A Critical Review on the Socio-educational Model of SLA

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Abstract—**Gardner's socio-educational model is the leading theory of motivation in the area of language learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Focusing on integrative motivation (Gu, 2009), it presents a dynamic model in which attitude and motivation affect language achievement, and language achievement itself affects attitude and motivation in an almost cyclical fashion (Gardner, 2001b). Although many researches have dealt with this model, few have scrutinized it a concise format. This paper, consequently, attempts to meet such an end.**

Index Terms—**socio-educational model, motivation, integrativeness, orientation, attitudes toward the learning situation**

I. INTRODUCTION

Gardner's socio-educational model, according to MacIntyre (2007) is one of the most dominant models in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). It is the first and most influential theory of motivation in the area of L2 motivation research (Gu, 2009). Being considered as the most influential social-psychological models of SLA (Williams & Burden, 1997), it falls under the category of positivist models (Dewaele, 2009). The central concept of this model is motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). In simple terms "A socio-educational model of second language learning suggests that the learning of a second language involves both an ability and a motivational component and that the major basis of this motivation is best viewed from a social psychological perspective" (Gardner & Lalonde, 1985, August, p. 1).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Background

Gardner (2001b) has attributed the first empirical investigation associated with the socio-educational model to Lambert's (1955) research on bilingual dominance and the development of bilingualism. Gardner and Lambert (1959) were the first researchers who attempted to measure variables directly relevant to this approach.

According to Gardner (1985), the socio-educational model shares much in common with the seven foreign language learning models of Krashen's monitor model, Carroll's conscious reinforcement, Bialystok's strategy model, Lambert's social psychological model, Schumann's acculturation model, Clement's social context model, and Giles' intergroup model although often different concepts and perspectives have been emphasized in these models. Gardner (1985) has made the following comparisons between these models and his socio-educational model.

Both Krashen's monitor model and socio-educational model include attitudes and motivation, but they differ in that while in the former these have a facilitating function in the latter motivation is considered as an instigator to action. Moreover, both models predict that attitudes and motivation will correlate with proficiency, whereas the nature of the process varies in experimentally verifiable ways.

Central to Carroll's conscious reinforcement is the notion of reinforcement, which is clearly a motivational concept. According to Gardner (1985), although not discussed in the Carroll's model, there is evidently some social reason underlying the desire to communicate. Also, the idea of the performance grammar suggests some cognitive component similar to language aptitude and/or intelligence. These elements are also considered in the socio-educational model.

Although Bialystok's strategy model contains no explicit motivational construct, it, however, implies that individuals must try to find language exposure. Also, the notions of inferencing, monitoring, and formal and functional practicing show goal-directed behavior, which is indicative of a motivational component. Both Bialystok's and Gardner's models permit the operation of both cognitive and affective processes.

Many of the constructs in Lambert's social psychological model are identical to socio-educational model. However, they differ in that the former predicts direct causal relationships between attitudes and orientations and second language proficiency, while the latter claims that this association is mediated by motivation. Also, while the effects of proficiency on self-identity are not discussed explicitly in Gardner's, they have been dealt with in Lambert's model. Of course, the notion of changes in one's self-identity is close to the idea of non-linguistic outcomes of language study in Gardner's model.

Many of the social variables in Schumann's acculturation model are comparable to cultural beliefs in Gardner's model. The individual variables such as language and cultural shock are analogous in concept to situational anxiety. The concept of motivation exists in both models. The concept of ego permeability, i.e., the ability to identify with others, in Schumann's model is conceptually similar to the integrative component of motivation in Gardner's model.

Many aspects of constituents in Clement's social context model are similar to those of the Gardner's model. However, they differ in that the former focuses on the cultural context as a determinant of the types of motivation and includes fear of assimilation as an element of integrativeness. Also, the concept of collective outcomes in social context mode, a sociological concept, is not mentioned specifically in the socio-educational model although it would be associated with the outcomes of language study.

Giles' intergroup model, like the socio-educational one, puts considerable emphasis on integration with the other community as a major motivational construct. Also, like socio-educational model, it includes intelligence, language aptitude, situational anxiety, language acquisition contexts, and language learning outcomes. The models, however, differ in that the intergroup model is concerned solely with SLA by minority group members, and notion of ethnic identity although this notion seems applicable to all individuals irrespective of the status of their own ethnic group in the community.

B. Different Versions

The initial social psychological model was developed by Lambert (1967, 1974, as cited in Gardner, 2010b), who proposed that aptitude, attitudes, orientation, and motivation boost the development of language proficiency and affect self-identity. The socio-educational model proposed by Gardner and Smythe (1975, as cited in Gardner, 2010b) has maintained the elements of Lambert's social psychological model but has further expanded it to take into account the language learning situation by distinguishing between formal and informal language learning contexts. According to Gardner (2010b), this model also differs from Lambert's model in that the concept of self-identity in it is not explicitly identified although the concept of integrativeness raised in this model includes the willingness to identify with the other language community.

This model has been revised over the years. Consequently, it has several versions which were devised in 1979, 1983, 1985 (Ellis, 2008), 2007 (Cook, 2008), and 2000 (Gardner, 2000). There are slight differences between different versions, for instance, the model proposed by Gardner (1985) (Figure 1), according to Brown, Robson & Rosenkjar (2001), was primarily developed to account for L2 learning in classroom settings although it also considered natural settings.
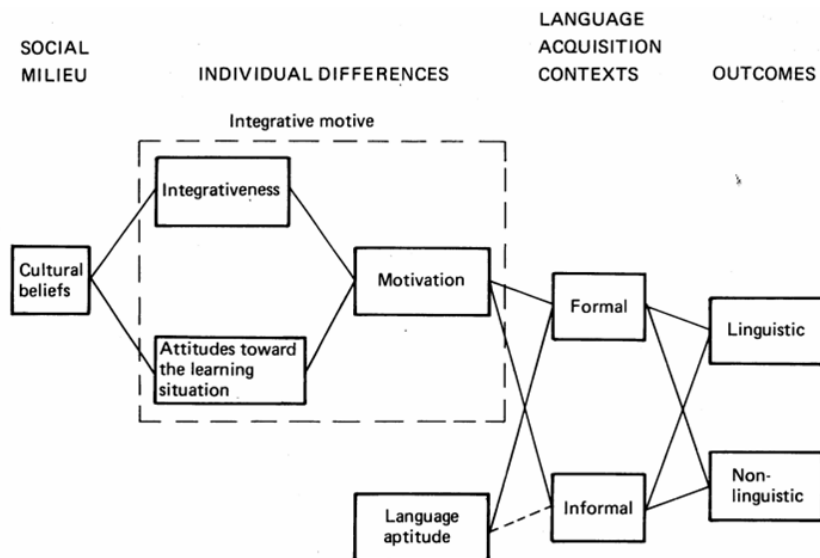

Figure 1 Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model. (from Gardner & Lalonde, 1985, August)

In 2000 Gardner proposed another version of the socio-educational model (Gardner, 2000) (Figure 2). According to Gardner (2000), as shown in figure 2, Integrativeness and Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation are two correlated variables which influence Motivation to learn a second language. Moreover, Motivation and Language Aptitude influence Language Achievement. According to Gardner (2001b), based on this model if someone shows high levels of Integrativeness and/or very positive Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation, but these are not linked with Motivation to learn the language, these variables will not be particularly highly related to achievement. Similarly, a person who demonstrates high levels of Motivation which are not supported by high levels of Integrativeness and/or favorable Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation may not show these high levels of motivation consistently. Integrative Motivation represents a complex of these three variables.
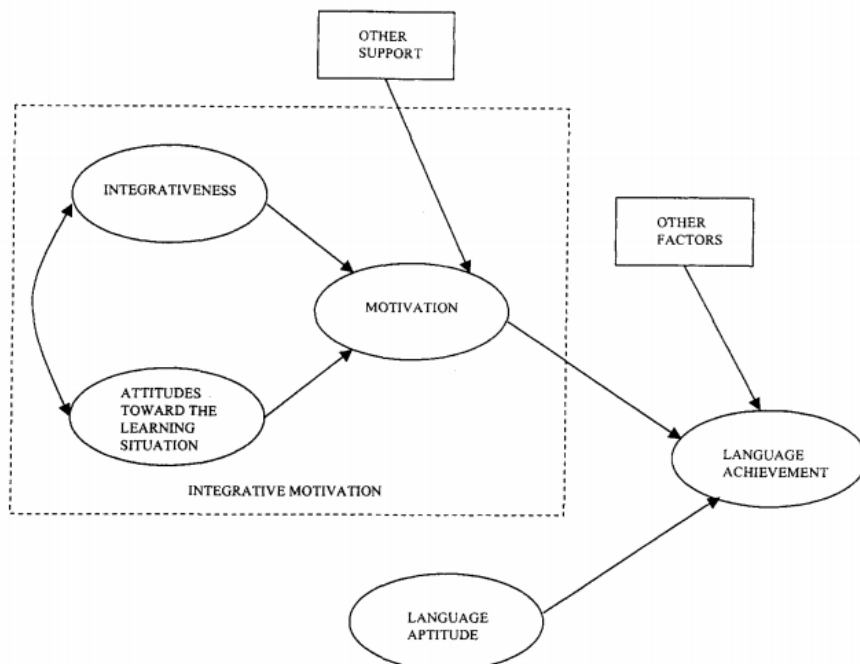
Figure 2 Gardner's (2000) socio-psychological model (from Gardner, 2000)

C. Main Hypothesis

The underlying rationale in Gardner's model is that learning a second (or foreign) language involves two types of tasks, i.e., cognitive and emotional. The cognitive aspect in this model considers another language as simply another code - a set of words, grammatical principles, pronunciations, etc. Based on this aspect language learning is much like learning any skill. And like other skills those who learn languages more readily have a cognitive or ability component which in the case of language is referred to as language aptitude. The emotional aspect, on the other hand, considers another language as an aspect of behavior which is characteristic of another ethnolinguistic community. Consequently, learning another language goes beyond learning another set of words, grammatical principles, pronunciations, etc. That is, it also requires learning the characteristics of another cultural community (Gardner & Lalonde, 1985, August).

D. Basic Components

1. Motivation

According to Gardner & Lambert (1959), L2 motivation differs from that involved in other learning processes because language is inherently related to socio-cultural identities and socio-political factors. Motivation to learn a second language plays the leading role in the socio-educational model. But motivation is a complex concept which cannot be simply measured by one scale (Gardner, 2010a) and there are many variables which affect motivation. (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995)

According to Tremblay and Gardner, in order to query why there is a relationship between motivation and proficiency a simple statement that some aspects of motivation result in higher proficiency or better performance is not sufficient. Rather, they believe that to improve motivation models mediators that explain why one variable affects the other should be identified. They proposed that the three 'motivational behaviors' of *effort*, *persistence*, and *attention* mediate between the seemingly distant factors of *language attitude*, *motivation* and *achievement*. They found support for a LISREL structural equation model linking these variables and concluded that the new motivational measures deepen our insights into motivation in language learning. In other words, this construct, as acknowledged by Gardner (2010a), is a complex concept which cannot be simply measured by one scale. Rather, it should be assessed by multiple scales. Therefore, motivation, as defined by Gardner (1985), refers to "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). Consequently, motivation in the socio-educational model, according to Gardner (2010a), is assessed in terms of the following three components:

1) The desire to learn the language
2) Attitudes toward learning the language
3) Motivational intensity (i.e., the effort extended to learn the language)

Therefore, according to Gardner (1985), for a student to be considered motivated four elements of a goal, desire to achieve the goal, positive attitudes, and effort are necessary. Gardner (2010a) believes that while neither any of the three aforementioned elements on its own would provide an adequate assessment of motivation the tripartite assessment provides a rather fairly good estimate of this construct.

As mentioned by Sternberg (2002), this definition of motivation is consistent with the previous definitions in literature and at the same time, it is more comprehensive since it includes attitudes and desire to which Gardner has referred "affective variables". Sternberg believes that Gardner has managed to clearly differentiate these variables from the more purely cognitive factors such as intelligence, aptitude and related variables. This definition, as held by Sternberg, allows Gardner to address different issues under the motivation rubric and allows establishing a link between motivation and emotion which is often missing from the definition of motivation provided by cognitively-oriented psychology.

According to Gardner (1985), this definition is an operational definition of motivation which makes possible the measurement of the three components of motivation, i.e., desire to learn the language, motivational intensity, and attitudes towards learning the language.

These elements are measured by the Aptitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner and Smythe (1981). According to Gardner (2001b), this test battery was used to assess the supposedly major affective factors involved in second language learning. It currently consists of 11 subtests which are grouped into the five categories of Integrativeness, Attitudes Towards the Learning Situation, Motivation, Instrumental orientation and Language Anxiety.

According to Brown et al. (2001), AMTB was first based on the theoretical model developed by Lambert, but Gardner (1985) later altered the theoretical basis of this test battery to encompass the sum of the three aforementioned elements. This scale, as mentioned by Dörnyei (2005), is a useful self-report instrument adapted for use in different learning contexts throughout the world. Gardner (1985) emphasizes that there is not *one* AMTB and rather the items on such tests should be developed in such a way as to be appropriate to the particular context under investigation.

According to (Gardner & Lalonde, 1985, August) success in language learning is related to motivation which itself is shaped by a variety of attitudinal variables such as ethnic relations, as well as ability and linguistic factors and it is possible that the social and cultural milieu in which language learning takes place will determine learners' beliefs and influence which attitudinal variables serve as basic supports for their motivation.

2. Integrativeness

While the central concept of this model is motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995), its main hypothesis is that the individual's openness, i.e., their willingness or ability to acquire features of another community, plays a leading role in the process of SLA (Gardner, 2010a). At the same time, "The motivational component is influenced to some extent by factors that affect an individual's willingness to accept "foreign" behavior patterns"(Gardner & Lalonde, 1985, August, p. 1). This aspect is regarded as the cultural component of second language learning which is represented in the construct of integrativeness (Gardner, 2010a).

The concept of integrative motivation, as acknowledged by Gardner (2001b), has been considered by many researchers to play a role in the process of SLA, yet this concept has been used rather slightly differently in literature. According to MacIntyre, Mackinnon, & Clement (2009), the integrative motive from Gardner's socio-educational model (1985) has been the central concept in motivation study for many years. This concept, as mentioned by Gardner (2005, as cited in MacIntyre et al. 2009) has two important defining features of integrativeness and motivation. In simple terms integrativeness refers to "how the learner relates to the target culture in various ways" (Cook, 2008, p. 223). Put in Gardner's words (2001b), it refers to a learner's "genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community" (p. 5). "Integrativeness, Attitudes toward the Learning Situation and Motivation form "Integrative Motivation"" (Gardner, 2001a, February, p. 13). Integrativeness and attitudes are two correlated variables which influence motivation to learn a second language, moreover, motivation and language aptitude influence language achievement (Gardner, 2001a).

Gardner and Lambert (1959) developed a "Motivational Intensity Scale" which measured the amount of effort and enthusiasm which students show to acquire the second language. To recapitulate it should be mentioned that:

1). Integrative motivation is a complex of attitudinal, goal-directed, and motivational variables.

2). The concept of integrative motivation assumes that

   a. Second language acquisition refers to the development of near-native-like language skills, and this takes time, effort, and persistence.

   b. Such a level of language development requires identification with the second language community." (Gardner, 2001b, pp. 1-2)

3. Orientation

According to Gardner (2001b), "Orientations are simply classifications of reasons that can be given for studying a language, and there is little reason to believe that the reasons, in and of themselves, are directly related to success" (p. 16). Gardner and Lambert (1959) developed the "orientation index" which aims at identifying the types of motivation associated with success in language. This index classifies individuals as integratively or instrumentally oriented.

As mentioned by Gardner (2001b, p. 2), "There is an important distinction between integrative motivation and an integrative orientation." Nevertheless, it appears that orientations or reasons for studying a second language have been equated with motivation by some researchers. But the important point is that the operative variable is motivation, and not orientation. Integrative orientation refers "to the desire to learn a language in order to interact with, and perhaps to identify with, members of the L2 community" (Noels, 2001, p. 44). Instrumental Orientation "refers to an interest in

learning the language for pragmatic reasons that do not involve identification with the other language community." (Gardner, 2001b, p. 8)

4. Attitude Toward the Learning Situation

According to Gardner (2001b), attitudes toward any aspect of the situation where the language is learned is referred to as Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation. For example, in the context of school, these attitudes could be directed toward the teacher, the course, classmates, the materials, extra-curricular activities associated with the course, etc. In other words, "in any situation, some individuals will express more positive attitudes than others, and it is these differences in attitudes toward the learning situation that are the focus of the model." (Gardner, 2001b, p. 6)

E. Basic Elements of the Model

According to Gardner (2010a), the 1985 version of the model consists of the four components of 1) the social milieu, 2) individual differences 3) SLA context, and 4) outcomes. These four factors are believed to play an important role in determining the achievement in second language learning. The first factor, social/cultural milieu, according to Semmar (2007), refers to the social and cultural setting, i.e., monolingual/monocultural vs. multilingual/multicultural societies, where learning is taking place and which shapes the learner's belief about other ethnic and linguistic groups. The second factor, which has to do with individual difference variables, is related to the first. According to Ellis (2008), Gardner identified a number of variables that are conducive to individual differences. Gardner and MacIntyre (1992, as cited in MacIntyre, 2002) have referred to the socio-cultural milieu which affects both cognitive and affective (Individual Differences) ID variables. Cognitive variables include intelligence, language aptitude, and language learning strategies, and affective variables include attitude, motivation, language anxiety, and self-confidence. The third factor is about learning context and whether it is formal or informal, and the last factor has to do with the outcome of learning which, according to Ellis (2008), can be linguistic (L2 proficiency), and non-linguistic (attitudes, self-concept, cultural values, and beliefs).

The attention to non-linguistic outcomes in this model is important, since such non-linguistic outcomes encompass the attitudes, values and beliefs that learners have derived from the learning experience. Consequently, such outcomes affect the learner's identity. This is in line with the idea held by many scholars such as Williams & Burden (1997) who consider language a part of one's identity, and a means to convey this identity to other people. Therefore, learning a language goes beyond simple acquisition of linguistic aspects and it includes an alteration in self-mage. In short, according to Gardner (1979, as cited in Finegan, 2012), the acquisition of a second language is far more than learning new information. Rather, it is a process during which the learners acquire "symbolic elements of a different ethnolinguistic community" (p. 520). Therefore, the acquisitions of, for instance, new words, grammar, and pronunciation are far more than learning new concepts, new words order, and new ways of saying different things. It is a process which involves the acquisition of features of another ethnolinguistic community.

The socio-educational model has evolved ever since its presentation, so that its current version, according to Gardner (2010b), focuses on the six latent constructs of *language aptitude, attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, motivation, language anxiety,* and *language achievement.* The last construct has been characterized in terms of linguistic and nonlinguistic outcomes.

F. Critical Appraisal

1. Strong points

a. Providing scientific and empirical studies supporting socio-educational mode

By playing an important role in implementing scientific L2 motivation research procedures, Gardner's psychological theory brought research to maturity (Gu, 2009). Gardner's model is associated with the AMTB which provides reliable assessments of its major constructs, allowing empirical tests of the model (Gardner, 2006). This issue is important because, as acknowledged by Gardner (2010b), often various models use concepts and measures that are somewhat different. Assessing the validity of such models, therefore, requires obtaining more information regarding the specific measures used in each model. Moreover, observing the utilization of somewhat different constructs bearing the same name, Gardner (2010b) has also recommended the clarification of concepts in order to remove the problem of using multiple definitions for one construct.

Consequently, one of the main concerns' of Gardner (2010a) is to present models which focus on the underlying constructs and their measurement while containing schematic diagrams which indicate the processes by which the variables under considerations are linked. Gardner believes that an appropriate strategy in a scientific investigation is to follow such a procedure since it emphasizes the operational definition of the constructs and therefore, enables other researchers to verify the validity of the generalizations made by the model. This point can be considered as one of the strength of the model. In fact there are many researches whose results empirically supports Gardner's socio-educational model, e.g., Gardner, Lalonde & Pierson (1983), and Semmar (2006).

b. Providing a realistic model

The other strength of this model can be claimed to be what Gardner, (2010a) and many scholars (e.g., MacIntyre, MacMaster & Baker, 2001; Ellis, 2008; Baker, 1992) have referred to as the non-static nature of the socio-educational model. This model, therefore, "is a dynamic one in which individual difference variables are seen to influence language achievement and language achievement is seen to have an influence on the individual difference variables" (Gardner,

2010a, p. 85). Consequently, this model, as acknowledged by Baker (1992), is also cyclical, in the sense that the outcomes of the learning feed back into the model. That is, the experiences gained by learners in formal or informal settings affect attitude which in turn affects motivation, which itself in an endless cyclical process affects continued experience in those settings. Therefore, this model takes the true dynamic nature of learning into account and allows for the inevitable variability of the interlanguage, and as such the model is considered to be (more) realistic than other methods.

Moreover, due to this dynamic nature, Gardner (2010a) has rejected some of the critics of this model who consider ID variables as traits. Since traits, as acknowledged by him are relatively enduring, while these variables allow for changes under different circumstances.

c. Providing a useful and practicable model

As mentioned by Gardner (2001b), there are other attributes of the motivated individual about which the model is silent, but the model tries to focus "on only the defining attributes *in the interest of parsimony* [emphasis added]" (p. 6). In other words "it satisfies the scientific requirement of parsimony in that it involves a limited number of operationally defined constructs" (Gardner, 2006, p. 237). Nevertheless, this point does not pose a threat to the model because Tremblay and Gardner (1995) indicated that the integration of other indices of motivation into this model still does not change its basic structure.

d. No limitation of the model in EFL context

There are some criticisms raised which have been apparently answered by Gardner (2010b). For example, there are critics who believe that socio-educational model is just applicable to bilingual settings such as Canada, where most of Gardner's studies were taking place, believing that the results of such contexts cannot be generalized to different settings (particularly in EFL contexts as opposed to ESL contexts). But, as held by Gardner (2006), the socio-educational model can be applicable to both foreign and second language learning contexts.

To find out the generalizability of the Garner's model, a number of researches were conducted in this area in EFL contexts. But the results of some of them do not support Garner's claims, e.g., Kojima Takahashi (n.d.). Such results point to the limitations of integrativeness in such context. Nevertheless, the study conducted by Gardner (2006) shows that when uniform measures are utilized, the obtained results show considerable stability.

2. Weak points

a. A gap in development

While Dörnyei (2005) has referred to Gardner's model as the dominant motivation model for more than three decades and has considered AMTB as a scientific assessment tool both in terms of presentation and content, nevertheless, he believes that Gardner's motivational theory has remained rather unmodified over time. Dörnyei believes that this lack of development is not in accord with the dramatic changes that have taken place in motivation research following the "cognitive revolution" in psychology. In this regard, Gardner (2010a), in an attempt to provide an answer to this criticism, has been reported as saying "Revolutions in psychology come and go, and though the socio-educational model is not phrased in "cognitive" terms, this does not mean that the research findings and the model itself are no longer relevant" (p. 203). Yet it seems that Gardner has not been successful in providing an adequate answer to Dörnyei's criticism.

2. Over-emphasis on integrativeness

It seems that Gardner has over-emphasized the role of integrativeness in predicting achievement and has placed excessive emphasis on the positive attitude and beliefs of the learner. While the facilitative effect of this concept is not at all rejected, it seems that Gardner's model is not able to account for cases where learners do not have a positive attitude towards the target language and culture but, nevertheless, succeed in learning it. Also, as mentioned by (Gu, 2009), despite the emphasis on social attitudes, Gardner's theory has not succeeded in addressing the intricate interrelationship of Anglophone and Francophone communities in Canada or how changing power relations between the two groups affects L2 learning in various different ways. And instead he has considered the individual's attitudes towards the L2 community as the main social determinants. Gu has depicted this shortcoming by the following figure (Figure 3).
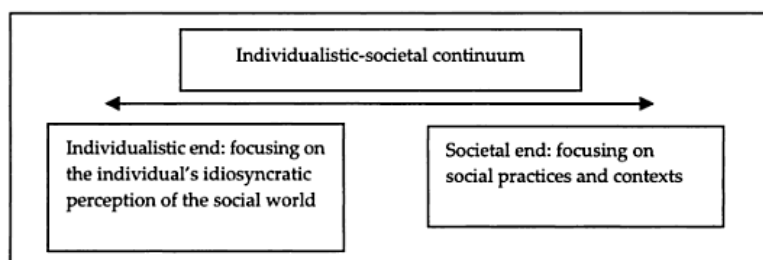

Figure 3 Gardner's Theory of an Individualistic-Societal Continuum (from Gu, 2009)

Gu believes that while Gardner's theory has focused on the individual end, it has overlooked the societal end. And as language learning can never happen in a vacuum, a theory which does not consider the impact of the societal factors at

large is not comprehensive. In other words, it can be claimed that one of the shortcomings of the Gardner's theory is it has neglected to consider what Kumaravadivelu (2006) has referred to as "language as ideology". Kumaravadivelu has looked at "language" from the three vantage points of language as system, language as discourse, and language as ideology. The third vantage point, i.e., "language as ideology" "deals mainly with issues of how the social and political forces of power and domination impact on language structures and language use" (p. 24). This is the very point which has been overlooked in the socio-educational model.

III. Conclusion

Although Gardner (2006, p. 237) believes that his model is superior to other models in that "it is concerned with the motivation to learn and become fluent in another language, and not simply with task and/or classroom motivation", nevertheless, there is still a long way ahead of motivation inquiries.

Dörnyei (2005) has divided the history of motivation into the three phases of 1) the social psychological period (1959-1990) with Gardner playing the key role, 2) the cognitive situated period (during the 1990s) when studies were conducted based on cognitive theories in educational psychology, and 3) the process-oriented period (2000 till present) which is marked by an interest in motivational change. In line with the new era in motivational study some researchers have proposed other motivational model which takes into account other variables. For example, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, as cited in Rock, 2011) discussed motivational Self System as a superior L2 motivational theory than Gardner's construct of integrative motivation in the socio-educational model, believing that their system is a better predictor of a learner's overall motivational disposition than the concept of integrativeness raised by Gardner. Others sush as Yashima (2002, as cited in Dewaele, 2009) considered a concept whish she named "international posture" as a better predictor of achievement in EFL contexts. Also, Gu (2009) believes that there is a need for research into more globally oriented models of motivation.

Nevertheless, taking into account all merits and demerits of Gardner's socio-educational model into account, the influential role of this model cannot not be neglected. This point can be evidenced by the fact that criticisms addressing this model were not successful at marginalizing it. To the extent that even Dörnyei (1994), who has been ranked among the critics of this model, has acknowledged the seminal work of Robert Gardner and his colleagues and admitted that Gardner's theory has profoundly influenced his thinking on this subject. Indeed, even Dörnyei himself has attempted to integrate the social psychological constructs postulated by Gardner, Clement, and their associates into the proposed new framework of L2 motivation (Dörnyei). On the whole, not neglecting the achievements made by Gardner, it can be said that considering the complexity of the construct of motivation still there is a long way ahead of researchers to be taken.

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