ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES ON LEARNERS' LANGUAGE

LEARNING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ENGLISH: AN OVERVIEW OF

REVIEW BASED FACTS

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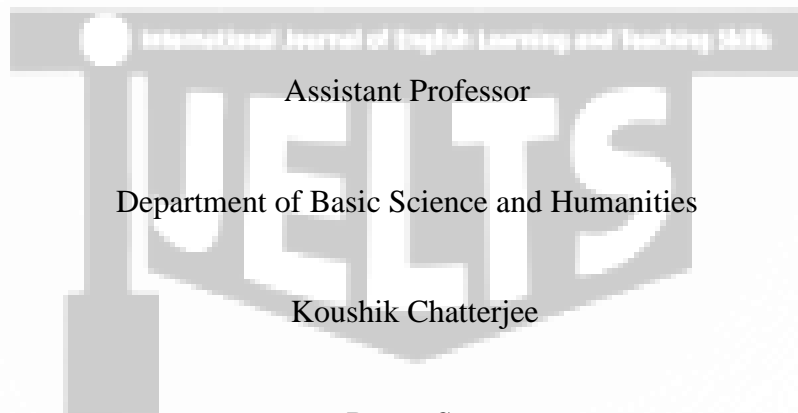
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Abstract

Language is a social and human means of exploration, communication and representation. Language learning begins at birth and continues through a lifetime. Learning language occurs in specific contexts such as learning a specific topic, for community participation, readiness for getting a job and other leisure activities. Acquisition of language, especially English depends on various characteristics of the learners, and among them are the motivation of the learner (McDonough,1983; Ellis, 1994) and their language attitude (positive or negative).Only when paired up with motivation, proper do attitudinal tendencies relate to the levels of student engagement in language learning, and to the attainment of the skill. Despite their similarity, language learning motivation and attitude are two different psychological concepts affecting language acquisition and success of the learners. They are accepted as closely interrelated factors and often investigated together. In the present paper, whether there is any effective and efficient relationship between language learning, motivation and attitude have been answered by providing an overview of recent advances in research on motivation and attitude. The authors have concentrated and accumulated in the past and existing theoretical models of motivational factors affecting language learning and the results of empirical researches by doing a literature review. All in all, a better understanding of students' motivation and attitudes would help the educators, psychologists, linguists to frame and design better curriculum, devise language teaching programs that generate the attitudes and motivation most conducive to the production of more successful English learners.

Keywords: Language Learning, Motivation, Attitude, English Language.

ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES ON LEARNERS' LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ENGLISH: AN OVERVIEW OF REVIEW BASED FACTS

Introduction and Rationale

Language is a social and human means of exploration, communication and representation. It is not only a defining feature of culture, but language is a mark of personal identity which helps in forming interpersonal relationships, understanding social situations, sharing experiences, reflecting on thought and action, and contributing to a democratic society. Language learning begins at birth and continues through a lifetime. Children develop language informally through development in the initial years and much later they understand the rules and conventions of language and use language to construct and convey new meanings. Learning language occurs in specific contexts such as learning a specific topic, for community participation, readiness for getting a job and other leisure activities.

English language is of paramount importance in the professional and academic lives of students (Basturkman, 1998; Pendergrass et al., 2001; Pritchard & Nasr, 2004, Joseba, 2005; Sidek et al., 2006; Hui, 2007; Venkatraman & Prema, 2007). Therefore, early start of English teaching has been supported in studies conducted by psychologists, linguists, educators (Jurišević & Pižorn, 2013). However, acquisition of language, especially English depends on various characteristics of the learners, and among them are the motivation of the learner (McDonough, 1983; Ellis, 1994) and their language attitude (positive ornegative).

Motivation is a complex and multi-faceted topic of research in language learning and is at the core of language acquisition. McDonough (1983, p.142) states that "motivation of the students

is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language". There has been many theories and models that study motivational characteristics, but there has been a dearth of any one comprehensive approach that explains how motivation affects language learning, especially with reference to English Language. Another factor is the learners' attitudes that majorly affects the learning process (Tamini and Shuib, 2009; Zhao, 2015). Gardner and Lambert (1972, p.3) state that "his [the learner] motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his orientation towards the learning task itself". In addition, Lifrieri (2005, p.14) assert that "attitudes are necessary but insufficient indirect conditions for linguistic attainment. Only when paired up with motivation, do attitudinal tendencies relate to the levels of student engagement in language learning, and to attainment". Although language attitudes and motivation for language learning are main predictors of the success or failure of learning the language (Gardner, 1985), there are other factors like the cognitive and affective factors (Rosansky, 1975), intelligence and aptitude (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) that affect the language reception process.

Given the importance of identifying learners' motivation and attitudes towards learning the English language, this paper draws on prior research models in the aforesaid areas and is supplemented with review based facts in this field.

Models of Conceptualizing Motivation In English Language Learning

Research and studies on motivation have been dominated by the drive-reduction theories. Psychologists have identified biological and psychological needs which have to be satisfied in one way or the other. In 1964, Atkinson (quoted in Williams and Burden, 1997:

113) reformulated the drive reduction approach to motivation. Basically the approach was based on the premise that people differ in their need to achieve or be successful. In some people the drive to succeed and engaging in a particular activity because of fear of failure.

Remain a high achiever in everything they do is dominant, whereas, for others, it is just the opposite. It may not be so important to them to achieve what they always want. Also, a person might avoid During the 1920's and 1930's behavioural psychologists laid emphasis on what could be only objectively observed, measured and described and not depend on an introspective study of human behaviour. Since most of the human behaviour is actions repeated in similar circumstances, habits and the mechanisms in which they were acquired (theory of stimulus- response and reinforcements) were of much interest to the learning theorists. "In practice, the overemphasis on tedious mechanistic processes to which the student was not expected to make any spontaneous or personal contribution, left little room for the idea of doing something for pleasure or satisfying a subjective purpose and interest." (Veronica,2013).

As a reaction to Behaviourism emerged Cognitivism based on the ideas of linguist Naom Chomsky, who maintained that, "far from being a form of behaviour, language was a ruled-based system from which an infinite number of sentences can be created. The concept of "language creativity" and the idea of choice could not remain without an echo in the sphere of language learning and had an important influence upon the concept of motivation." (Veronica, 2013). Hence the approach of cognitivism maintained that motivation was concerned with why people act in certain ways and what factors predisposes them to that kind of behaviour. Therefore, this view of learning put motivation at the core of any action.

Chomsky's work later evolved in the development of Krashen's theory of language acquisition (Krashen et al., 1979), to socio-linguistics and humanistic approaches which held that at the core of the learning process is the learner because they uniquely and individually make sense of various external influences as well as personal factors depending on their disposition. All these put together will decide how much an individual allows or prevent external input to be received. This directly points at the need of having a relaxed language classroom atmosphere and having a positive attitude towards the learner.

The perceived value of an activity is the next most important factor influencing student motivation. Socio-linguists believed that to effectively and efficiently communicate in a foreign language (like English), learners should have more than only learning the language or express the correct language in grammar. This everyday practice and usage of language in real world situations, and to satisfy various vocational, cultural and social needs, numerous syllabus that served these purposes have been created.

Brown (2000, p.160) stated that, it is easy in foreign language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation". He added that studies on motivation highlighted on two types of motivation, namely integrative vs. instrumental motivation. According to Gardner (1983, p. 203) instrumental motivation was "learning a language because of someone or less clearly perceived utility it might have for the learner". That is, when a learner learns the language simply to pass an examination, get a job or because the educational degree requires it (Wilkins, 1972), whereas integrative motivation refereed to the motivation to learn a language because the learner wished to acquire the skill and integrate with the society (Gardner, 1983, p.203). Gardner's integrative motivation had three components—integrativeness, attitude towards the learning situation and motivation.

According to him, an integrated learner puts *effort*, is *desirous* and displays *affect* (Gardner 2001:13). Affect is important as it indicated continued interest, pleasure and enjoyment in the acquisition of the language. These were also a part of the intrinsic motivation which resulted in more positive outcomes. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand indicated to instrumental reinforcements like the need to pass an examination.

Vijchulata and Lee (1985) at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) studied students' motivation for learning English. The researchers developed a questionnaire to take the data from the students based on earlier researches by Gardner and Lambert (1972). The findings highlighted that students are integratively and instrumentally oriented towards English learning.

Research in Japan by Benson, 1991, surveyed 300 freshmen on their motivation for learning English and the results highlighted that integrativeness is a more dominant factor in motivation of Japanese college students over instrument alones.

Qashoa (2006) conducted a study among secondary school students in Dubai. The study aimed at

1) studying the students' instrumental and integrative motivation for acquiring English Language, and

2) recognizing the factors affecting learners' the motivation.

Questionnaires and interviews were used in the study. Questionnaires were given to 100 students and 20 students were interviewed along with 10 Arab English Teachers and 3 supervisors. The results revealed that students have a higher degree of instrumentality than

integrativeness. In addition, the findings indicated that difficulties with English such as vocabulary, structures and spelling were found to be the demotivating factors for the students.

However, later researches suggested that other factors like travel, friendship and instrumental orientations were more significant factors in maintaining motivation to continue with a foreign language like English (Noels et al. 2003; Lamb 2004, 2013). Hence integrativeness by Gardner was losing its applicability.

Besides instrumental and integrative motivation by Gardner, Cooper and Fishman, 1977, brought forward the developmental or personal motivation which referred to the motivation related to personal development or personal satisfaction which included learning English (Cooper and Fishman, 1977). Dörnyei (1994: 280) had put forward '*Components of Foreign Language Learning Motivation',* comprising of different components at three levels—learner level, language level and learning situation level. This model also included group-specific, course specific and teacher specific motivational components. Williams and Burden (1997) further built on this model and highlighted three interactive stages of motivation:

1. Why does one do something(reasons),

2. Initiating motivation and

3. Sustaining the effort.

Williams and Burden also explored the internal and the external factors that made a learner learn and put effort into it. The internal contextual factors included interest in the activity, perceived value of the activity, sense of agency, mastery, self-concept, attitudes, gender, age and other affective states whereas, the external factor included interaction with significant others, learning environment and broader context.

The Process Motivation Model (PMM) for Investigating Language Learning Pedagogical Approaches was put forward by Bower, 2017, which identified the various characteristics of motivation in the language learning context. That is it provided a mixed method approach for identification and research on motivation in language learning which enabled the researchers, practitioners and learners to understand the learner behaviour, in specific settings and in a range of different contexts across nations (Dörnyei, MacIntyre and Henry 2014b: 5). The framework integrated Coyle's three major aspects of motivation (Coyle, 2011): learning environment, learner engagement and learner identity/self. Coyle also included three broad categories under learner engagement aspect of motivation, namely: 'enhancing learners' attitudes and successes', 'relevance of learning and learner involvement', and 'retrospective reflection on learning'. Therefore this framework had been a successful model for clarifying and identifying the aspects of motivation in the acquisition of English Language.

Attitudes of the Learner in English Language Learning

Gardner proposed that "attitude is an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent."(Gardner, 1985, P. 9). Ajzan (1988, p.4) considers attitudes as "a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event". Baker (1992, p.10) defines attitudes as "a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour".

According to Gardner, 1985, "motivation... refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). Wenden, 1991 proposed that attitudes is comprised of three components—

cognitive (beliefs, ideas or opinions about the attitude object), affective (likes/dislikes, with or against the attitude object) and behavioural (actions or intentions towards the object).

Language learning is closely associated with attitudes towards the language as per research on language learning (Starks & Paltridge, 1996). Karahan (2007, p.84) stated that "positive language attitudes, let learner have positive orientation towards learning English". If students had more favourable attitudes towards the language and its speakers, towards the teacher and the course, they will probably be more attentive in the class, would complete assessments more seriously and, shall be willing to achieve more and would also look for situations when they can obtain further practice in the foreign language.

Some critics (Gardner, 1985) make a differentiation between types of attitudes according to subject characteristics such as age or sex. Thus we can speak of attitudes revolving not only around the educational aspects of language acquisition (educational attitudes) and of social attitudes, focusing on cultural implications of language acquisition but sex differences are also thought to influence attitudes and motivation: experience indicates that girls tend to demonstrate significantly more positive attitudes towards learning languages than boys, a good example in this respect being the overwhelming majority in the faculties of philology and foreign languages.

Buschenhofen (1998) assessed the attitudes towards English among year 12 and final-year university students in Papua New Guinea (PNG) using questionnaires to assess tolerance

towards using English in various contexts. Results indicated a general positive attitude towards using English, but significant attitudinal differences among the two groups in relation to specific English language contexts. The study concluded that "changing social, educational, and linguistic conditions which characterize the transition from year 12 to university education are the reasons to such differences".

Study by Karahan (2007) with Turkish English Foreign Language learners correlated language attitudes and language learning at the school level where English was being taught intensively. This study found that especially female students had only mildly positive attitudes towards English although they were exposed to English in a school environment more frequently than other students at public schools. In addition, although the students recognized the importance of the English language, but did not reveal high level orientation towards learning the language. On the other hand, the students had mildly positive attitudes towards the English based culture, but they were not tolerant to Turkish people speaking English among themselves. In the Yemeni Arabic EFL context, Al-Quyadi (2002) investigated the psycho-sociological variables in the learning of English in the faculties of Sana'a in Yemen. One of the main objectives of his study was to study the nature of the psychological variables of learning English by Yemeni EFL learners in terms of attitudes and motivation as measured by English majors at the Department of English, Faculties of Education at Sana'a University. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The sample consisted of 518 students who represented seven Faculties of Education. Generally, the results showed that the students had a high level of instrumental and integrative motivation toward the English language. With regard to their attitudes, the study found that the students had positive attitudes towards the English language and the use of English in the Yemeni social and educational contexts.

Teaching Tips on Learning Attitudes And Motivation In English Acquisition

The role of the teachers is of utmost importance and rather than the emphasis being on integrativeness or instrumental motivation, it is also considered a key to learning something; it is   created, fostered and maintained by an enthusiastic and well-prepared teacher. The teacher's role is an all encompassing act of harnessing the enthusiasm, acknowledging and stimulation of students ideas, the creation of a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom, the presentation of activities in a clear, interesting and motivating way, the encouragement of pupils with difficulties, helping them to increase their expectations of themselves that not only help sustain a motivation to learn but also increase positive attitudes towards a foreign language. Mary Finocchiaro, 1982, has added to all these "the importance of:

(a) making sure the students understand every dialogue, utterance, summary of the reading passage;

(b) the teacher must be giving them extensive practice in using verbal or non-verbal alternatives for communicative expressions;

(c) correcting important errors, rephrasing a question, expanding an answer, or by merely saying "listen" and giving the correct answer;

(d) buddy-tutoring that is letting them grade their papers with a partner;

(e) showing concern for school or community problems of individuals;

(f) encouraging them to enjoy small successes and the feeling that they are making definite – even if slow – progress toward their goals.

As pointed out by Veronica, 2013, "when teachers help the learners to develop an internal sense of control as well as feelings of effectiveness in their ability to carry out tasks, then there are great chances for the learners to become motivated to learn. External reinforces in the form of rewards, good marks or simple praise, are often considered to be excellent ways of motivating underachieving or reluctant learners. Conversely, extra homework, punishment or other sanctions, proved not only ineffective in bringing about positive change, but also having exactly the opposite effect."

Researchers and foreign language teachers have also gradually become conscious that individual students have preferred modalities of learning. According to Dickinson, 1995, "The mode of foreign language teaching should be student-centred and the teacher's role should be changed from the explainer to the enabler. That is, the teacher is aware of the thoughts and feelings of his students and knows well of the subject matter. In most of the cases, the teacher regards himself as someone whose job is to create the conditions that enable the students to learn for themselves. In such classroom environment, cooperation and negotiation are encouraged and a lot of autonomous learning will go on smoothly." Similarly, humanistic approaches have opined that, "teachers should be allowed to adapt their programmes with due attention to the objectives of their students and the needs of the area where they are teaching. Though, this might not always be easy, a concern for the students' learning styles might be of great help in motivating them to learn." (Veronica, 2013). "The teacher should employ heuristic teaching methods to inspire students' critical thinking. A novelty and diverse teaching method is bound to arouse the students' learning interest. Finally, it is the teacher's duty to eliminate students' negative learning experiences. Students' negative learning attitude results from their setbacks and failures encountered in the learning process" opines Zhao,

2015.

Implications of the Review Based Facts

- Although motivation and attitudes of the learners have been referred to often in literature, teachers have to be empowered to use the practicable tactics and methods to positively encourage language learning and it is suitable for the teacher to take humanistic measures to eliminate students' negative emotional experiences and develop their positive learning attitudes.

- The PMM framework facilitates a systematic, approach to planning a focus for investigation, designing the research instruments, conducting the study and analysis of data; it brings coherence to these processes

- Learner-centred learning is believed to be enhanced by harmonious classroom relationships between teachers and students and by ensuring that the learner' affective needs are considered. A teacher's care, encouragement and rewards add weight to developing students' learning abilities.

Personal reasons were also regarded as important motives to the students. However, in regards to the integrative reasons, the studies have provided evidence that learning English to be part of the culture.

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