

A Study on Motivation Orientations of English Learners in Management Major

Xu Wei and Zhang Yi

Abstract—Based on the motivation theory, this study aims to investigate the motivational orientations of the English learners from Management majors. 32 graduate students participated in the questionnaire and accomplished the interview in this research. Based on the statistics processed by SPSS, it is found that (1) instrumental orientation is significantly stronger than the integrative type; (2) among all the motivation items, the most three significant motivations are preparing for a future career, desiring to be a knowledgeable person and passing exams. Besides, based on the analysis of interview, a model of major-oriented, international and nested systems of instrumental motivation was constructed, indicating the interrelationship between motivational factors: globalization, social expectation, university policy, major needs and learner factors. It is expected that this study can provide some implications to English teaching to management students with the investigation of the systematic structure of their motivations.

Index Terms—Motivation orientation, management major, nested model.

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation refers to the combination of efforts plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language. Motivation is also seen as referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of the desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity (Gardner, 1985) [1]. Motivation plays an important role in the rate and success of second or foreign language learning. For several decades, researchers in social psychology and education have recognized the importance of motivation for successful second language learning (Ellis, 2008) [2].

Since Gardner and Lambert (1972) [3] constructed a classic learning motivation model from the perspective of social psychology, how to effectively motivate students to learn English has long been one of the foci of scholarly attention. The subsequent emergence of Dörnyei's theory of L2 Motivational Self System has a profound impact on the study of learning motivation in the following decades. It is acknowledged that the integrative and instrumental orientation is still presented as one of the most robust motivational factors in the language learning research today, which still occurs in many empirical studies (e.g. Ren & Liu, 2020; McEown, Sawaki & Harada, 2017) [4], [5].

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Motivational research focuses more on undergraduate students (e.g. Hui, Zhang & Li, 2019; Fu, 2019; Zhang, 2017) [6]-[8] and high school learners (e.g. Li & Jiao, 2019; Liu, 2016; Liu, 2014) [9]-[11], while less on the graduate learner group. This gap was also indicated in Feng's (2019) [12] review of motivational investigations from 2009 to 2019 in China. However, foreign language learning plays a significant role in graduate education and the cultivation of international competitiveness of graduates (Zhao, Xiao & Han, 2017; Yu & Wei, 2019) [13], [14]. It is, therefore, important to investigate their English learning motivation, so as to help educators to better the educational mode of graduate English teaching through knowing the need of graduate learners.

In English Learning Motivation investigations, the learners are simply divided as the English major and non-English majors in general (Wu, 2019; Lu & Wang, 2018; Chang, 2017; Wang, 2014; Jing, 2017; Zhong, 2017) [15]-[20], and little attention was devoted to a single, specific non-English major. Whereas several studies have seen the effect of the major difference in the motivation of EFL and devoted to the investigations of journalism major (Ren & Liu, 2020) [4] and medical (Huang, 2020) [21] major, few studies explored the motivation of management students. However, it might be interesting to focus on Management majors, because they are between soft science and hard science, and their learners tend to learn English for both business and academic purposes, whose motivation may be more complicated than other majors.

To concern the gaps above mentioned, this paper would like to particularly set in The School of Management and investigate the motivation orientation of graduate students and aims to answer the following two questions:

- (1) What is the motivation orientation of graduate students from the School of Management?
- (2) What are the reasons for this orientation?

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pioneering work by Gardner and Lambert (1972) [3] on motivation in second language learning introduced researchers to the terms integrative and instrumental orientation (Strong, 1984). This famous classification of language learning motivation has been regarded as an important factor that affects second and foreign language learning.

The integrative motive (or integrative motivation) is the high level of drive on the part of the individual to acquire the

language of a valued L2 group in order to facilitate communication with that group (Gardner, 1985) [1]. To give more concrete explanation, some scholars defined the behaviors of integratively motivated learners that “have positive attitudes toward the target language community, value the people and their culture, desire to interact with speakers of the target language and have an interest to be members of that community” (Lim, 2012). [22]

An instrumental orientation is “more self-oriented in the sense that a person prepares to learn a new code in order to derive benefits of a non-interpersonal sort” (Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 14) [3]. To make it clear, there is another definition: “Instrumental Motivation refers to the individual’s basic reason(s) to embark on a particular activity for pragmatic, utilitarian benefits. For instance, instrumentally motivated learners refer to those who choose to learn a particular language in order to help them achieve other rewards such as getting a well-paid job or promotion” (Lim, 2012) [22]. “Gardner and Lambert (1972) [3] suggested that individuals with an integrative orientation would demonstrate greater motivational effort in learning an L2, and, thus, achieve greater L2 competence” (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998), while “Dörnyei (1990) took into account the impact of the contexts of L2 learning (i.e., EFL vs. ESL) and proposed an approach to L2 learning motivation that emphasized the importance of instrumental motivation in an FL context” (Noels, 2000) [23]. Thus, both the instrumental and integrative motivation has certain functions of promoting English learning.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Subjects

32 graduate students from the School of Management will be randomly selected to participate in this research. The research targets graduate students because generally, they have a more clear view of their language learning than undergraduates, which enables them to have a more thorough understanding of their learning motivation. Besides, the research is restricted in The School of Management for the season that its disciplines are between soft science and hard science, which may appear some interesting results comparing to the completely soft or hard science. The detailed information of our participants is listed in the following Table I.

TABLE I: THE DETAILED INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Gender	Grade	English level	Major
Male	16	G 1 16	CET-4 6
Female	16	G 2 10	CTE-6 26
		G 3 6	IEM 7
			TEM 1
Total			32

*Note: BM for “Business Management”; MS for “Management Science”; IEM for “Industrial Engineering Management”; TEM for “Technology Economics and Management.”

B. Questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire consists of two main parts including the background information part and the main part

which is related to learners’ ELM. The background information consists of gender, grade, English level and major. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery by R. C. Gardner (1985) [1] will be adapted as the reference for the main part of the questionnaire since it has been widely used among EFL/ESL researchers. 10 statements related to Integrative and Instrumental Motivation are revised from the test battery based on the Chinese situation, which is presented as follows Table II.

TABLE II: THE STATEMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

No.	Statement
S1	我学英语是因为有助于我欣赏和理解外国文化、习俗、艺术。 Studying English can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate art and literature in foreign countries.
S2	我学英语是因为想与外国人更好、更多地交流，希望交一些外国朋友。 Studying English can be important for me because it will allow me to communicate more and better with foreigners and make friends with them.
S3	我学英语是因为它可以让我更加轻松自在地与外国人相处。 Studying English can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with fellows who speak English.
S4	我学英语是因为想更多地参与留学生群体的活动。 Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of international students.
S5	我学英语是想更好地了解外国人的生活。 Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to know more about foreign life.
S6	我学英语是因为找工作的需要或将来获得工作提升的机会。 Studying English can be important for me because I need it for my future career.
S7	我学英语是想将来跟外国人做生意。 Studying English can be important for me because I need it to do business with foreigners.
S8	我学英语是为了去国外留学。 Studying English can be important for me because I want to study abroad.
S9	我学英语是为了通过考试。 Studying English can be important for me because I need to pass exams.
S10	学习英语可以增长知识，开拓视野，使我成为一个更加博学的人。 Studying English can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.

C. Research Procedure

Firstly, after the questionnaire being revised, it was piloted with 5 learners to test whether the statements were appropriate and the wording used was understandable enough for the participants. Secondly, the questionnaires were administered to the 32 individual subjects in person for approximately 10 minutes. Thirdly, the data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed through the tool Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as T-test and One-way Analysis of Variance were conducted to detect significant differences between the orientations in the terms of ELMs. Fourthly, 5 graduate students from the School of Management will be selected to help generate questions for the interview protocol based on the result of the questionnaire survey. Specifically, the participants will be asked to brainstorm about their motivations to learn English and reflect on the factors that affect their motivation. Fifthly, all of the 32 students were required to participate in an interview which might take 15-20 minutes. Finally, the interview data was processed through Python and presented in the figures of wordcloud. The reasons behind the orientations were explained and the

major oriented, interactional and nested model of ELMs was eventually constructed based on the current survey.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results of Motivation Orientations

Based on the data collected from thirty-two participants, the descriptive statistics of their motivation orientation are listed in the following table.

TABLE III: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MOTIVATION ORIENTATIONS

	Integrative Motivation	Instrumental Motivation
Mean	15.38	18.81
Min	8	15
Max	22	22
SD	3.066	1.891

As Table III shows, the motivation orientations are different in lines of mean, minimum and standard deviation. The average score of integrative motivation (15.38) is less than the instrumental motivation (18.81), which means that students learning English is more likely out of non-interpersonal purposes. Besides, the minimum of integrative motivation (8) is also smaller than that of

instrumental type (15).

To investigate whether there is a significant difference between the two orientations, the Independent Samples Test was employed in this research. The results are listed in the following Table IV.

TABLE IV: LEVENE'S TEST FOR EQUALITY OF VARIANCES

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Motive	Equal variances assumed	3.710	.059
	Equal variances not assumed		

In the table, we can see that the variances of the two motivations are relatively equal ($P > 0.05$). Thus, the performed T-test is valid. Table V presents the test results.

The T-test examined the equality of means between two motivation orientations, the results reveal that there is a significant difference between integrative and instrumental motivation ($MD = -3.438, P = .000$). This finding supports the finding by Au (1988) [24], Crookes and Schmidt (1991) [25] that integrative motive may not work well in learners in a foreign language setting.

TABLE V: T-TEST FOR EQUALITY OF MEANS BETWEEN TWO MOTIVATIONS

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Std. ED	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Motive	Equal variances assumed	-5.397	62	.000	-3.438	.637	-4.711	-2.164
	Equal variances not assumed	-5.397	51.602	.000	-3.438	.637	-4.716	-2.159

*Note: MD for "mean difference"; ED for "error difference"

The above part has described the overall difference between two motivation orientations, thus the following section is going to find out the detailed distinctions among 10 items of motivation. It is shown in the Fig. 1 that the S6 (4.41) obtained the highest score, which means that for participants, the most significant motivation for learning English is related to their future career. The S10 (4.25) and S9 (4.13) ranked second and third, and it indicates that the other two important factors are exams and desires to be a knowledgeable person. It should be noted here that all of the top three scores lies in the instrumental motivation. The fourth and fifth-highest scores occur in the S3 (3.66) and S2 (3.50), which are associate with communication and getting along with foreigners. These two motivations belong to integrative orientations. The lowest one is S4 (2.91) which is the desire of participating more freely in the activities of international students.

To make the results more accurate and reliable, the One-way Analysis of Variances was conducted, but before comparing the mean scores of 10 statements, Homogeneity of Variances was tested. The results are listed as follow Table VI.

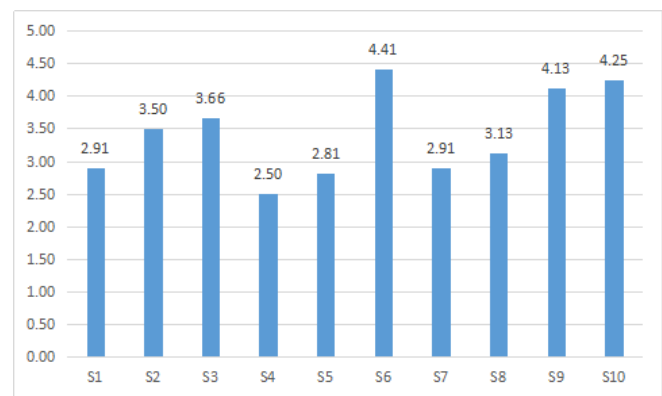


Fig. 1. The score of each statement of motivation orientations.

TABLE VI: TEST OF HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
12.038	9	1084	.000

The results indicate that the variances are different ($P < .000$). And the One-way Analysis of Variances was performed to compare the means among different statements. The results are shown in the following Table VII.

TABLE VII: LEVENE'S TEST FOR EQUALITY OF VARIANCES

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	129.637	9	14.404	19.912	.000
Within Groups	224.250	310	.723		
Total	353.888	319			

The statistics show that there is a significant difference among the scores of 10 statements. To find out the most distinguished items, Tamhane's Post Hoc Tests were

TABLE VIII: MULTIPLE COMPARISONS OF SCORES OF 10 STATEMENTS

I \ J	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)	MD(J-I)
S1 MD(I-J)		.594	.750	-.406	-.094	1.500*	.000	.219	1.219*	1.344*
S2 MD(J-I)	-.594		.156	-1.000*	-.688	.906*	-.594	-.375	.625	.750
S3 MD(J-I)	-.750	-.156		-1.156*	-.844	.750	-.750	-.531	.469	.594
S4 MD(J-I)	.406	1.000*	1.156*		.313	1.906*	.406	.625	1.625*	1.750*
S5 MD(J-I)	.094	.688	.844	-.313		1.594*	.094	.313	1.313*	1.438*
S6 MD(J-I)	-1.500*	-.906*	-.750	-1.906*	-1.594*		-1.500*	-1.281*	-.281	-.156
S7 MD(J-I)	.000	.594	.750	-.406	-.094	1.500*		.219	1.219*	1.344*
S8 MD(J-I)	-.219	.375	.531	-.625	-.313	1.281*	-.219		1.000*	1.125*
S9 MD(J-I)	-1.219*	-.625	-.469	-1.625*	-1.313*	.281	-1.219*	-1.000*		.125
S10 MD(J-I)	-1.344*	-.750*	-.594	-1.750*	-1.438*	.156	-1.344*	-1.125*	-.125	

*Notes: MD for "mean difference"; The mean difference is significant at the 0

B. Discussion on the Reasons for Two Motivation Orientations

The motivation orientations have been investigated in the previous section, and it is found that (1) instrumental orientation is significantly stronger than the integrative type; (2) among all the motivation items, the most three significant motivations are preparing for a future career, desiring to be a knowledgeable person and passing exams. Based on this quantitation results, an interview involving 32 students is performed to find out the reasons for this phenomenon.

the knowledge of foreign languages because of quite typical and practical motivation- job hunting and career development. Within the wave of globalization, "English is in the process of being reframed as a basic must-have social and educational skill" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) [26]. A common view amongst participants was that as a lingua franca, English is like a surviving skill in nowadays hyper-competitive working market, especially in densely populated China:

"In nowadays society, finding a good job is very difficult, but if I can speak English well, I will become more competitive."

"It's helpful (to learn English), because it's impossible to effectively communicate with people all over the world only by Chinese at present. English is a universal language tool, and it is necessary to learn and use it. Especially for students of Management major, learning English well will be very helpful for future job hunting and career development."

"Personally, I think learning English makes it easier for me to find a good job because English skill has been one of the main requirements of most jobs. In this era of globalization, English is undoubtedly of great help to my future career development."

"Global awareness has been a very important quality of competitive personnel in nowadays society, so learning English is very helpful for future job hunting and career



Fig. 2. The interview about preparing for future career concerning ELM.

1) Preparing for future career

It is not surprising to find that the students highly valued

development”.

As we noted in the interview, the respondents have been aware that English is playing an increasingly significant role in their future careers in the process of globalization. The enterprises or institutions also command higher requirements of English competence. Thus, students are strongly motivated to acquire English knowledge. These results support the idea that motivations of language learning are associated with globalization and social expectation, which construct the general context of their motivational system (two outer loops in Fig. 3).

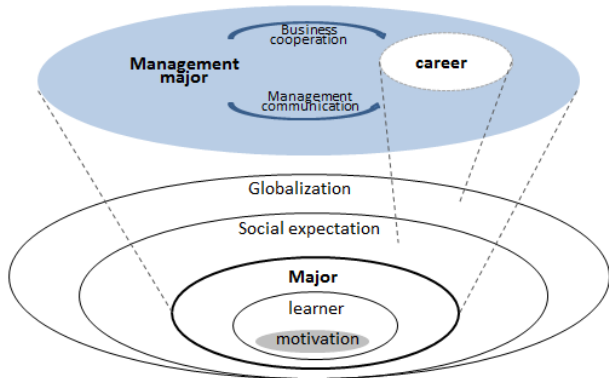


Fig. 3. An initial representation of the nested systems in the instrumental motivation of management majors.

The interview data also shed light on the interrelated nature of learning motivations and majors. We found that some of the participants associated their majors with their future career when they were asked to explain their motives:

“We are major in Management, comparing to the Engineering students, we are required to be good at communicating with others. We may have business corporations with foreigners in the future. It is necessary and beneficial to learn English well. If we do not learn English well, it will become a bottleneck in our career”.

“My major is Management Science and Engineering. Learning English can help me enter an international enterprise and better communicate with others. Also, I need to read the technical manual, and the documents are all in English”.

“My major is Business Management. After the graduate, I will do business management in an enterprise. In my future work, there will be some foreign business cooperation, so if I learn English well, it will be very helpful for my career development”.

As they told us, they are management majors, which endow their future careers with the sociable nature. Communication and business cooperation will be an important part of their future job. Whether they are able to expend their career to the international market is depend on their English competence to some extent. In this sense, the management students must obtain enough English knowledge to get a seat in the world business competition.

Overall, the findings suggested that language learning motivation is probably mediated through the students’ immediate environment: globalization, social expectation and major needs (3 loops on the bottom of Fig. 3). The English leaning motivation concerning future career is

closely related to the major, in the sense that major leads to the direction of a future career, and the potential jobs require English competence in the social context of China and in the waves of globalization (the loop on the top of Fig. 3). The interactional relations between major and other motivational factors are summarized in the initial model of motives below.



Fig. 4. The interview about passing exams concerning ELM.

2) Passing exams

The interview data indicated that motivated behaviors were also brought about by the university policy. For example, as 6 students noted that they study English in order to pass the CET-6, because if not, they cannot graduate successfully according to the university’s regulation.

A group of participants expressed the belief that passing BEC (Business English Certificate) would help them find a good job or get promoted:

“I want to learn English because I want to pass the BEC test. A lot of my classmates also enrolled in the test. They said it is very helpful when finding a job”.

“(I am learning English) To pass the Cambridge Business English test. It is mainly for the future career development. As a graduate student of management, BEC will be of great help to my future career development.”

“(I am learning English) To pass BEC test, because it is a significant and authoritative certificate of business English proficiency”.

Several respondents stated that they are working for passing IELTS (International English Language Testing System). As one of them said,

“I am studying English to pass IELTS exam, because I want to go abroad to further my study. Also, it will be useful when I apply a job.”

Our interview data related to the exams revealed that university policy and future career have an effect on students’ language learning motivation. The extended form of the model (Fig. 5) of the motivational system includes the university policy as an element of language learning motivation. Besides, the interrelationship between exam and career is also presented at the level of major concerning ELM: BEC and IELTS are benefit for job hunting and future development. Especially, as the arrows indicate in Fig. 5, BEC is more closely related to learners’ future career, because it represents the learners’ mastering of business English, rather than the general language skills in all field as IELTS represents.

students' first step of becoming "broad-horizon" is to attend exams and get certain English proficiency certificates because they are needed for applying for international learning or training programs. Besides, they want to be "voluble" because they need to manage communication, which is required in their future career. Additionally, the learners would like to be "translator-independent" because machine translator is not advanced enough to meet their academic and professional needs. Therefore, students would like to get access to the first-hand material and obtain more knowledge. To conclude, being more knowledgeable is one of the fillers of the desire of learning English, which comes from the inside world of learners and interacts with the factors from the outside environment. In addition, the new unexpected finding detected in the interview is also presented in the model: learning English for academic research, which is associated with the university policy. (See Fig. 7).

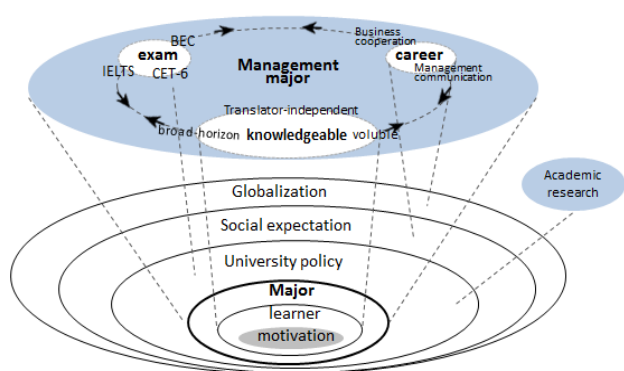


Fig. 7. The final form of the model of the nested systems in the instrumental motivation of management majors.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the motivation theory, this study aims to investigate the motivational orientations of the English learners in The School of Management. 32 graduate students have participated in the questionnaire and all of them accomplished the interview conducted in this research. Based on the statistics processed by SPSS, it is found that (1) instrumental orientation is significantly stronger than the integrative type ($P=0.000$); (2) among all the motivation items, the most three significant motivations are preparing for a future career, desiring to be a knowledgeable person and passing exams. Besides, based on the interview data, a model of the nested systems in instrumental motivation was constructed, including globalization, social expectation, university policy, major needs and learner factors. The model is major oriented and presented the interrelationship between the instrumental motivational factors concerning management major students.

It is expected that this study could help second language learners who are major in but not restrict in Management to get a more clear view of their stratified motivations, especially instrumental orientations. Besides, the model can be helpful for language teaching in Management majors, the lectures are able to better motivate students to learn English through designing more targeting materials and meet the needs of students. It is noteworthy that this study provided an

exploratory way of analyzing the systematic structure of motivation, which would be beneficial for future ESP teaching. A limitation of the current study is that the number of participants was relatively small. It would be better for future study to extend the number of samples.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Xu Wei conducted the research and wrote the paper; Professor Zhang Yi provides critical suggestions; all authors had approved the final version.

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