Motivation in a Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract:

Motivation is a key component in determining the success of foreign language learning, particularly in the context of learning English as a foreign language, where learners are geographically and psychologically isolated from the target culture. To be motivated is to have an internal drive that propels one toward achieving goals and succeeding; motivation is a prerequisite for success. Different categories of motivation exist, including intrinsic and extrinsic, integrative and instrumental, internal, external and so on. The most often mentioned contrast in motivation, though, is between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Setting goals, creating a stimulating learning environment, and engaging in engaging lessons are the three areas where language instructors can have a direct impact on language learners' motivation and ongoing engagement in the classroom. Among the key strategies for raising students' motivation are giving them constructive criticism and improving their ability to learn on their own.

Keywords: motivation, foreign language, autonomous learning, language acquisition, integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, positive feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Without a doubt, motivation is essential for success in the majority of learning domains since achievement requires a willingness to act. Without this kind of drive, we are very likely to forgo certain activities or to spare the effort required to finish a task or reach a particular objective. The motivations of language learners are frequently brought up when discussing the success or failure of English language learning. EFL teachers must take care of their students' motivation, pique their interest in learning, and sustain this level of arousal since motivation is crucial to learning English as a foreign language (EFL) The article explores to provide an academic viewpoint on motivation, encompassing the concept of motivation, various kinds of motivation and the factors that can inspire

language learners to learn.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In educational psychology, the definition of what it is to be motivated is quite simple: "to be motivated is to be moved to do something" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). However, further breakdowns of the term tend to become rather complicated, especially when considering the variable facets of motivation involved in a task as complex as the socially- and culturally-bound, long-term endeavor of foreign language learning. Gardner (1985), in his landmark account of a socio-educational model of language acquisition, wrote that motivation to learn a foreign language can be described as a complex of constructs, involving both effort and desire, as well as a favorable attitude toward learning the language at hand. This model promoted the notion that self- identify and identification with the foreign language community is important to the language-learning process. For example, a student may feel he or she does not "fit in" with the target language speakers (a demotivating factor), or may want to "fully integrate" and become, perhaps, completely passable as a native speaker of the language (a highly motivating factor). Where one is along this continuum is described as one's integrative motivation, or how much one wants to integrate with the target language community. According to Gardner, another motivation student may possess is instrumental: they may want to learn the foreign language to achieve a practical goal, such as a job promotion or to obtain course credit (Gardner & Macintyre, 1991). Another set of definitions stemming from research is intrinsic and extrinsic motivation — intrinsic motivation comes from the joy or pleasure derived through language learning itself, while extrinsic motivation results from the desire to obtain some particular outcome, reminiscent of Gardner's notion of instrumental motivation.

METHODS

Examples of these types of learner motivation can be found below in some students' responses to the question **"Why are you learning English?"**

Integrative motivation – to integrate or connect with the target language speakers.

"To learn how to read and write fluently, so I can better communicate with foreigners when I travel to English speaking countries"

"I am very interested in the history and current events of the English speaking world, and I would like to be able to read and listen to English -language media and participate in discussions with English speakers."

Instrumental, external or extrinsic motivation – to obtain a practical goal.

➢ "I am a possible Educational Psychology major and am interested in reading modern psychological resources"

➢ "To learn a new language that is currently in demand by many professional employment markets in the United States."

Intrinsic or internal motivation – for personal reasons related to the learning task.

✓ "I want to be able to speak English for fun."

✓ "As a personal challenge and to better understand a culture that's important to understand."

However, it should be noted that these motivational descriptions are not mutually exclusive, and students often have a mixed bag of responses when being asked why they are motivated to learn a foreign language.

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) described how motivation changes over time for any given learner, and described how the flux in motivation may be related to temporal components as small as a task in

the language learning classroom or as large as the flow of a foreign language course over an entire academic year. According to this dynamic, process-oriented approach to motivation, in either small- or large-scale time frames, students' motivation consists of three stages: preactional, actional, and postactional (Dörnyei, 2003):

1. **Preactional Stage:** First, motivation needs to be generated. According to Dörnyei (2005), the generated motivation helps the student select the goal or task to pursue and launches the student into action. The student's own initial goals, values and attitudes associated with the learning process, perceived likelihood of success, and the support the student gets (both mental and physical) can all influence this stage of motivation.

2. **Actional Stage:** Next, Dörnyei (2005) wrote that at the actional stage, the motivation needs to be "maintained and protected by the quality of the learning experience, by the nature of the classroom environment, by teachers, peers and/or parents, or by the student through self-regulation during the particular action, which may be a classroom-based task or the long-term endeavor of learning the foreign language in the classroom. Dörnyei mentioned that this is especially important for classroom settings where students may be distracted by mitigating factors such as anxiety, competing interests (established by teachers, parents, peers, or the school), or even physical conditions (e.g., noise or poor classroom conditions).

3. **Postactional Stage**: After the action is completed, at the postactional stage, the student retrospectively evaluates how things went to help determine the type and quality of activities he or she will be motivated to pursue next. Dörnyei (2005) noted that some of the main motivational influences on this stage of learning are grades and/or feedback obtained from teacher(s) and/or others and the student's own sense of what was learned, along with an introspective measure of his or her self-confidence and self-worth in relation to what was learned and how things went in the classroom.

RESULTS/DISCUSSIONS

Thus, with a processing approach to motivation, we have pedagogical implications associated with learner motivation. There are some other essential means which a language teacher needs to do to promote the right classroom emotional atmosphere and to arouse the motivation of students for learning. Giving positive feedback and providing autonomous learning can be an essential means of sustaining students' participation in classroom activities. Brown (2000:77) states that the positive feedback that learners perceive can be a boost to their feelings of competence and self-determination which in its turn can increase or maintain their intrinsic motivation. Providing positive feedback according to Richards (2007:188) may serve not only to increase motivation but also to build a supportive classroom climate and to let learners know how well they have performed. In order that feedback is positive, Westwood (2009:70) urges that the feedback should come in the form of descriptive praise (i.e., well done, good job, and others.) if the student's work is good. On the other hand, if a student's work is incorrect, the teacher should provide immediate correction to help remove the misconception and to supply accurate information. However, the most important thing in giving feedback is that it should be delivered in a positive emotional tone, not with annoyance or frustration.

Regarding learner autonomy, Brown (2000:77) states that if the learners are given an opportunity to do language for their reasons of achieving competence and autonomy, they will have a better chance of success than if they become dependent on external rewards for their motivation. There are various techniques or activities which language teachers can adapt to enhance learner autonomy at the same time to promote learner-centered learning. Farrel & Jacobs (2010:19-20) represent several means of enhancing learner autonomy such as promoting collaborative learning (i.e. through the use of small group and pairs), encouraging a life-long reading habit (i.e. through the use of extensive reading or student-selected reading) and self-assessment as the sole judge of the language

learners' strengths and weaknesses. The idea for self-assessment is for language learners to develop their internal criteria for the quality of their work, rather than being independent on external evaluation or evaluators.

CONCLUSIONS

Motivation, in general, is defined as the driving force in any situation that leads to action. In the field of language learning, a distinction is sometimes made between an orientation (a class of reasons for learning a language) and motivation (a combination of the learner's attitude, desires and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second or foreign language). There are many kinds of motivation, and the most widely cited distinction of motivation is between intrinsic motivation (about the enjoyment of language learning itself) and extrinsic motivation (driven by external factors such as academic requirements or other sources of rewards and punishments). As an ideal for self-determined behavior, it is claimed that intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation for the success of learning.

Considering the critical role of motivation in the success of learning a second or foreign language, it is critically important that a language teacher make attempts to keep the learners motivated for learning. There are three areas – goals and goal setting, learning environment, and exciting classes – in which the language teachers can directly influence the students" motivation. Providing positive feedback and enhancing autonomous learning are also crucial to arouse and maintain the learners" motivation. The language teachers need to be careful when giving feedback to their students, in which they need to give constructive feedback and deliver it in a positive emotional tone. Moreover, to enhance learner autonomy, the language teachers can organize collaborative learning, promote a life-long reading habit and encourage self- assessment.

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