

Motivational Repression, Dissociative Disorder, and Language Education: An Overview Study

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Abstract

This paper examines the intricate connections among motivational repression, dissociative disorder, and language teaching and learning. The paper delves into the relationships between motivational repression and dissociative disorder, as well as motivational repression and language teaching and learning through an overview study. Motivational repression, a psychological defense mechanism, safeguards the self by consciously or unconsciously depressing unacceptable desires, opinions, or distressing experiences. Dissociative disorder is characterized by the breakdown of memory, self-awareness, or cognitive function, often triggered by severe stress or profound trauma. Language teaching and learning encompass purposeful instructional activities aimed at teaching both first and second languages. It underscores the significance of fostering a positive teaching environment for enhancing student motivation and emotional well-being.

Key words

Motivational Repression, Dissociative Disorder, Language Teaching, Student-Tutor Interaction

1. Introduction

Amid the widespread popularization and rapid evolution of education in China, the significance of student's academic qualifications and experiences has never been more prominent (Chen, 2019). Contemporary educational strategies have sparked a considerable focus on the psychological well-being of learners (Wei et al.,

2015). The contention is that by enhancing educational strategies, we can broaden the reach of education and facilitate its rapid development. An essential component of this enhancement involves nurturing a healthy mindset, as it holds the potential to alleviate a plethora of psychological issues (Yu, 2015). In this context, the aim is to make education more targeted, strategic, and inclusive to encompass a broader spectrum of learners (Yang,

2015).

This paper is dedicated to exploring the intricate interplay between learning motivation and learning outcomes with the primary objective of fostering and nurturing intrinsic motivation in learners. Learning motivation is a pivotal factor in shaping the educational experience, as it directly influences the enthusiasm and dedication with which students engage with their studies (Song, 2013). Conversely, the learning effect, which represents the degree of knowledge and skill acquisition, can also reciprocally influence learning motivation (Song, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative to identify and address the core issues in the learning process, bridging the gaps in knowledge and skill acquisition, as these are the linchpins to achieving favorable educational outcomes and laying the foundation for genuine success. The cultivation of learning motivation can be approached through both direct generation and indirect transformation (Song, 2013). A central consideration in this endeavor is understanding and catering to students' intrinsic learning needs (Shan, 2018).

One approach to satisfying these original learning needs is through the lens of inquiry-based education. This pedagogical method involves the provision of various opportunities via a diverse array of activities, tailored to meet the unique requirements and interests of students in multifaceted ways (Gao, 2014). By embracing this approach, education can become a dynamic and personalized journey that is responsive to the multifarious dimensions of student motivation and engagement (Gao, 2014).

This paper draws extensively from the existing literature on motivational repression, dissociative disorder, and language education to unravel the intricate relationships among these domains. Specifically, it endeavors to address two key research questions: (i) How does motivational repression exert its influence on the development of dissociative disorder? and (ii) What is the profound impact of motivational repression on the teaching and learning of language? In doing so, it seeks to contribute valuable insights to the understanding of the interplay between psychological factors and education, ultimately guiding the development of more effective and student-centered educational strategies.

This paper comprises six distinct sections, working in harmony to build a coherent narrative, culminating

in a holistic exploration of the interplay between motivational repression, dissociative disorder, and language teaching and learning. The introductory section establishes the research context and central question, while the second section delves into an extensive review of the existing literature surrounding the three research targets. The third section bridges the relationships between motivational repression, dissociative disorder, and language education. In the fourth section, the paper synthesizes major findings, acknowledges research limitations, and outlines research implications.

2. Literature Review

Motivational repression, originally proposed by Sigmund Freud, is a psychological concept that delves into the human inclination to act and direct behavior toward specific goals. As with most psychological processes, motivation undergoes development throughout an individual's life and is influenced by both biological and environmental factors and the combination of the two as well (Song, 2013).

Today, psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches to therapy primarily draw upon Freudian principles. Freud's contributions extend beyond his groundbreaking work on motivation. He developed influential theories on the unconscious mind, the origins of psychopathology, and the significance of dreams. According to Freud's theory, instances of forgetting can be attributed to repressed emotions or motives. When these repressions are lifted, memories have the potential to resurface. In some cases, the inability to remember something can be linked to a lack of motivation (Zheng, 2021). This view aligns closely with the idea of the subconscious mind, where unacceptable desires, opinions, or painful experiences may be depressed, leading to motivated forgetting (Zhang, 2022).

Considering an individual who has experienced a traumatic car accident, upon waking from the accident, they may have a natural inclination to forget the painful details of the incident as a form of physical and psychological self-protection (Zhuang, 2021). This process is akin to repression and can be seen as a self-defense mechanism, although it possesses both advantages and disadvantages (Zheng, 2021).

Dissociative disorder refers to mental health condi-

tions characterized by a disconnection between thoughts, memories, feelings, surroundings, behaviors, and identities (Ji, 2020). These symptoms of dissociative disorder often involve a form of escape from reality, which can be unwanted and unhealthy, leading to difficulties in managing everyday life (Ji, 2020). They typically arise as a response to traumatic, distressing, or painful events, serving as a means to distance individuals from challenging memories.

The American Psychiatric Association classifies three major types of dissociative disorder: depersonalization/derealization disorder, dissociative amnesia, and dissociative identity disorder (Ji, 2020). Symptoms vary depending on a specific disorder but may encompass feelings of detachment from oneself, distorted perceptions of reality, blurred self-identity, impaired ability to cope with stress, memory loss, and mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Zhang, 2022). Traumatic memories often cause individuals to perceive even ordinary situations as potentially dangerous, triggering panic responses (Li & Zhu, 2012). Relationships with loved ones may become strained; as a result, sudden bursts of intense emotions, such as anger, can occur without a clear understanding of their origins (Zhang, 2022).

Dissociative disorder often serves as a coping mechanism for dealing with overwhelming and distressing events. While they are most commonly associated with children who have experienced prolonged physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, they can also emerge in response to other types of trauma, such as war, natural disasters, or extensive medical procedures (Ji, 2020). Regarding treatment, different forms of dissociative disorder may require unique approaches. For instance, depersonalization disorder may benefit from cognitive-behavioral techniques such as attention training, while dissociative identity disorder may require more extensive therapy involving elements of dialectical behavior therapy (Li & Zhu, 2012).

Language teaching as a specific field of study straddles the disciplines of education and applied linguistics (and at times other disciplines such as applied psychology and applied sociology). As societies have become increasingly mobile, language teaching practices have changed to keep pace with changing learners' needs (Ding, 2022). Globalization has led to dramatic changes

in language pedagogies, both in terms of the rise of global lingua franca such as English, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic, as well as issues surrounding language teaching in immigrant communities, regions, and countries (Qiu, 2021).

Language learning is teaching about a language (its use, its speaker, its structure), with the hope that a student learns enough to be able to speak the target language (Dong & Lan, 2018). Language acquisition, in its current sense, tries to expose a student to the target language in meaningful ways so that one acquires the language's structure through actual use (Lei, 2016). Language learning follows from the official language model, whereas native American languages are taught as foreign languages in their native community. This helps to commodify the heritage language; makes studying it an artificial exercise; and occupies the time, money, and effort of the population that could be better spent in doing language acquisition and achieving real results of the revitalization of their heritage language (Liu, 2018).

The goals of language teaching, according to the theory of Communicative Language Teaching are focused on the teaching of communicative competence, instead of the teaching of grammatical competence (Pan, 2022). Here, grammatical competence refers to knowledge of the grammar rules, which involves parts of speech, tenses, clauses, sentence patterns, etc. Even though some learners can master the rules to create correct sentences, they are still not proficient in using the language for meaningful communication (Wu, 2021). It is for this reason that the core of language teaching should focus on communicative competence a teacher should take into consideration the following aspects of language knowledge: Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions (Xu, 2016). First of all, a student should know how to vary his use of language according to the setting and the participants (Xu, 2016). Next, a student should know how to produce and understand different types of texts. Furthermore, a student should know how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (Xu, 2016).

The development of language motivation. the language motivation field has been examined in its 60-year history. The discussion starts by briefly reviewing the social-psychological and the situated-cognitive periods.

The former was primarily concerned with affective factors in intergroup relations, while the latter was with learners in classroom contexts (Zheng et al., 2021). The second half of the article surveys a number of emerging themes in the field to highlight major findings and potential future directions. These themes include the dynamic, affective, unconscious, and long-term aspects of motivation to learn English and other languages, as well as the implications of the pervasive presence of technology in daily life (Zhuang, 2021).

The social-psychological period was spearheaded by Gardner who classifies the history of his research program into three phases (Zheng, 2021). The first phase (from 1945 to 1972) concerns ancient history. This phase covers the above early researchers as well as Gardner's MA and PhD work. The second phase, or early history, spans the 1970s and the early 1980s. During this period, Gardner and P. C. Smythe obtained funding to establish the Language Research Group at the University of West Ontario and conducted studies across Canada. Gardner calls the last phase of his research modern history, which describes work conducted in the 1980s. This is when Gardner and his graduate students continued research after the Language Research Group was disbanded. (As explained in more detail below, the 1990s marked the beginning of the cognitive-situated period).

Starting from the 1990s, these accumulating issues led language motivation research to shift into a new phase, which was described as the cognitive-situated period. For decades, Gardner and associates have repeatedly insisted that the socio-educational model is dynamic rather than static and that it does not just link variables together but describes a process. The language motivation field is currently in its third phase. Jiang (2015) characterizes this period by the shift to sociodynamic perspectives. Indeed, perhaps the most salient characteristic of this phase is the growing emphasis on the dynamic nature of motivation and its temporal variation (Hu, 2016). However, a number of other themes are also emerging, and so we need to take care not to portray researchers...as part of a coordinated, focused movement, when it was more the case of various diverse concerns emerging at a similar time (Huang, 2020). This makes it hard to give this period a single monolithic title. Such titles usually emerge in retrospect, especially when the field is ready to move to a new phase.

The purpose of language teaching is to make a student learn to listen, speak, read, and write, and to communicate in the language. The content of language teaching consists of language elements, pragmatic rules, speech skills, verbal communication skills, and related cultural knowledge. The teaching principle of language teaching is to master the basic knowledge and skills of language and cultivate the skills of using language to communicate (Chen, 2019). Language teaching adopts different teaching methods according to the teaching of language knowledge and the training of speech skills and communicative skills. Student-centered, teacher-led, gives full play to students' initiative and creativity.

In addition to the traditional teaching methods, there are also a number of other pedagogical methods, which have language teaching as the core. Direct teaching method, listening and speaking teaching method, structured global audio-visual teaching method, audio-visual teaching method, communication teaching method, action teaching method (Huang, 2020). The language teaching method is different from other teaching methods in that it should be used step by step to strengthen attention and reproduction and achieve spiral improvement. The use of the method is expected to correctly deal with the relationship between language and culture, language and knowledge and speech skills, adhere to the combination of structure, function, and culture, take students as the center, give full play to students' enthusiasm and initiative, strengthen the learning environment, and adhere to the combination of conscious learning and natural acquisition (Zheng et al., 2021).

3. Discussion

3.1 Motivational repression and dissociative disorder

Dissociative disorder, often a pivotal response to trauma and subsequent repression, plays a multifaceted role in helping individuals cope with and distance themselves from the traumatic memories and psychological turmoil they experience. This section delves into the multifaceted functions of dissociative disorder in the context of trauma and underscores its implications for trauma-related distress like motivational repression.

Leveraging dissociative disorder as a therapeutic tool, we can harness motivation theory to activate an internal state that is conducive to healing. By utilizing this method, individuals are guided to create and sustain an internal state of behavioral arousal, underpinned by a subjective desire and willingness to achieve specific goals. This approach empowers individuals suffering from dissociative disorder to regain a sense of control and autonomy over their emotional well-being. Motivation, in this context, emerges as a response to the necessity of change and is only ignited when a certain intensity threshold is crossed. Moreover, learning motivation can be integrated into treatment plans to transform direct processes into more indirect ones.

In the intricate web of memory processes, individuals are engaged in a three-step journey – encoding, storage, and retrieval. Active forgetting, on the other hand, represents a deliberate act of selective memory depression. For instance, when encoding memories, individuals may employ inhibition control, thereby selectively blocking certain traumatic associations. In the final step of memory retrieval, individuals can enact depression control, preventing the resurgence of painful memories that have been encoded and stored.

Consider a case of dissociative disorder in the aftermath of a major trauma, whether innate or acquired. Applying the principles of motivational repression theory, one can intervene at the memory encoding stage. This may involve introducing positive words or associations in place of the distressing memories, facilitating the process of active forgetting. Similarly, during memory retrieval, inhibition control, or extraction inhibition, can be employed, particularly when higher levels of dissociative disorder are evident. The more pronounced the inhibitory control in the memory retrieval process, the greater the effectiveness.

The treatment of dissociative disorder using motivational repression has yielded promising results, with some cases demonstrating enduring therapeutic effects and relatively low rates of recurrence. However, it is important to note that this method necessitates a prolonged course of treatment that requires ongoing maintenance to ensure its continued efficacy. This approach offers a nuanced and effective way to address dissociative disorder in the context of trauma, facilitating healing and recovery over time.

3.2 Motivational repression and language teaching and learning

The study and theories surrounding the concept of motivational repression have profound implications for the field of language teaching, particularly in the context of Chinese language education. In comparison to traditional pedagogical approaches, we can draw upon relevant insights from motivation theory to shape a novel paradigm for language instruction. Within this framework, there are notable enhancements to the conventional curriculum model that warrant exploration.

First and foremost, the integration of mind-mapping techniques is a noteworthy departure from traditional teaching methods. By enabling the programming, storage, and retrieval of students' cognitive processes, this approach facilitates a deeper understanding of memorization and absorption. Essentially, it serves as a tool to unlock the latent potential of learners and foster a more profound engagement with the material.

The second aspect of this innovative teaching approach challenges the traditional concept of a curriculum, which often involves copious amounts of textual content. Instead, this paradigm encourages a shift towards a multi-sensory experience by incorporating visual aids such as pictures and videos, as well as interactive activities. This shift from conventional passive learning to active, participatory learning transforms the motivation from an indirect to a direct source, as it elicits a natural curiosity and enthusiasm among students. It is through such diverse activities that we provide students with a range of opportunities to cater to their individual needs and interests.

Consequently, the focal challenge in language education is bridging the knowledge mastery gap. Success hinges on the effectiveness of learning strategies and the cultivation of interest. An effective approach is to empower students by transitioning them from passive listeners in the classroom to active contributors. In comparison to the conventional classroom model, this new approach encourages students to assume various roles, including that of an explainer. This experiential shift cultivates a sense of self-determination and internal motivation, leading to heightened interest in the subject matter, increased self-esteem, and enhanced language learning outcomes.

In essence, students' motivation for learning is a

complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It encompasses a propensity to take learning tasks seriously, a commitment to deriving benefits from them, and the adept utilization of appropriate learning strategies. By incorporating motivation theory into language education, we aim to foster an environment where students are not just passive recipients but active participants in their learning journey, thereby elevating their potential for success.

4. Conclusion

This study conducted a comprehensive review of academic literature on motivational repression, dissociative disorder, and language teaching and learning. Motivational repression encompasses theories regarding the generation, mechanisms, and the relationship between motivation and needs, behavior, and goals. In psychology, motivation refers to the internal arousal state that initiates and sustains human behavior, manifesting as the subjective desire or intention to pursue specific goals. Motivation, stemming from needs, transforms into action when needs reach a certain intensity and can be fulfilled. The concept aligns with Freud's subconscious, where the depression of unacceptable desires or experiences leads to motivational forgetting, serving as a form of self-defense.

Dissociative disorder involves the breakdown of memory, self-awareness, or cognitive functions, often triggered by extreme stress or profound trauma. Symptoms include confusion in self-identity, changes in self-perception, unreal feelings, loss of self-awareness, and amnesia. Dissociative disorder comprises various manifestations such as dissociative amnesia, dissociative wandering disorder, multiple personality abnormalities, and loss of self-perception.

Language teaching and learning denote purposeful, planned, and specific educational activities, playing a crucial role in the overall educational framework. The goal of language teaching is to cultivate and enhance learners' language abilities, encompassing both first and second languages. The research in language teaching extends beyond general linguistics to include close associations with sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

This study delves into two sets of relationships: the connection between motivational repression and dissociative disorder, and the link between motivational repression and language teaching and learning.

This study has two notable research limitations that point towards directions for more in-depth future research. Firstly, due to the substantial academic workload in schools, researchers had limited extracurricular time for the project. This constraint significantly restricted the time available for data collection, and the study primarily drew materials from authoritative Chinese databases, with minimal inclusion of foreign literature. Consequently, future research should aim to conduct a more extensive review of foreign literature related to dissociative disorder, motivational repression, language teaching, and learning. This approach will lead to a more comprehensive and diverse research perspective.

This limitation is crucial because themes like dissociative disorder, motivational repression, language teaching and learning may exhibit variations across different cultural and educational backgrounds. Foreign literature may offer different theoretical frameworks, research methods, and empirical data, thereby enhancing our understanding of these rela-

tionships. Introducing more foreign literature enables researchers to stay abreast of the latest international research trends and deepen their comprehension of the complex connections between these topics. Secondly, this study is solely a review and lacks empirical data support, impacting the persuasiveness and reliability of the findings. To address this limitation, future research could employ field investigation methods to collect firsthand data on dissociative disorder, motivational repression, language teaching, and learning. Through empirical research, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the specific relationships between these factors, capturing the actual interactions between variables and thus enhancing the practicality and applicability of the research.

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