**The Impact of** **Motivation, Emotion and Attitude on Foreign Language Learning and Its Implications for College English Teaching**

**ABSTRACT**

**Aims:** This paper examines the impact of motivation, emotion, and attitude on foreign language learning, aiming to provide practical teaching strategies for educators.

**Methodology:** This paper primarily employs the literature review method and theoretical analysis method.

**Findings:** In foreign language learning, motivation drives learners to take action and has an important relationship with learning outcomes. Attitude in foreign language learning is another major factor that affects learning outcomes.The success of foreign language teaching relies not only on the imparting of knowledge but also on the guidance of students' emotions and the overcoming of psychological barriers.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** To help students learn a foreign language well, teachers need to adopt a tailored approach, promoting not only the improvement of language skills but also a positive and optimistic mindset. Teachers should employ scientific teaching methods and emotional education to help students develop a positive learning attitude and self-image, thereby unlocking their learning potential and achieving efficient learning.

**Significance:** This paper not only deepens the understanding of psychological factors in foreign language learning but also provides valuable guidance for foreign language teaching practices, holding significant theoretical and practical importance.

***Keywords:*** *Foreign language learning; motivation; emotion; attitude; teaching strategies*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Learning foreign language is a long and complex process. Even though learners are in the same environment, their learning outcomes can vary significantly. These differences are caused by a combination of various internal and external factors. The external learning environment has a significant impact on learners. A favorable environment is conducive to foreign language learning, while an unfavorable environment can create obstacles for foreign language learning (He., 2001). Therefore, it is the responsibility of schools and teachers to create good external conditions for learners (MacIntyre, 2003). However, although the influence of the external environment cannot be ignored, internal factors in foreign language learning still require significant attention (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). Personalized learning elements, such as learning strategies, attitudes, and abilities, significantly affect students' enthusiasm and effectiveness in learning (Sturgeon, 2006). Previous research has mostly focused on traditional variables such as external environment, language background, age, or cognitive ability, with less attention paid to learners' internal psychological factors (Oz et al., 2015). This paper focuses on analyzing internal factors such as motivation, attitude, and emotion in foreign language learning, and explores their impact on foreign language learning. These influencing factors in foreign language learning are interrelated (Zhao, 2015). A deeper understanding of these personalized factors can help us better understand the individual differences among learners, thereby enabling the development of more precise teaching plans in the field of foreign language teaching and improving students' learning outcomes (Dörnyei, 1998).

In the current foreign language education model, a student-centered, teacher-assisted approach is advocated (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). Teachers need to fully recognize the central role of learners in language acquisition, scientifically consider the multiple factors that affect language learning, and flexibly apply appropriate teaching methods and techniques (Sturgeon, 2006; Saito et al., 2018). To help foreign language learners improve their learning performance, this paper will explore personalized factors such as motivation, attitude, and emotion in foreign language learning, and provide targeted improvement strategies for educators.

1. **MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

In foreign language learning, motivation drives learners to take action and has an important relationship with learning outcomes (Shao et al., 2019). Learners with strong motivation are more likely to take the initiative to put in more effort and thus are more likely to master the foreign language they are learning. Canadian scholars Gardner and Lambert classified the types of motivation in foreign language learning into integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation mainly involves learners showing a strong interest in the target language and its culture, with the goal of integrating into and becoming part of the target society through learning the target language (Fandiño et al., 2019). This motivation stems from the learner's identification with and desire for the target language culture. Learners with integrative motivation not only hope to master the language but are also willing to accept and integrate into the values and lifestyle of that culture. Learners with integrative motivation can experience joy in learning and can master the target language more quickly and proficiently (Khajavy et al., 2018; Richards, 2022). For learners driven by instrumental motivation, learning a foreign language is seen as a means to achieve personal goals. These learners are committed to mastering a foreign language to pass various exams or to find a desired job (Seven, 2020). Instrumental motivation places more emphasis on the utility of the foreign language rather than a strong interest in the language or its culture. Although instrumental motivation is goal-oriented, it does not last long, and once the goal is achieved, the motivation may quickly dissipate. Other researchers have proposed integrative community motivation, which is deeper than integrative motivation. Learners with this motivation are eager to integrate into the target language community and are willing to fully accept the target language culture, even to the point of abandoning their original identity. This type of motivation is more common among immigrant groups. Because these learners have a strong sense of cultural identity, they often master the foreign language better.

Gardner and Lambert began researching motivation in foreign language learning in the 1970s, providing important support for subsequent scholars' exploration in this area. However, as research progressed, scholars found that the boundaries between instrumental and integrative motivation are not always clear, and the classification of specific motivations often depends on the subjective perception of the learner. To address this, Portuguese scholar Dornyei.Z constructed a three-dimensional structural model of motivation in foreign language learning from the perspectives of language, learner, and learning situation, to analyze and study the complexity of motivation. This model enriches motivation theory and provides educators with a more comprehensive perspective on foreign language teaching. The language level focuses on the attractiveness of the target language itself, the learner level involves individual interests and goals, and the learning situation level emphasizes the impact of the teaching environment and external support on motivation. In the field of domestic research, significant progress has also been made in the study of motivation in foreign language learning. Scholars have proposed classifications such as certificate motivation and deep versus surface motivation based on the actual situation of domestic learners. Research shows that about 80% of foreign language learners in China exhibit a clear tendency towards exam-oriented learning, with their driving force mainly coming from obtaining diplomas or passing exams, rather than focusing on improving practical language skills. In contrast, learners with deep motivation often show stronger enthusiasm for learning, with significantly improved knowledge acquisition efficiency and more rapid development of language skills.

1. **ATTITUDE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Attitude in foreign language learning is another major factor that affects learning outcomes. Attitude reflects an individual's cognitive orientation and behavioral patterns towards specific things based on their value system and moral standards (Zhang et al., 2020; Getie, 2020). Famous psychologist Gordon Allport proposed that attitude is a preparatory mechanism of the psychological and nervous system that guides and continuously influences an individual's response in specific behaviors. Linguists typically analyze attitudes in foreign language learning into three dimensions. These include the learner's subjective perception and emotional experience of the target language and its user group; the learner's understanding and acceptance of the cultural significance and social value system carried by the target language; and the learner's judgment of the value of language learning and the exploration of intrinsic motivation. Students with self-aware and interest-driven learning attitudes are usually motivated by an inner drive to pursue learning spontaneously. In contrast, students with persuasive and coercive learning attitudes are more driven by external pressure, either persuaded by others or forced to learn. These classifications are based on learning behaviors. Regardless of the content being learned, attitude is crucial, and in foreign language learning, the connection between attitude and emotional factors is particularly close. Therefore, cultivating a positive learning attitude is very important.

The composition of attitude includes three core elements: cognition, emotion, and conation. The cognitive component reflects an individual's beliefs and views about a specific object, the emotional component reflects an individual's evaluation of likes and dislikes, and conation refers to an individual's potential choices in action. In the field of foreign language learning, students' learning attitudes are manifested as a holistic reflection of their cognitive understanding, emotional experience, and behavioral intentions towards language learning. This attitude is closely linked to the learner's value orientation and is also regulated by their emotional state, as emotion is essentially an external manifestation of attitude. Learning attitudes can be positive or negative. The former makes foreign language learners more willing to interact with target language users, thereby improving language skills and achieving better learning outcomes. The latter, however, can lead learners to develop a rejection of the target language and its culture, finding foreign language expressions awkward, and even developing a fear of foreign language learning, ultimately affecting learning outcomes. A positive attitude greatly enhances students' learning motivation and efficiency. Teachers should help students develop a positive learning attitude through diverse teaching methods and content, thereby achieving better results in foreign language learning.

1. **EMOTION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Wang Chuming (Wang., 2001) pointed out: "Emotion is important because it is the engine of learning. No matter how good the machine is, if it is not started, it is just a pile of waste. If the role of emotion is well utilized, it can motivate students to learn actively, release their learning potential, and solve psychological and ideological problems in the learning process." In the process of language learning, students' perception of the teacher's professional competence, teaching methods, and teaching style, as well as their evaluation of their own learning tendencies and outcomes, will significantly affect their learning state. However, many students experience more anxiety and tension than pleasure and excitement when learning a foreign language, and this emotion is particularly evident. Anxiety and tension are often seen in expressive tension, communicative tension, evaluative anxiety, and reflective anxiety (Liu., 2001).

Emotional factors are closely related to students. As early as the late 1970s, the famous Monitor Model regarded the Affective Filter as one of the key factors in second language acquisition (Krashen., 1982). The Acculturation Model, which has had a significant impact on second language acquisition research, is also largely based on the study of emotional factors (Schumann.,1978). Poor performance in certain areas can weaken students' learning motivation and self-confidence, thereby reducing their learning efficiency and leading to a decline in academic performance. Emotional variables in the process of second language acquisition include learning motivation, cognitive tendencies, self-identity, self-confidence, tension, and empathy. These factors influence each other, and the factor of self-image needs to be given special attention. Self-image is constructed based on students' self-perception of their academic abilities and their subjective judgment of how they are perceived by others. Learners are usually unwilling to show their shortcomings in front of others and will establish certain psychological defenses. The quality of individual self-assessment will determine whether emotional factors such as learning motivation, cognitive tendencies, and self-confidence will have a positive impact. Among foreign language learners, those with a poor self-image are more likely to experience negative emotions. This emotional fluctuation directly affects their learning motivation, significantly reducing their enthusiasm for learning. Unlike other subjects, foreign language learning requires learners to read aloud what they have learned. Although pronunciation may only be one part of the foreign language learning process, it has a profound and lasting impact on the learner's subsequent learning process. Oral expression is an external manifestation of language ability, and the quality of pronunciation directly determines whether this manifestation can be done well. Foreign language learning often requires students to engage in oral expression, and students with poor pronunciation may fear revealing their shortcomings, threatening their self-image, and thus building psychological defense mechanisms, even developing resistance to foreign language learning, ultimately falling into a vicious cycle. On the other hand, students with good pronunciation are more likely to gain recognition from classmates and teachers, enhancing their self-confidence and forming a virtuous cycle. This phenomenon is particularly evident in middle school English teaching, where students in the second year of middle school often show a polarization in language skills, with students who have good pronunciation being able to master language skills more smoothly, while students with poor pronunciation may face learning difficulties. Although pronunciation learning is only a small part of foreign language learning, it plays a key role in affecting the overall learning outcome. This phenomenon also explains why some "Crazy English" learning methods have attracted a large number of learners. By having learners practice oral English loudly, these methods help learners break through psychological barriers and enter an ideal learning state. Therefore, helping students practice pronunciation well when they first start learning a foreign language can effectively help them overcome emotional barriers and establish a positive self-image in foreign language learning.

1. **TARGETED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES**

1.In foreign language teaching, teachers should comprehensively implement needs analysis, expectation theory, and motivational methods, and integrate emotional education to help students tap into their potential and develop their ability to self-motivate. Teachers need to help students set clear and realistic goals. Long-term goals should be somewhat challenging, while short-term goals should be aligned with the student's actual level. It is essential to set appropriate standards based on the student's abilities to avoid unreasonable pressure. For example, in the English classroom teaching process for non-English major college students, given the limited teaching time, it is difficult to master all language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation in a short period.

2.Teachers should adopt scientific and efficient teaching methods, and classroom interaction management plays a key role in addressing emotional variables and is an important teaching method. The teacher's task is to inspire students' confidence and willingness to learn actively. Moreover, teachers should possess profound professional knowledge, demonstrate professional teaching standards in the classroom, and earn students' respect and trust through their professional demeanor, thereby stimulating their enthusiasm for learning.

3.The selection of teaching content is extremely important. The target language culture must be treated as a real culture. Teachers should encourage students to maintain a positive attitude towards the target language culture. In the classroom, teachers should make full use of modern multimedia equipment, using a multi-sensory teaching approach that integrates text, images, and sound to stimulate students' senses and arouse their thirst for knowledge. Using the most modern equipment and facilities can provide students with a rich, vivid, and interesting learning environment, thereby increasing their interest in the subject. Multimedia is not only a major breakthrough in teaching technology but also an important expansion in teaching philosophy.

4.Teachers should not only possess excellent classroom management skills and teaching methods, creating a fun classroom environment, but also effectively enhance students' concentration. In the classroom, interaction can increase students' sense of participation and improve their attention. At the same time, teachers should focus on checking and supervising students to ensure they can complete their learning tasks both inside and outside the classroom.

5.For students with negative anxiety, teachers should provide more attention and encouragement to help them build confidence. Students with poor English foundations can improve their weaknesses with the help of teachers. Through patient guidance and encouragement, teachers can help students eliminate excessive anxiety and improve their academic performance.

6.Modern language teaching is showing a trend of diversified development, requiring educators to carry out innovative practical activities while retaining traditional methods. The "soul" of teaching is the students. They should be placed at the center of all considerations, ensuring that the communicative function of language is fully realized. Educators should skillfully use a variety of teaching strategies, achieving expected results through the appropriate arrangement of various teaching resources. Teachers need to focus on the organic integration of teaching methods, encouraging students to actively construct knowledge in real language communication scenarios. Importantly, students should be taught to make full use of their time both inside and outside the classroom, and they should be encouraged to participate in practical activities.

7. In the process of teaching, educators need to pay special attention to the personalized characteristics of learners, such as cognitive preferences, learning motivation, and knowledge accumulation. It is necessary to differentiate teaching methods and adopt flexible and diverse guidance methods to improve each individual's language learning ability. Helping learners establish a clear learning orientation and intrinsic motivation is the primary task. Language learning should stem from interest and love, not from any utilitarian motivation. Teachers must help learners set their own goals. In the teaching design process, educators need to implement the concept of hierarchical guidance, breaking the constraints of a unified teaching model. Specifically, a multi-dimensional course system should be created based on learners' cognitive characteristics, interests, and knowledge accumulation, fully stimulating their enthusiasm for learning. Progressive evaluation standards should be set according to each student's ability, fully leveraging the guiding role of evaluation. Establishing a scientific evaluation system is also crucial. Real-time attention should be paid to classroom dynamics, and timely teaching interventions should be carried out to provide personalized guidance to learners.

8.The process of foreign language acquisition is stage-based. In the basic education stage, although learners' abstract thinking and logical reasoning abilities are still developing, their language imitation and mechanical memory abilities are relatively strong. Language teaching during this period is suitable for immersive teaching methods, focusing on developing basic communication skills. In the secondary education stage, learners have preliminary language perception abilities and vocabulary reserves, their memory functions are at their best, and they exhibit a strong desire for knowledge. Teaching at this stage should focus on using visual teaching resources, strengthening listening and speaking training, and developing learners' oral expression abilities, promoting the systematic accumulation of language knowledge and the improvement of comprehensive application abilities.

1. **CONCLUSION**

Educating students and imparting knowledge to them is the responsibility of teachers. Therefore, teachers must be prepared to provide ideological education to students, develop the habit of combining classroom teaching with ideological education, and maintain their interest in the course. To help students learn a foreign language well, teachers need to adopt a tailored approach, promoting not only the improvement of language skills but also a positive and optimistic mindset. When teaching a foreign language, imparting knowledge is key, but the method lies in guiding students' emotions. Teachers should use scientific teaching methods to evoke positive emotions in students, help them overcome psychological barriers, and develop their learning potential, thereby achieving the goal of efficient learning.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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