

Individual factors in the motivation of learning L3 through L2 among minority students in Xinjiang

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Abstract

Learner motivation is considered as one of the important factors that help to understand learner performance. As motivation is affected by both individual and social factors, it is essential to explore the learner motivation before effective instrumental programs for learners studying in different social contexts are designed and implemented. Using the expectancy-value theory (EVT) model of achievement motivation, proposed by Eccles and her collaborators, this study aimed at exploring (1) the most influential effective variables in learning English as an L3 and (2) individual factors that influence the learners' L3 motivation. The participants in this study were ethnic minority students of a university and a middle school in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. Two hundred and ninety-nine students from one of the top universities and a prestigious middle school in Ürümqi voluntarily answered a motivational questionnaire and filled in a personal information sheet. Results of the study showed that L3 learners held higher utility and attainment value than intrinsic value and expectancy for success. The age onset of bilingualism, L2 exposure and attitude towards L3 learning are the important individual factors related to learners' L3 motivation. On the basis of these results, the author provides suggestions on the provision of L3 education, the medium of L3 instruction, as well as the influence of present bilingual education policy on teaching English as an L3 in the context of different bilingual teaching modes in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Keywords: bilingual education, minority learners, L2 and L3, learner motivation, individual factors, language planning and policy

Introduction

Third language acquisition is a very common phenomenon, in natural as well as formal contexts, and it takes place in a large number of diverse sociolinguistic situations. It not only promotes the willingness to maintain L2 and encourages the use of L1, but also enhances the arousal of new skills and techniques deriving from the learners' previous language-learning experience (Clyne, 2011; Herdina & Jessner 2000). There are ample research results that showed the advantages of bilinguals and bilingualism in third language acquisition (Cenoz, 2003; Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Jorda, 2005; Clyne & Grey, 2004). The positive effects of bilingualism on third language acquisition were observed from the point of creative thinking, metalinguistic awareness, and individual factors like those of age, motivation and intelligence (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Muñoz, 2000; Stapforda et al., 2010).

Social and cultural factors are as important as educational factors when it comes

to understanding bilingual and trilingual development in contexts with two or more languages (Errasti, 2003; Troike, 1984). Obeng (2000) showed that attitudes encompassing a wide range of values, beliefs, and emotions concerning language influence learners' perceptions towards languages in general and towards educational bilingual policies in particular. Thus, contextual settings where languages are learned and used, and the status of the languages involved need to be taken into great consideration in the research of third language acquisition (Cenoz, 2000, 2003). With the development of globalization and with English becoming the global language, many Asian countries such as Malaysia, India, and China give priority to English education as a foreign or third language in schooling. Yet few empirical studies were conducted on the third language acquisition of the minority learners in China, specifically in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region where Uyghurs make up the majority. Thus the main goal of the present study is to illuminate issues about motivation in L3 learning by studying a unique context that will shed new light on the research domain of L3 motivation, which until now has been dominated by (a) studies focusing on bilingual (L2) as opposed to multilingual (L3) and western as opposed to non-western contexts.

Literature review

The term motivation differs among the theorists and researchers from different fields and domains. The present study is conducted within the framework of EVT that consists of two parts: (a) cognitive and (b) social. From the point of cognitive view, Eccles et al. (2004) defined motivation as the combination of learners' expectancy for success and their value beliefs in a task. They define expectancy as the individuals' beliefs about how well they will do on an upcoming task. It depends on learners' confidence in their intellectual abilities and on their estimation of the task difficulty, and relates to learners' sense of competence, self-efficacy and locus of control. In self-determination theory, competence refers to the feeling that one has the capacity to effectively carry out an action. For example: in the context of L3 learners in Xinjiang, they learn L3 through L2 that is believed to hinder the learners' expectancy.

Regarding task values, Eccles et al. (2004) define them as the qualities of different tasks and how those qualities influence individual's desire to do the task. They grouped the individual's value beliefs on a task into four types.

- **Intrinsic value:** the enjoyment or emotional incentives a person gets from doing the task and his/her subjective interest in the task; this is closely linked to intrinsic motivation in self-determination theory.
- **Utility value:** the individual's future goals for doing the task such as getting required credit at school, gaining a prestigious job in a society and so on. This component of the subjective task values is very similar to the extrinsic motivation in self-determination theory in which the cause of an action is out of learners' own control.
- **Attainment value:** the personal importance of doing well on a task and relevance for an individual of engaging in the task for confirming or disconfirming salient aspects of his or her self-schema such as ego, identity. It is very close to the more internalized identified regulation in self-determination theory and ideal self in L2 motivational self-system.
- **Cost:** negative aspects of engaging in a task, such as performance anxiety, fear of failure as well as success, task difficulty as well as the amount of time and effort needed to success and the lost opportunities resulting from making one choice rather than another.

In the area of trilingual education, study results showed that motivation and general intelligence were more important factors associated with higher achievement in learning L3 than the influence of bilingualism in the European context (Cenoz, 2008; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994). In terms of age onset of L3 learning, researchers (Cenoz, 2003; Nikolov, 1999) found that younger learners displayed stronger motivation and more positive attitude towards learning English as an L3 than older learners. Studies from the Hungarian context further confirm these results (Dornyéi et al., 2006). Ellinger (2000) investigated the relationship among identity, motivation and achievement in English as a foreign language. Variables included ethnolinguistic identity, self-confidence, instrumental and integrative orientation. Results showed that ethnolinguistic identity was a greater predictor of achievement than any of the other variables. When examining the impact of L1 on the L2 and L3, Lasagabaster (2003) found that minority learners showed more positive attitude towards L3 than L2, and reasoned it for the absence of English in the Basque Region.

Social background

Linguistic situation and bilingual education policy in Xinjiang

Chinese (L2) and Uyghur (L1) are two official languages of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region though there are other languages such as Kazak, Mongol, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Xibe spoken by their speakers as L1. The present educational policy for the minorities in Xinjiang is the bilingual education of L2 and L1, and the mode of this bilingual education differs largely from region to region due to the population distribution. Ma (2009) classified it into three types: (1) traditional bilingual teaching mode, (2) bilingual education of particular minorities and (3) new bilingual teaching mode. In the traditional bilingual teaching mode, L2 teaching starts in primary school Grade three and the hours of L2 instruction keeps increasing so that the minority students transfer from L1 to L2 smoothly in later school years. The second mode directs to the small group of ethnicities such as Xibe and Mongol who are intermingled with Han students. In the third mode, most of the courses such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and English are taught in L2, while the rest such as native language, history, and geography, are taught in L1. According to her, one of the prospects of this new bilingual teaching mode is that the schools may develop a “trilingual schools”, wherein, L1, L2 and L3 are opened simultaneously, and all the other courses except for L1 are taught in L2. The document released in 2011 by the Educational Bureau of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region also proposed two kinds of teaching mode, and advocated to teach a foreign language, mainly English to the minority learners where the conditions allowed. In mode one, L1 is used for the first two or three years with L2 taught as a major school subject, and the mode two is same with the new bilingual teaching mode as classified by Ma (2009), in which all the courses are taught in L2 and L1 is taught as a school subject. In both modes, L3 is taught in L2.

English education for the minorities in Xinjiang is still in the beginning stage compared with English education for the Han majority. Yet, based on the aforementioned two bilingual teaching modes, it is becoming more and more popularized and welcome. This new teaching area has already drawn the attention of scholars and researchers from both inside and outside China (Adamson & Feng, 2009; Feng, 2005, 2012; Lam, 2007; Yang, 2005), and they addressed a series of difficulties and problems from micro to macro levels. These difficulties and problems are categorized by

Feng (2012) as the lack of educational resources, the vigorously advocated bilingual language policy that brings a threat to minority languages and identity, and limited practical use of English in the ethnic minority areas. On the other hand, Baehler and Besharov (2013) describe the English education as an opportunity for enhancing minority students' ethnic, national and international identities, and it equips them with linguistic tools for academic and career development, and a worldview to act as global citizens.

The study

Considering the present bilingual education policy, complex sociolinguistic context, and the lack of empirical research on the third language acquisition in China, namely in Xinjiang, this study aims to explore the minority learners' motivation in learning L3, the contributions of individual factors (mainly the choice of L3 medium of instruction, age of L2 onset, the rate of self-evaluation in L2 and L3 proficiency and exposure to L2) to their L3 motivation. We focused on the above-mentioned individual factors as we thought these factors were directly linked to the minority language planning and policy in Xinjiang. We chose the EVT of achievement motivation as a theoretical base of this study for the following reasons: (1) expectancy for success and the task value cost suit best to explore the minority learners' motivation in learning L3 because of the L3 medium of instruction; and (2) the motivational variables in this model can best predict their L3 motivation when socio-cultural and sociolinguistic factors (the language policy, the huge socioeconomic gap between regions as well as between the minority and the majority, and increasingly changing demographic situation) are taken into consideration. Therefore, this study aims at answering the following two research questions.

1. What are the most influential motivational variable(s) for minorities in learning English as an L3 in Xinjiang?
2. What are the contributions of individual factors (age of L2 onset, the rate of self-evaluation in L2 and L3 proficiency, and exposure to L2) to the L3 motivation of minority learners in Xinjiang?

Methodology

Participants were students from one of the top universities and a prestigious middle school in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Males make up 36.5%, females make up 63.5%, and their mean age is 21.8 and 15.2 respectively. The university students majored in both science and art, all of them reached the L2 proficiency level required by school administration. Among them, Uygurs were 246 (82.8%); Kazaks were 45 (15.2%) and Kirgiz were 6 (2%). The participants' exposure to L2 is largely different according to the regions and the teaching modes of bilingual education. Most of the university students belong to the traditional teaching mode, and the students from middle school belong to the new teaching mode. All the participants from both the universities and middle school learn L3 in L2.

The research instrument (written in the native languages of the participants) in this study is composed of two parts: a personal information sheet and a questionnaire on learner motivation (see Appendix). The questionnaire about learner motivation is based on the Motivational Scale by Wigfield (1994), later modified by Ohki (2009)

with a five-point Likert-scale from disagree to agree. Some items in the questionnaire were modified according to the local context, and four items were added after its validity and reliability were confirmed.

Results

Motivational variables in L3 learning

We compared the mean of motivational variables obtained in the questionnaire and conducted ANOVA test in order to answer the first research question. Mean, SD and ANOVA results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparison by motivational variables

	Expectancy	Intrinsic	Attainment	Utility	Cost	F
Mean	3.65	4.15	4.41	4.46	3.52	100.91***
SD	.91	.94	.77	.71	.56	

N=299 ***p<.001; *p<.05

As shown in Table 1, ANOVA results showed that there was significant effect of motivational variables on minority learners' L3 learning at the $p<.001$ conditions for the five motivational variables ($F(4.1072) = 100.91$, $p<.001$). To better understand which motivational variables are the most influential, we further looked into the results of Turkey post hoc test. There were statistical significant differences between cost and intrinsic attainment and utility value ($p <.001$), between expectancy and intrinsic, attainment and utility value ($p<.001$), between intrinsic and utility value ($p<.01$), and intrinsic value and expectancy for success ($p <.001$).

Motivational differences between the age of early- and late-onset bilinguals

In order to investigate the influence of L2 age onset on L3 motivation, subjects are divided into groups of two according to the age of their L2 onset. Group I is of university students, and their mean age of L2- and L3-onset is 8.84 and 18.82 respectively. Group II is of middle school students and their mean age of L2- and L3-onset is 5.30 and 8.25 respectively. T-test was conducted to explore the motivational differences between early- and late-onset bilinguals. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Comparison by age onset

	Group I (N=229)		Group II (N=55)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
expectancy	3.69	.91	3.50	1.13	$t(71.65) = 1.12$, n.s.
intrinsic	4.24	1.05	3.75	1.43	$t(66.67) = 2.40$, $p<.05$
attainment	4.47	.66	4.11	1.14	$t(57.57) = 2.18$, $p<.05$
utility	4.52	.70	4.20	1.28	$t(59.31) = 1.82$, n.s.
cost	3.54	.67	3.42	1.08	$t(58.74) = .78$, n.s.

As shown in Table 2, the mean values of all motivational variables of group I are higher than group II except cost. Statistically significant differences revealed in the intrinsic and attainment value between the two groups.

Learners' self-evaluation of L2 and L3 proficiency

Subjects are grouped into three according to the question that explore their self-evaluation of L2 and L3 level. The question is "How do you evaluate your level in Chinese/English?" with three alternative answers: Good, Not bad and Bad. Group I is Good, group II is Not bad and group III is Bad. ANOVA was conducted to explore the motivational differences among the groups in order to understand the influence of their self-evaluation of L2 /L3 level on their L3 motivation. Learners' L2 self-evaluation failed to reveal any statistically significant influence on their L3 motivation. Table 3 reveals the results of learners' L3 self-evaluation on their L3 motivation.

Table 3

The impact of learners' L3 self-evaluation on their L3 motivation

	Group I (N=47)		Group II (N=187)		Group III (N=44)		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
expectancy	4.09	.95	3.72	.86	3.00	.94	F(2, 271) =19.19, p <.001
intrinsic	4.43	1.05	4.25	1.03	3.41	1.41	F(2, 277) =12.28, p <.001
attainment	4.59	.81	4.41	.73	4.18	.88	F(2, 271) =3.12, p <.05
utility	4.52	.99	4.52	.75	4.17	.99	F(2, 275) =3.19, p <.05
cost	3.32	.86	3.54	.71	3.68	.70	F(2, 270) =2.70, n.s.

With regard to the influence of the learners' L3 self-evaluation on their L3 motivation, as shown in Table 3, the intergroup differences were significant in all cases except cost. After post-hoc analyses for the groups with significant F values, statistically significant differences were revealed among all the groups in expectancy, and statistically significant differences were revealed between group II and group III in intrinsic, attainment and utility value. Thus, the students with a good command of English hold higher degree of expectancy for success and intrinsic value than the ones with not bad or bad command of English. The students with a good command of English hold higher degree of attainment and utility value than the ones with *bad* command of English though the significance is not as strong as expectancy for success and intrinsic value.

The influence of the attitude of L2 and L3 learning on L3 motivation

To investigate the subjects' attitudes of L2/L3 learning on L3 motivation, the question "When you started learning Chinese/English, did you want to learn it?", with three alternative answers "Very much, Not very and No", was asked. Subjects were divided into groups of three according to their attitudes towards L2 and L3 learning: group I (very much), group II (not very) and group III (*no*). Then ANOVA was used to explore the influence of their L2/L3 attitude on their L3 motivation.

Table 4
Comparison by learners' attitude towards L3

	Group I (N=207)		Group II (N=57)		Group III (N=16)		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
expectancy	3.82	.90	3.34	.95	2.60	.80	F(2, 272)=18.27, p <.001
intrinsic	4.37	1.00	3.83	1.20	2.40	1.11	F(2, 277)=29.31, p <.001
attainment	4.48	.77	4.32	.81	3.72	.60	F(2, 271)=7.67, p <.01
utility	4.52	.81	4.44	.86	3.81	.1.08	F(2, 276)=5.33, p <.01
cost	3.42	.73	3.73	.78	3.87	.76	F(2, 270)=5.53, p <.01

In terms of the influence of learners' L2 attitude toward their L3 motivation, no statistically significant differences revealed among the groups. Table 4 reveals the results of learners' L3 attitude towards their L3 motivation.

As shown in Table 4, the three groups were statistically significant different. The mean values of all the motivational variables of group I are higher than the mean values in group II and group III except cost. The mean value of utility of group I is significantly higher than the mean value of utility of group III. The mean value of cost in group I is the lowest among the other two groups and there is a significant difference between group I and group III.

Learners' origin of hometown and its impact on their L3 motivation

The population distribution of Han and other ethnicities in Xinjiang is uneven. As mentioned earlier, the majority of Han live in the north and more developed cities, while the majority of Uyghurs and other minorities are heavily concentrated in the South. Thus students are grouped into two according to the Han-ethnic population distributions of the regions from where they come. Group I are the students from Hotan, 33, 12.5%; Kizilsu, 3, 1.1%; Kashgar, 65, 24.6%; Aksu, 31, 11.7%; and Turpan, 8, 3%. Group II are students from Ürümqi, 58, 22%; Altay, 40, 15,2%; Bortala, 4, 1.5%; Karamay, Maytag and Sawan, 6, 2.3%; Kumul, 7, 2.7%; Korla, 9, 3.4%. 58.1% students from group I came from the southern part of the region where Uyghurs make up over 70% of the total population of Xinjiang. The largest proportion of the students from group II come from Ürümqi where Uyghurs make up around 12%. We did so as we assume that the L2 exposure in natural as well as formal context would affect the learners' L2 motivation and proficiency, which in turn influences their L3 motivation. T-test is conducted to explore the motivational differences in learning L3 between two groups. Table 5 below reveals the results.

Table 5
Comparison by hometown

	Hometown I (N=130)		Hometown II (N=109)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
expectancy	3.72	.90	3.67	.98	t(237) = .41, n.s.
intrinsic	4.33	.99	4.15	1.15	t(214.10) = 1.36, n.s.
attainment	4.44	.72	4.45	.76	t(237) = .20, n.s.
utility	4.44	.82	4.55	.74	t(237) = 1.01, n.s.
cost	3.41	.64	3.73	.80	t(205.27) = 3.38, p<.01

As we see in Table 5, statistically significant differences revealed in *cost* between the two groups, and the cost of L3 motivation of learners from group II is significantly higher than group I.

Discussion

The first research question aims at exploring the most influential motivational variable(s) in minority learners' L3 motivation. Utility value has the highest mean among the five motivational variables, near to "5" in the Likert-scale referred to agree (Learning English is useful to find a good job after my graduation. English will be useful to my future plan). This figure further confirms the instrumentality of EFL learner motivation found in the past research results in China (Gao, 2004; Hu, 2010; Rayhangül, 2014). Minority learners are fully aware that they cannot survive in the globalized era with L2 only, especially in the job market where they compete with Han students who learn English as a compulsory course from elementary Grade three. Moreover, the (Road and Belt) policy 一路一带政策, tourism development, the newly opened special economic administrative cities, the educational system which requires relatively high English proficiency for the entrance exams of postgraduate schools, the growing number of students who want to study abroad, the increasing rate of unemployment among the minorities plus the increasing number of foreign students from border countries would be additional reasons to enhance the utility value of English in this region.

The mean of attainment and intrinsic value reaches "4" referred to somewhat agree in the Likert-scale (English is very important to make our culture known to the world. English is very important to realize my dream. I am interested in learning English.). It indicates that minority students not only show importance to L3 in the reflection of their identification with their culture, but also show interest in learning it. With the demographic change and the economic development of the region, they have realized that they need to know not only the national language, but also the international language to make them heard to the world. Knowing English also helps them to compete with the majority Han and Minkaohan students who have the opportunity to learn English from Grade Three. These social issues lead them to believe that L3 plays an important role in their personal and career development. The cultural and language environment in which the minority students live contributes to their interest in learning L3. Because of geographical location, the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang have the opportunity to expose to foreign cultures and languages. For example: They learn Russian, Turkish, English, and each other's languages as a second or foreign language for academic and trade purposes. Moreover, many technical words in the minority learners' L1 come from English. These advantages enhanced their interest in L3, too.

These results are in line with the previous study results (Rayhangül, 2014) in which minority students placed higher interest and attainment value to English in comparison to Han students. They also further confirm the Baehler and Besharov (2013) claim mentioned in the social background section above. Expectancy for success ranked fourth among the motivational variables. The minority students' expectancy in learning L3 in L2 reaches "3" in the Likert-scale referred to the neither agree nor disagree (e.g.: I think I can master English. I think I am mastering what I have learnt in English class.). This figure indicates that although they reached the L2 proficiency level assumed to have the ability of receiving instructions in L2, they are not fully confident in learning L3 even though they are beginners. This further proves the difficulties categorized by Feng and Yang (2005, 2009) that vigorously promoted bilingual education policy and low L2 proficiency would hinder the minority learners' L3 education in rural and less developed areas. Lastly, cost has the lowest mean and standard deviation (e.g.: Learning English in Chinese is very difficult for me. To get good grades in English, I have to study hard.). This result implies that in the beginning stage, they found L3 not so challenging and difficult.

The second research question aims at exploring the influence of individual factors on the minority learners' L3 motivation. These individual factors include learners' age of L2 onset, their choice of L3 instruction, the rate of self-evaluation in L2 and L3 levels, and their exposure to L2. Study results (Cenoz, 2003; Nikolov, 1999) carried out in the multilingual European context showed that early-onset bilinguals had more positive attitudes and higher motivation towards the motivation of L3 learning than late-onset bilinguals. The results of the present study do not support the findings of these studies. In this study, university students hold higher intrinsic and attainment value in comparison to middle school students even though they have more exposure to L2 and have better L3 learning advantages. This is most probably because: (1) middle school students are either too young to understand the role of L3 in their future life, or they devote less time and effort to L3 as it is considered less important in comparison to other school courses. (2) As previous study results (Stafford, Sanz, & Bowden, 2010) showed, the late-onset bilinguals in this study might have advantages over early-onset bilinguals in organizing their L3 knowledge linguistically and cognitively.

The second individual factor explored is whether minority learners' self-evaluation of L2 and L3 proficiency levels has any impact on their L3 motivation. The study results indicate that out of 289 students, 235 learners evaluate their L2 proficiency to the level of Good, but it failed to show any effect on their L3 motivation. Instead, out of 283 students, 196 chose L1 as the medium of L3 instruction. These results suggest that minority students either have strong commitment to their L1 or the level of their proficiency in L1 and L2 is not balanced. It indicates that the teaching modes in which L3 is taught in L2 needs to be further researched before it is fully implemented all over Xinjiang. In terms of the learners' self-evaluation of L3 level, it further confirms the previous study results (Lasagabaster, 2000) in which a good command of language competence is one of the most influential motivational factors in L3 achievement in a multilingual context. The present study results also support the previous study results (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) in which high competence results in high motivation and vice-versa.

The third individual factor explored the influence of learners' attitudes towards L2 and L3 learning on their L3 motivation. Out of 283 students, 189 responded they wanted to learn L2 Very much when they started to learn it. These results further support the study results by Ma (2009) and Tsung (2010) in which the minority students

in Xinjiang held positive attitudes towards L2 learning, but this positive attitudes failed to show any impact on the motivation of their L3 learning. Thus, the results of the present study do not support the hypothesis by Cenoz (2000) in which a good command of language attitude and competence in L2 leads to higher motivation in L3. Yet, in terms of learners' attitudes to L3 learning, it has a positive influence on their L3 motivation. These results are consistent with the previous study results in that the positive attitude leads to higher motivation (Gardner, 1985, 2001). In order to help policy makers and language planners to make an optimal trilingual educational policy in such a multilingual and multicultural region, the minority learners' attitudes and motivation in L1 and L2 need to be explored and taken into account.

The fourth individual factor is the minority learners' exposure to L2 and its influence on L3 motivation. The results of this study are different from the study results in which students from mainly Spanish-speaking community have more positive attitude and motivation towards English (Lasagabaster, 2003). In terms of bilingual teaching mode and learners' exposure to L2, the cost of L3 motivation from group II is higher than group I. It can be explained from both societal and individual levels. From the societal level: (1) nearly half of the students from group II are from new teaching mode in which L1 is taught as a school subject. This means they spend more effort and time in learning their school subjects from the earlier age, one of the main causes of increasing *cost* in a task. These results further confirm Feng's (2005) worries about the negative influence of the present bilingual language policy on the minority learners' L3 education. (2). The school system that places English as a minor course and exempt the minority students from taking it in the College Entrance Exam. From the point of individual level, based on the cognitive influence of L2 age onset on L3 outcomes, these results further confirm the previous study results in that: (1) a higher frequency of use of the minority language (Sciriha, 2001), a better competence in the minority language (Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner & Reyes, 2004) or a higher proficiency in both the minority and the majority language (Muñoz, 2000) happen to be related to better outcomes in different dimensions of L3. (2) late-onset bilinguals maintained improvements in accurately making noun case morphology in L3 production somewhat better than early-onset bilinguals. If we apply the Cenoz' (2003) hypothesis in which effective L1 proficiency leads to adequate L2 motivation, which in turn, leads to adequate L3 motivation in the multilingual and multicultural context, future researches are needed to explore the effectiveness of different modes of bilingual teaching system.

Conclusion

On the basis of EVT of achievement motivation, this study aimed to explore the minority learners' motivation in learning English as an L3. Regarding the most influential motivational variables, utility and attainment value have the strongest influence on minority learners' L3 motivation. The study results showed that L3 learners' expectancy is lower in comparison to other motivational variables of intrinsic, attainment and utility value even though they reached the L2 proficiency level set by educational authorities. Thus, a study exploring the minority students' attitude towards L1 and L2 and their motivation in these two languages will shed better light on their motivation in learning L3.

This study also investigated the individual factors influencing the minority learners' L3 motivation. The results showed that the individual factors related to learners' exposure to L2, the L2-age onset, and their attitude towards L3 learning and

self-evaluation in L3 proficiency have stronger influence on the minority learners' L3 motivation than their choice of the medium of L3 instruction and the attitude towards L2 learning. On whole, the study showed different results in comparison to the studies carried out in other multilingual and multicultural contexts (Cenoz, 2003; Lasagabaster, 2000). Thus, further studies that investigate the influence of social factors will help better understand their motivation in learning L3. The results of the present study have a number of important educational and policy-related implications, specifically relevant for the different modes of bilingual education in Xinjiang. First, they point to the importance of implementing a well-planned bilingual education policy that facilitates the minority learners' L3 acquisition, and the medium of L3 instruction. Another important implication is that English proficiency is not currently one of the evaluative measures in the pre- or post-university tests that all minority students must take if they wish to gain a place at university, and which top universities use to select students in China. Middle school students don't like to devote efforts and time in learning English, as it is a minor course, especially when they are in their third year in Junior high school, because their English test scores are not required for (中考) Senior High School Entrance Examination. What is more, no matter how their English level is, they start learning it from the very beginning after they enter colleges. Thus the findings highlight the need to establish assessment policies for the minority students' L3 proficiency before and after their graduation from the college.

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Note on Contributors

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Appendix

I. Personal Information

1. Your native language: A. Uyghur B. Kazak C. Others
2. Your gender: A. Male B. Female
3. Your hometown: -----
4. Your major: -----
5. Your language level in the following languages
English: A. Good B. Not bad C. Bad
Chinese: A. Good B. Not bad C. Bad
6. How old were you when you started to learn Chinese? -----years old
7. How old were you when you started to learn English? -----years old
8. When you started to learn this language, did you want to learn it?
English: A. Very much B. Not very C. No
Chinese: A. Very much B. Not very C. No
9. If you are given a chance, what language do you choose as the medium of English instruction?
A. Native language only B. Chinese only
C. Both native language and Chinese D. Whatever language is OK

II. Questionnaire from Expectancy-Value theory

Likert scale from disagree to agree 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Expectancy

2. I am more competent in my English than my classmates.
5. I think I am mastering what I have learned in English class
6. I think I can master English.
9. I think I can get good grades in English in the final exam.
10. I think I can achieve my goal successfully in learning English.

Interest

3. I am interested in learning English.
15. Learning English is interesting to me.

Attainment

1. It is important for me to have good grades in English.
12. English is very important to fulfill my potentials.
16. It is important for me to be able to use English completely in all situations.
20. English is very important to make our culture known to the world.

Utility

18. What I have learnt in English course will be useful in the future.
19. English is useful to find a job after my graduation.
21. English will be useful to my future plan.

Cost

4. English is difficult for me.
7. It is difficult for me to learn English in Chinese.
8. It is very difficult to learn English, because there are a lot of things to do after class.
11. I don't have enough time to learn English, because I have many courses to take this semester.
13. To get good grades in English, I have to study hard.
14. Learning English is a burden (painful) in several ways.
17. I think I have to work hard to acquire English.