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A dynamic systems theory model for reading motivation among English as a foreign language learners in China

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Abstract

English learning has been prevalent in China since the Reform and Opening-up Policy in the early 1980s. The number of English learners in China has increased tremendously over the years and the approach to learning English as a foreign language has also changed over time. However, most studies on reading motivation were conducted at one point in time rather than discussing it from a dynamic perspective. The article begins with a literature review, then discusses the relationships and interconnections between factors influencing reading motivation, adopting a Dynamic Systems Theory, to develop a conceptual model to study the reading motivation among English as a Foreign Language learners in China.

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1. Introduction

A very common question and concern for many people anticipating a trip to China is whether the Chinese people's level of English is adequate for the visitor to be able to ask for directions, order food, and partake in other activities. This concern is irrelevant particularly in urban areas because the number of English learners in China is more than 400 million, which is approximately one third of the population in China (Bolton & Graddol, 2019). Since the Reform and Opening-up Policy in the early 1980s, English has been promoted in China at the governmental level, educational level and individual level for modernisation, internationalisation, competitiveness, as well as upward and outward mobility (He, 2017). The emphasis on English learning has expanded from the memorisation of grammar rules and vocabulary to more creative skills such as writing and speaking which are an important part of English education in China. Guangdong Province, for example, has started requiring all students to take the English speaking exam for the National College Entrance Examination as of 2010.

Currently, learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China still relies strongly on written text materials, from primary school to university. Taking the English education from primary to senior high school in Heilongjiang province, for example, there are no listening and speaking classes, which is attributable to there being no corresponding assessments or evaluations in any English examinations. English Reading is still emphasised at tertiary level in China. This is because reading extensively is indispensable to learn a foreign language well (Dong, 2003) and the reading comprehension score accounts for the largest proportion (35%) in the College English Test Band 4 and 6 (CET-4/6) in China, which is in line with Andrews' (2001) finding that English reading is a fundamental ability to acquire literacy in a target language. Jiang (2008, p. 17) stated, when reviewing his three-year work in the Education Bureau of the Chinese Embassy in the U.S., that "my work experience is that the overseas students in our country do not show poorer English pronunciation, intonation, and speed but the English reading, the ability to read and retrieve the English material in particular, compared with those from Japan or Korea." Therefore, in recent years, to enhance the university students' ability of reading and writing, research articles in their disciplinary journals have become a subject of immense pedagogical interest at tertiary level in China (Cai, 2019).

Furthermore, cognitive factors such as working memory, prior knowledge, or reasoning ability could affect EFL learners' reading ability (Alloway & Gregory, 2013; Kane & Engle, 2002; Kendeou & van den Broek, 2007; Kintsch, 1998). Notwithstanding the importance of cognitive factors, Davis et al. (2018, p. 122) observe that "students who disengage from reading, however, may not lack ability to read but resist reading due to a lack of motivation". Studies revealed that reading motivation is correlated to various predictors of reading comprehension (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Park, 2011; Schiefele et al., 2012; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). In spite of these findings on the relationship between reading motivation and reading ability, previous studies on reading motivation have not discussed the comprehensive and dynamic aspects of second language reading motivation.

Most studies on reading motivation have been conducted to uncover the nature of reading motivation, mostly using Gardner's (2001) social psychological framework. Research on reading motivation has, however, transitioned from the social psychological, cognitive-situated, or process-oriented perspectives to a social-dynamic one. Van Geert (2008, p. 183) states that Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) is not "a specific theory but it is a general view on change, change in complex systems, in particular, or, systems consisting of many interacting components, the properties of which can change over the course of time". Based on the shift in research focus, Dörnyei et al. (2016) have conducted research on motivation applying the DST. Yet, studies on Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation applying DST are very limited or have not been carried out. In addition, studies addressing Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation focused on uni-variate or multi-variate variables (Yuan, 2003) are inadequate in explaining the comprehensive interrelationships between different variables of reading motivation as well as the dynamic relationship of reading motivation and reading proficiency among Chinese EFL learners.

Consequently, this paper aims to discuss the complex and dynamic nature of Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation and conceptualise a research framework to explain the interrelationships between different variables influencing reading motivation and the dynamic process of Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation.

2. The Conceptual Dynamic Model of Chinese EFL Learners' Reading Motivation

2.1 Prior Studies on Chinese EFL Learners' Reading Motivation in China

Research on reading motivation among students has been carried out by some scholars in China. The studies and results can be found in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. CNKI is a key national information construction project under the lead of Tsinghua University. It is supported by the People's Republic of China (PRC) Ministry of Education, PRC Ministry of Science, Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China and PRC General Administration of Press and Publication. CNKI has built a comprehensive China Integrated Knowledge Resources System, including journals, doctoral dissertations, masters' theses, proceedings, newspapers, yearbooks, statistical yearbooks, e-books, patents, standards, and publications.

There are 226 journal articles relevant to reading motivation which were published between 1 January 1990 and 31 December 2018 that can be retrieved from the CNKI database. Among these journal articles, 135 focused on the development of reading motivation in Chinese language learning. 55 journal articles employed a quantitative research method to study reading motivation and two journal articles employed a mixed research method through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. 34 journal articles discussed the relationship between reading motivation and reading competence and factors influencing reading motivation, and 91 journal articles researched reading motivation at a

static point.

Ying and Xu (2001) studied the choice of English reading materials from the perspective of reading motivation. They administered the questionnaire covering reading motivation, expectation, and the characteristics of the students' favourite reading materials to 63 students at Zhejiang University. The result showed that the choice of reading materials was aligned with the students' reading motivation and their learning needs. The preferred reading materials have the following characteristics: (1) language in the reading material should be applicable in daily life; (2) the topic itself should be interesting; (3) the reading materials should be narrative; and (4) the title of the material should be attractive and stimulate curiosity.

Meanwhile, Duanmu (2001) studied the relationship between mood and reading effectiveness from the perspective of applied psycholinguistics. He pointed out that reading motivation influences the reading method, which affects reading interaction. Then, the reading interaction influences the mood, which determines reading results and the realisation of reading purposes.

Yuan (2003) distinguished two types of reading motivation in the reading motivation model: enjoyable reading motivation and instrumental reading motivation. The study revealed that Chinese EFL learners have a strong disposition towards instrumental motivation, and enjoyable reading motivation significantly influences reading efficacy. The result is partially in line with the findings by Gholami et al. (2012) and Zheng (2010). Gholami et al. (2012) conducted an empirical research on motivation with the aim to investigate the dominant type of motivation among EFL students. They administered the motivation test (5-point Likert Scale format) to 95 final year Iranian male students in a high school in Malaysia. The results revealed that the dominant type of motivation among EFL learners in high school was instrumental motivation. Besides, high achievement students had mostly possessed both types of motivation and they were significantly outperformed compared to those who were instrumentally motivated. Meanwhile, Zheng (2010) conducted an empirical study to investigate motivation, anxiety, global awareness, and linguistic confidence, and their causal and correlational relationships with English test performance in the context of Chinese university students taking the College English Test Band Four (CET-4). Zheng (2010) employed a mixed approach through a questionnaire (927 participants) and in-depth interviews (12 participants) to examine the psychological factors that influence the students' language performance. The result indicated that the instrumental motivation was stronger than the integrative motivation among the respondents. The three categories of instrumental motivation are grade, further education, and career prospects. The students from the Arts School emphasised that their English proficiency could be valued by their future employers.

Zou and Zhao (2009) conducted a study on reading motivation among 69 non-English major second and third-year students at the Beijing Institute of Technology. A mixed research method including classroom observation, questionnaire, interview, and test was used in this study.

The quantitative results showed that reading interest and attitudes were positively related and significantly influenced English reading. Furthermore, the intensity of reading motivation was positively affected by reading scores. On the other hand, the qualitative results of the in-depth interview revealed that reading interest could affect the choice of reading materials to a large extent and reading English materials could be beneficial to language learning and future career. The attitude towards reading activities was negative and some students even believed that they could get a better reading score by self-learning. This could be due to the information and communication technology (ICT) skills that students possess that enable them to search and access relevant online learning materials available in the social media.

Subsequently, Wang and Li (2016) administered the original Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) to 320 second-year English major students at three universities in China. The study identified nine factors influencing reading motivation using exploratory factor analysis. These nine factors are reading efficacy, social reasons for reading, reading curiosity, reading involvement, reading word avoidance, reading compliance, reading for grades, reading challenge, and the importance of reading. These factors corresponded with the sections in the MRQ. Competition in reading and recognition in reading were incorporated into reading recognition-competition. Interestingly, integrative reading motivation and reading materials were two new factors identified in this study.

Meanwhile, Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation presented the variation in terms of demographic variables such as gender, discipline, and high/low reading proficiency. For instance, Xu (2011) administered a questionnaire covering instrumental and integrative reading motivation variables to 60 students majoring in English and 65 students in non-English majors at a university in Wuhan, China. The results showed that the reading motivation among non-English major students was instrumental. These students are motivated to learn English because they want to pass the CET-4/6 test, to obtain the diploma certificate, and to go abroad for further education. Their intensity of instrumental reading motivation was significantly different from that of integrative reading motivation. Conversely, the English major students showed strong integrative reading motivation to learn English which include reading interest and reading desire. Their intensity of integrative reading motivation was significantly different from that of instrumental reading motivation. In addition, the study also found that the intensity of integrative reading motivation among the English major students was higher than that of the non-English major students.

A study of English reading motivation, English reading achievement and gender among 156 first-year non-English major students in colleges was conducted by Wei (2011). The study used an MRQ and found that there was a significant difference between the reading score of the high-achiever group and that of the low-achiever group. In addition, the competence and efficacy beliefs for the high-achiever group was significantly higher than the low-achiever group. Interestingly, reading efficacy, reading achievement, and

social aspects for reading among female students were significantly higher than male students in this study.

Similarly, Gong and Liu (2012) conducted an empirical research on reading motivation among 66 English major students in college using an MRQ. The results showed that the high-achiever group demonstrated a higher intensity in reading motivation compared to the low-achiever group. The study also revealed that the dominant type of reading motivation was external reading motivation, followed by internal reading motivation, and efficacy beliefs for both high-achiever group and low-achiever group respectively.

Somehow, studies on Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation are still subject to some limitations. Firstly, the dynamic feature of reading motivation among Chinese EFL learners has not been discussed in detail. Most of the studies on Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation were the static and snapshot researches that could not uncover the dynamic and complex nature of reading motivation.

Secondly, the interrelationships between and among reading motivation variables and their reciprocal influence have not been explored in detail. The dynamic change of reading motivation is the result of the collective behaviour of all potential variables. However, prior studies only researched the influence of multi-variables on Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation respectively, not considering and explaining the complex and dynamic interrelationship between or among the multi-variables. In addition, prior studies using multi-variables ignored the dynamic development of those potential multi-variables over time and their dependence on foreign language learning context.

Thirdly, most studies were conducted using quantitative methods to research Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation, while very few scholars (Zou & Zhao, 2009) researched reading motivation from both the structuralism and poststructuralism perspectives.

2.2 Dynamic Systems Theory (DST)

Larsen-Freeman (1997) initiated the discussion on the characteristics of language as a complex adaptive system and identified the similarities between Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) and Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA). Some researchers (e.g. de Bot et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) point out that a system could be perceived as dynamic and complex if two or more factors in the system are interrelated with each other and bring about change over time. The ongoing interrelationships between and among variables in the system lead to unpredictable dynamic and complex behaviour in the system. As a result, Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) aims to explain the unpredictable collective behaviour among the interactive components in the system.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), dynamic systems consist of a great number of subsystems and components that are interconnected with each other. The interconnectedness between the subsystems and components increases the complexity of the system. Besides,

dynamic systems are systems that change over time (de Bot et al., 2007). Therefore, elements in the system are not static but they continuously evolve, including their subsystems and the corresponding components. In addition, dynamic systems are open which means that other elements are allowed to enter the system. It is also adaptive which means that changes in one field might cause changes in the whole system. Consequently, complex dynamic systems consist of elements or agents that interact with each other, resulting in self-organisation and the emergence of new patterns at different periods and levels.

To investigate the dynamic learning motivation of French language among students in Sweden, Henry (2016) administered an open-ended questionnaire to twenty-two first-year upper secondary students (twelve females and ten males) to list the issues that made the respondents more motivated and less motivated to study the French language. He further interviewed six participants (four females and two males) to get insights on learning motivation. The methods of double hermeneutic and interpretive phenomenological analysis were employed to analyse the transcripts. The major findings in his study were that the motivation towards learning French among all the six interviewed respondents differed from one lesson to the next. In addition, the intensity of learning behaviours among the respondents fluctuated during the lesson, and the attitudes towards whom the respondents chose to sit next to in class changed in every lesson.

The Dynamic Systems Theory may add new insights into the study of dynamic learning motivation. Some scholars such as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) and Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) have put forward that researchers could shift the research perspective of learning motivation from the conventional linear and static investigation to the dynamic and complex investigation to uncover the interrelationships between and among the various elements of learning motivation.

2.3 Conceptualisation of Reading Motivation

A conceptual model to investigate the Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation from the dynamic systems theory perspective is presented in the following Figure 1.

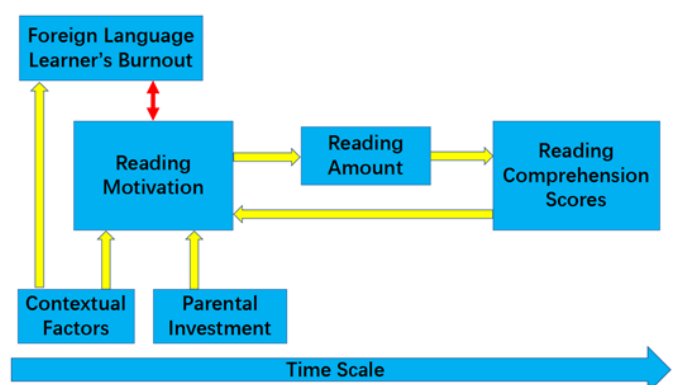


Figure 1: Dynamic systems of Chinese EFL learners' reading motivation.

The above conceptual model is developed to represent the complex, dynamic, adaptive properties of reading motivation among Chinese EFL learners based on Dynamic Systems Theory and previous studies on motivation and reading motivation.

First, reading motivation possesses the properties of motivation such as dynamism, complexity, nonlinearity, openness, and dependence. Previous studies on motivation using the DST (Dörnyei et al., 2016; Henry, 2016) enhance the conceptualisation of the proposed model in studying the reading motivation among EFL learners in China.

Second, studies on reading motivation discussed the interrelated relationships between variables such as motivation to read, the relationships between motivation to read and reading comprehension, and the mediation of reading amount between reading motivation and reading outcome. These interrelated relationships are incorporated in the conceptual model.

Third, foreign language learning burnout syndrome and reading motivation (Ehrman, 1996; Leaver et al., 2005) are included in the conceptual model to investigate the relationship between these two factors and further discuss reasons for the decrease of reading motivation over time. In addition, contextual factors and parental investment are added to the conceptual model to help analyse their individual and joint influence on reading motivation over time.

Fourth, the contextual factors are a part of the complex systems, therefore, teaching environment and social environment are included in the conceptual model to study the reading motivation among EFL learners in China.

Finally, parental investment is included in the conceptual model because it significantly influences reading behaviour and reading motivation (Norton, 1995; Liu, 2017).

3. Relationship between Factors in the Conceptualised Model of Reading Motivation

3.1 Reading Motivation and Reading Outcome

Reading motivation influences reading outcomes. Guthrie et al. (1999) and Schaffner et al. (2013) argued that reading motivation indirectly predicts English reading proficiency, which is mediated by the amount of reading. Baker and Wigfield (1999) used the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) invented by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and explored the correlation between reading outcome and all sub-categories of reading motivation. They found significant correlations between reading outcomes, though some intrinsic and extrinsic variables of reading motivation appeared only among white students and female students. The result suggested that reading outcomes could be predicted by reading motivation.

Meanwhile, Unrau and Schlackman (2006) found that grade level, gender, and composite scores of both intrinsic and

extrinsic reading motivation were the predictors of students' reading comprehension. In addition, the direct influence of intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation on reading outcome was exhibited among Asian students.

The study by Law (2008) on the relationships between extrinsic reading motivation, home literacy, parents' support, classroom instructional practices, and reading outcomes showed that extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension were not significantly related, but they were negatively and significantly related when home literacy, parents' support, and classroom instructional practices were added to the regression model. Nevertheless, Baker and Wigfield (1999), as well as Lau and Chan (2003), found positive relationships between extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension in their respective studies.

Schaffner et al. (2016) studied the reciprocal influence between intrinsic reading motivation and reading competence among students from academic track schools and non-academic track schools in Germany using a cross-lagged regression model. The study revealed that there was a significant cross-lagged effect between intrinsic reading motivation and reading competence for students from academic track schools but not for students from the non-academic school.

These studies reveal that intrinsic reading motivation is closely and positively related to reading comprehension. By contrast, extrinsic reading motivation is found to be either insignificantly or negatively related to reading competence. However, some scholars (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Lau & Chan, 2003) found the positive relationships between extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension. The inconsistent research findings in terms of the relationship between extrinsic reading motivation and reading competence might be attributable to the snapshot investigation of reading motivation over time. As a consequence, it is necessary to conduct the longitudinal research to uncover the complex nature between extrinsic reading motivation and reading competence over time and re-verify the consistent findings of the relationship between intrinsic reading motivation and reading competence.

3.2 Reading Amount as the Mediator between Reading Motivation and Reading Comprehension

Guthrie et al. (1999) put forward the assumption that reading amount has an influence on reading comprehension because students could gain knowledge from frequent reading, thereby facilitating their reading comprehension. Besides, students could enhance their reading-related comprehension beliefs as they read more, which could, in turn, help them choose more challenging materials to read. In addition, reading amount could increase reading effectiveness such as speed and fluency of reading. The reading effectiveness could shoulder the burden of memory and make the reader comprehend the materials better by, for instance, identifying main ideas or drawing conclusions.

McElvany et al. (2008) conducted empirical research on the mediating role of the reading amount by adopting the cross-

lagged regression model. The result showed that intrinsic reading motivation has an indirect influence on reading comprehension, which is mediated by the reading amount. Reversely, the effect of reading comprehension on reading motivation was not mediated by the reading amount.

Becker et al. (2010) obtained different conclusions using the same data as McElvany et al. (2008) used in their study. Becker and team members focused on social recognition and instrumental goals and measured reading motivation among students in grade 4. The result showed that intrinsic reading motivation influences reading comprehension with the mediation effect of reading amount. Extrinsic reading motivation, on the other hand, has a significant negative direct impact on reading comprehension. These snapshot studies may not be sufficient to explain the mediating role of reading amount between extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension from a dynamic perspective. The mediating role of reading amount could be either positive or negative due to the dynamic changes between reading motivation and reading comprehension. Therefore, the assumption that the amount of reading mediates the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension needs to be verified with more in-depth research.

3.3 Foreign Language Learning Burnout and its Influence on Dynamic Learning Motivation

Freudenberger (1974) was one of the scholars who described and analysed the burnout syndrome. Paine (1982) pointed out that burnout was closely related to job stress and he adopted the concept of burnout stress syndrome to refer to this psychological status. Some scholars (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Slivar, 2001) in the domains of psychology and education argued that the concept of burnout stress syndrome could also be applied to the study of learning processes. Pines and Kafry (1980) and Meier and Schmeck (1985) further put forward that burnout referred to the learners' energy exhaustion due to long-term course load, gradual enthusiasm loss in academic activities, indifference and behavioural alienation towards classmates, and negative attitudes towards academic activities because of poor test scores. Subsequently, many scholars (Balogun et al., 1996; Gold et al., 1989; Schaufeli et al., 2002) in different countries confirmed the existence of burnout phenomenon during the learning process.

Some scholars (Ehrman, 1996; Leaver et al., 2005) have also researched the burnout syndrome in foreign language learning. Ehrman (1996) researched the burnout syndrome among the foreign language learners at Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and discovered that many foreign language learners experienced the explicit burnout syndrome when they learned the third language and their intrinsic motivation would decrease. Felder and Henriques (1995) highlighted that the burnout syndrome would appear when the teaching style used by the teachers was continuously inconsistent with the learning style of the learners.

Yang (2015) put forward four hypotheses to study the relationship between foreign language learning burnout

and foreign language learning motivation. These hypotheses are: (1) the negative change of foreign language learning motivation is related to foreign language learning burnout; (2) foreign language learning burnout is negatively related to motivational intensity; (3) the attitude towards foreign language learning environment will affect the formation and development of foreign language learning burnout; (4) foreign language learning outcome has limited predictive influence on foreign language learning burnout. A mixed method research was used in the study and the results showed that foreign language learning burnout has three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased professional self-efficacy. Furthermore, foreign language learning burnout has dynamic characteristics where it rises and falls along with the variation of time and environmental factors. Lastly, there is a negative correlation between foreign language learning burnout and foreign language learning motivation.

As a consequence, the complexity and dynamism of foreign language learning burnout are in accordance with the characteristics of Dynamic Systems Theory. It is appropriate to consider the dynamic influence of foreign language learning burnout on the change of reading motivation over time.

3.4 Second Language Investment and its Influence on Dynamic Learning Motivation

Norton (1995) put forward the definition of second language investment. Norton (1995) argued that the conceptualisation of motivation was an individual psychological trait, neglecting the interaction between learners and language learning context. He put forward that "the notion of investment conceives of the language learner, not as ahistorical and unidimensional, but as having a complex social history and multiple desires" (p. 9). Individuals made an investment in learning a second language, "they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 17).

Some Chinese scholars (Liu, 2017; Wang, 2004) conducted empirical studies to investigate the potential influence of investment on learning motivation. For instance, Wang (2004) studied the attitudes of investment in English learning among postgraduate students in China. He administered the questionnaire to 35 participants (28 males and 7 females with age range from 21 to 31) at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. The results indicated that the participants recognise that foreign language learning is an investment. They invested more time in learning English instead of other courses in their own major. They have a strong desire to continue investing more time in learning English however they lack effective learning strategies.

Meanwhile, Liu (2017) conducted an empirical research on learning motivation from the social class perspective. He administered a questionnaire of second language investment and motivation to 1542 students in a high school and also their parents in the city of Shenyang, Beijing, and Nanjing in China. 16 students and their parents took part

in the in-depth interview. The results showed that parental investment in their children's language learning is more instrumentally oriented such as recognising English as an effective communicative tool than culturally oriented such as the enhancement of individual quality through English learning, multiple perspectives of reflecting on issues, and the interests towards foreign cultures. The study further identified four dimensions of parental investment. They are relation investment, knowledge investment, affection investment, and economic investment. The notion of parental investment has a direct influence on parents' investment behaviour and meanwhile an indirect influence on students' motivation to learn English. However, interestingly, parental investment behaviour has a direct effect on students' motivation to learn English.

As a result, the variation of parental investment (e.g. the shift of parental involvement methods) could influence their children's learning motivation either positively or negatively over time. The dynamic and complex feature of parental investment is in accordance with the notions of Dynamic Systems Theory which could contribute to the dynamic change of reading motivation over time.

3.5 Relationship between Reading Motivation and Contextual Factors

According to the Dynamic Systems Theory, the contextual elements are also a segment of dynamic systems with a vital influence on motivation. The contextual elements for reading motivation include the teaching environment and the social environment.

The teaching environment consists of elements such as the teacher, classmates, teaching materials, teaching methods, and strategies. The teaching environment itself is dynamic and it has a direct influence on learners' cognitive factors such as learning motivation or anxiety. Whereas the social environment contains the political, economic, and cultural environments, which are dynamic in nature and could affect the motivation of learning. As a result, the process of learning is constantly affected by the dynamic changing environment. Therefore, learners' motivation is constantly affected by various contextual elements in the environment, and they are continuously responding to active and inactive feedback from the learning context and adapting themselves to it (Davis & Sumara, 2006).

4. Conclusion

English learning is growing fast in China. It is more prevalent with the impact of globalisation and the diffusion of new technology. Dynamic changes in the external environment and the fluctuation of interest, intention, behaviour, attitude, and motivation on learners over time could influence reading motivation immensely among Chinese EFL learners. In order to explore the relationships among these internal as well as external factors influencing reading motivation, it is inevitable to develop a comprehensive and holistic conceptual model to study the reading motivation of Chinese EFL learners from a dynamic systems perspective.

Theoretically, the conceptual model uncovers the dynamic nature of reading motivation, the interrelationships between or among reading motivation components and the complex and dynamic influence of potential variables on reading motivation. It gives new insights into the investigation of reading motivation, which could overcome the limitations in prior studies. Furthermore, the conceptual model keeps pace with contemporary trends in examining issues in Second Language Acquisition by adopting the DST approach (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006).

Practically, the interrelationships between and among reading motivation variables and the reciprocal influence between reading motivation and other potential variables should be taken into consideration when designing second language reading curricula and instructional materials, which could improve the teachers' ability to perform more efficient interventions. Likewise, students could be equipped with knowledge about their English reading, thereby helping them to adjust and coordinate different reading motivation variables in order to improve their reading efficiency, which could enhance their reading achievements by focusing on some principal factors.

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