

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Book review:

**Robert C. Gardner, *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition: The Socio-Educational Model*.
New York: Peter Lang 2010, 244 pp.**

This is another very interesting publication by Robert C. Gardner analyzing the socio-educational model as well as the different scope and coverage of studies on the role of motivation in second or foreign language acquisition.

In the *Preface* the author first of all discusses certain ambiguities and misunderstandings that tend to be associated with the nature of motivation for foreign language learning in the socio-educational model. The preface later features a brief description of the book's chapters, including different aspects of the model, descriptions of the research forming the model, and also references to critical wordings.

Chapter 1 – *On the definition of motivation and its investigation* – discusses the fundamental aspects of structural equation modeling with regard to second language learning motivation and related issues such as motivation for learning, commitment to education, social and cultural factors or emotional reactions. The notion of integrative motivation is considered the fundamental element of the socio-educational model, and in this chapter is described as an emotional construct that contains attitudes toward learning situations and motivation. The main aspects of motivation have to be evaluated, especially as regards contributed effort, willingness to learn a language and attitude toward learning it. In the final section of the first chapter the author analyzes the relations between several variables that have a high status in foreign language learning. The analysis of factors focuses on the main components of motivation.

Chapter 2 – *On the history of the socio-educational model* – outlines the history of the socio-educational model through its three stages of development: “ancient” history (from 1945 to the early 1970s), early history (the 1970s) and

modern history (the 1980s). The first section (*"ancient" history*) discusses some of the earlier research that focused on socio-psychological factors, inspiring the educational model. The earliest empirical studies linked to this model were the source of bilingual domination and bilingualism development in the 1950s. This was also studied in relation to language talent, motivation for learning French and integrative orientation. The next segment (*early history*) is devoted to a series of studies employing the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire, which was designed to measure socially significant psychological variables related to second language learning. The results of these studies showed that motivation and skills are highly correlated with achievements. The final part (*modern history*) discusses research on processes linked to the socio-educational model that tested a number of hypotheses regarding this model.

Chapter 3 – *The modern age* – first presents an overview and critique of motivation research published in 1991-2000 as well as comparing the socio-educational model with other theoretical models. The research results presented in this chapter confirm that there is a cohesive pattern of relations between the means included in the socio-educational model of second language learning, and that this model is very enlightening as far as the process of learning another language is concerned. The author also analyzes alternative models that have been proposed by other researchers. Based on the analyses, he concludes that practically everything is compatible with the socio-educational model.

In chapter 4 – *The socio-educational model: Structure and hypotheses* – we find an outline of the foundations, construction and hypotheses of the socio-educational model. The author highlights the model's dynamic character in its consideration of motivation and skills as the main elements influencing the effectiveness of second language learning. Moreover, the author also notes that learners display a rather open-minded attitude toward other cultural groups, which reinforces their motivation for learning foreign languages. Further on in this chapter, the socio-educational model is explained in great detail. Apart from motivation, this model also accounts for factors of learning that can directly impact language learning achievements. The chapter ends with a test of 13 precise research hypotheses involving the role of motivation for learning foreign languages. The learning process is analyzed not only from the point of view of language development but also in relation to behaviors that reflect other aspects of second language acquisition, such as behavior in class, language interference and persistence in learning.

The next chapter (5) – *The Attitude Motivation Test Battery* – presents the structure of the comprehensive questionnaire containing a scale of integrative motivation measurement variables. The definition of the construction, important content and items contained in the questionnaire test are all described in detail.

Chapter 6 – *Attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety in an EFL European context* – discusses research involving the socio-educational model conducted

among students learning English outside Canada, primarily in Spain. These studies largely confirmed that the results obtained with the AMTB questionnaire in Canada are correlated with the results obtained outside Canada as regards foreign language learning.

Chapter 7 – *Learning English as a foreign language around the world* – presents a comparison of the statistical results obtained in motivation studies among students in Japan, Brazil, Poland, Croatia, Romania and Spain. The results show that the International AMTB displays a significant degree of internal coherence reliability in different countries.

The author of chapter 8 – *Language classroom motivation* – is Mercè Bernaus (Autonomous University of Barcelona). This chapter discusses different aspects of the classroom environment, especially as regards foreign language teachers and their motivation as well as the role played by motivation for achieving classroom teaching efficiency and skills. The author also presents a study on leading motivation strategies involving English-language teachers in Spain, conducted in Madrid in 2002. The results of this research show that motivation strategies increase the interest of students, focus their attention and increase their commitment to English classes.

In the conclusion – *Epilogue* – the author discusses various issues of the socio-educational model. He points out that the scope and scale and not the type of motivation is of the greatest importance for learning a second or foreign language. Though teachers can maintain and support their students' motivations, they are not able to motivate them effectively. Based on numerous analyses and research results, the author emphasizes that certain critical remarks about the socio-educational model are largely unjustified.

Robert C. Gardner's publication presents an extensive and comprehensive overview of the socio-educational model of second language acquisition as well as outlining some relevant historical, empirical and research aspects. Analyzing and determining the motivation variables that bring success in learning a second or foreign language is one of the most important historical concepts of research from this field. At the same time, a difference is made between socio-psychological factors and school teaching factors, which constitute two largely separate areas of motivation for learning a foreign language. The book offers students and researchers a one-of-a-kind report on this research approach as well as being a source text for this field of study. It is ideal for courses on motivation for second language learning and also as supplementary material for courses on research in applied linguistics, educational psychology or general linguistics.

Many key research notions are properly defined, and the historical evolution of the socio-educational model is also presented, explaining many details of its development. Different stages involving the model as well as its rationale of attitudes are carefully described. The book contains a detailed report on the AMTB questionnaire system, its design and development. Another valuable element is

the presentation of a wide range of studies on motivation in several countries with different language systems.

In summary, this is certainly a very valuable and high quality set of data related to motivation in second language learning and acquisition. This publication is to be recommended to researchers planning to conduct studies on second language acquisition, to postgraduate students involved in motivation research as well as teachers with an interest in motivation issues.

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