self-System to explore the relationship between traditional motivational factors, such as integrative and instrumental motivations, and how these factors influence learning behaviors across different age groups. Their findings highlighted that adult learners' motivation to acquire a second language is significantly shaped by two key factors: the Ideal L2 self and attitudes towards language learning, with teachers playing a vital role in forming these attitudes. Kormos and Csizér (2008) recommended that ESL educators adopt various techniques to enhance

adult learners' motivation, such as discussing their specific learning goals and emphasizing the global importance of English.

In parallel, Knowles et al. (2015) proposed an "andragogical approach" to cater to the unique learning needs of adult learners. This approach emphasizes independent learning and self-direction, recognizing that adult learners need to understand the purpose behind their studies before fully engaging. Additionally, they are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, drawing on past experiences that can either facilitate or hinder their progress. Knowles et al. (2015) also noted that adults are typically more motivated by learning that is directly relevant to their social and professional lives and tend to be more intrinsically motivated than younger learners.

Building on these insights, Scruton and Wallace (2017) proposed specific pedagogical strategies for teaching adult learners in ESL contexts. They emphasized the importance of careful lesson planning, the organization of critical thinking activities suited to adult learners, and the creation of a positive and comfortable learning environment. Furthermore, they highlighted the need to boost learners' confidence through fair assessments and constructive feedback, which are crucial for sustaining motivation in adult learners.

3. Conclusion and recommendations

The literature review highlights the crucial role that teacher-specific motivational strategies play in enhancing adult learners' motivation in second language acquisition (SLA). The analysis of various theoretical perspectives, including Gardner (2001)'s socio-educational model and Dörnyei (2009)'s L2 motivational construct, underscores that motivation is a complex and dynamic process. Teachers are instrumental in influencing learners' motivation by creating a supportive learning environment, presenting appropriate challenges, and providing meaningful feedback.

To effectively teach L2 to adult learners, it is recommended that educators adopt and refine motivational strategies that resonate with the unique needs and learning styles of adults. This includes applying adult learning principles, as proposed by Knowles et al. (2015), which emphasize self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation. Teachers should focus on understanding the specific goals and motivations of their learners, tailoring lessons

to make the language relevant to their personal and professional lives.

Moreover, educators should cultivate a positive classroom atmosphere where learners feel encouraged to take risks and engage actively with the language. Practical strategies might include setting clear, attainable goals, using real-life contexts to teach language, and incorporating interactive activities that promote active participation. Teachers should also provide continuous, constructive feedback that not only addresses language proficiency but also supports learners' confidence and motivation. While existing research provides valuable insights into the role of teachers in SLA, ongoing professional development and research are essential. Educators should continuously refine their approaches to better support adult learners' motivation, ensuring that teaching strategies remain effective and relevant in diverse learning environments.

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In the future research, the control method will be modified according to the actual experiment. The model simulation will consider the dynamics of the vehicle as well as the delay of transmit signal of V2V influence on the real-time control of the system. The decision system will be designed to find optimal free space for merging. A series of fuzzy rules is made automatically to control the vehicle and the cost function onsidering the energy consumption, the ride comfort, and total traffic flow is introduced.

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