

## Research Article

### MOTIVATION - THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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#### ABSTRACT

An old French proverb says, "A man who knows two languages is worth two men." Speakers of more than one language enjoy wide-ranging opportunities for travel, relationships and employment. Learning a language increases intelligence and opens many doors. However, to help learners obtain high achievement during their learning process, it is necessary for teachers to find out the factors that are the most powerful influences on learners' language learning. It is a well-established belief among most researchers that motivation is crucial in students' learning. The success of learning depends on high or low motivation of students. It can drive learners in reaching learning goal. Therefore, motivation is the key of success in learning and teaching process. Without motivation, the goal of learning seems difficult to be reached. By having motivation students will be enthusiastic in teaching learning process so they will be pushed to study English well. Dornyei (1998) stated that "Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of second language learning". Basing on some different researches, observation and teaching experiences at UNETI, I believe that motivation would be the most important factor to second language learning.

**Keywords:** motivation; second language learning; learning and teaching process.

#### INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I would like to mention some aspects such as: An overview of motivation; Role of motivation in language learning, types of motivation; how motivation effects on learners in second language learning; how to increase students' motivation, and some implications for the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Vietnamese context.

#### DEFINITION OF MOTIVATION

The word "motivation" appears to be simple and easy but it is too difficult to define. It seems to have been impossible for theorists to reach consensus on a single definition. General, education, social and cognitive psychology, as well as general educational and social theories and social-linguistics theories have something to contribute for understanding language learning motivation (LLM). Within a formal school context, the concept of motivation involves, in addition, neurobiological and physiological explanations. The complexity of the concept of motivation resides in its endeavors to explain individuals' actions and behavior (Dornyei, 2000 & 2001) which cannot be accounted for one pandemic approach. Skinner and Belmont stated that students who are motivated to engage in school when "they show generally positive emotions during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest". Meanwhile Bomia et al, (1997) developed the definition further, student's motivation "refers to a student's willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and is successful in the learner process." In addition, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) asserted that: Motivation refers to goal-directed behavior, and when one is attempting to measure motivation, attention, can be directed toward a number of features of the individual. The motivated individual expands effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires, and aspirations, enjoys the activities, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, make a attributions concerning success

and/or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. Light own and Nina Spada (2006) stated that motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon which has been defined in terms of two factor: On the one hand, learners' communicative needs, and, on the other, their attitudes toward the second language community. According to Norris-Holt (2001), motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language. Hence, the abstract term 'motivation' on its own is rather difficult to define. It is easier and more useful to think in terms of the 'motivated' learner: one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress.

#### ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

There have been many studies on the role of motivation in L2 learning so far. Most studies shows that motivation and language learning have a mutual relation, in which motivation helps teachers to maintain students' "intrinsic interest" - their inherent curiosity and sense of wonder about the world to help them learn (Leper, 1999). Motivation is a key factor in successful langue teaching. A metal-analysis of motivation studies has pointed to motivation as the key to success in learning a foreign or second language (Gardner, 1990: Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). It is clear that every teacher can realize the importance of students' motivation. S/he also believes that nothing can make a great change in students' progress unless students want to learn.

#### TYPES OF MOTIVATION

Since the seminal work of Ardner and Lambert in 1972, language teachers and researchers have organized the important role that motivation plays in language learning. Gardner and Lambert are responsible for proposing the most commonly used framework for understanding the different motivations that language learners typically have. They distinguish two types of language learning motivation: Instrumental motivation and integrative motivation.

### Instrumental motivation

The instrumental motivation refers to more functional reasons for learning the language such as getting a better job, a higher salary or passing an examination (Gardner, 1985). Little wood (1998) replicating Gardner and Lambert (1972), concluded "A learner with instrumental motivation is more interested in how the second language can be a useful instrument towards furthering other goals, such as gaining a necessary qualification or improving employment prospects" (1998). Learners who study a foreign language in order to achieve another goal are instrumentally motivated. In these cases, language competence isn't the goal in itself, but rather the vehicle to achieving a separate professional or personal accomplishment. For many students, language learning is pursued only in school, as an academic requirement. Though they may not enjoy the learning process and become engaged in the target culture, the primary motivation in this case is an instrumental one: to gain academic credit and move forward in school. For university students and professionals, language learning is often motivated by career. Many adults study foreign languages to fortify their CVs and qualify for work in target industries or companies. In this case, the goal is often based on a credential, such as certificates, university credit, or proficiency exam scores. Again, the motivation here is to land a job or promotion. Language learning is a step in achieving that goal.

### Integrative motivation

The integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to at least communicate or at most integrate (or even assimilate) with the members of the target language. There's a saying that a language is "best learned between the sheets". Indeed, cross-cultural romance is a common form of integrative motivation. Learners who study a language with the aim of better understanding a culture, language, and society are interpersonally motivated. In this case, language aptitude is the tool for building relationships and meaningful communication. Linguistic studies show that integrative motivation yields faster and more effective language learning results than other types. The desire to communicate with a partner and honour their culture can accelerate language learning. Of course, this doesn't apply to romantic relationships exclusively. Cross-cultural friendships can fuel one's integrative motivation. An in-law or distant relative with no English ability can also motivate language learning, out of love or simply as a gesture of respect. Integrative motivation also applies to relationships with cultures, not just individuals. Learners from multilingual nations can be iteratively motivated to learn their national languages as a way of connecting with their countrymen: English and French in Canada; German, French and Italian in Switzerland; Hindi and regional languages in India. Individuals with family roots in another culture can also be iteratively motivated. An American with Irish roots learning Gaelic, or a British-born Iranian learning Persian, are motivated to engage with a culture that is personally meaningful to them. Interestingly, iteratively motivated learners with positive attitudes towards the target culture are better at picking up pronunciation and accent. These learners often communicate more with foreign language speakers, and are more exposed to spoken language. Also, an empathy towards those speakers can compel learners to accurately imitate speech. Several studies have found that language learners who are iteratively motivated are more successful than those who are instrumentally motivated; it is likely that iteratively motivated language learners are more successful because their motivation is stronger than that of instrumentally motivated students

### Instrumental motivation vs integrative motivation

While both integrative and instrumental motivations are essential elements of success. A distinction has been made in to distinguish

'integrative' and 'instrumental' motivation: the desire to identify with and integrate into the target-language culture, contrasted with the wish to learn the language for the purpose of study or career promotion. Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) showed that success in a foreign/second language is likely to be lower if the underlying motivational orientation is instrumental rather than integrative. But research since then has cast doubt on the application of this claim to foreign language learners in general. In any case, at least one other study (Burstall *et al.*, 1974) has indicated that it may be impossible in practice to distinguish between the two. (Penny Ur (2005) A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.p.276). Another distinction, perhaps more useful for teachers, is that between 'intrinsic' motivation (the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake) and 'extrinsic' (motivation that is derived from external incentives

## THE EFFECTS OF MOTIVATION ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

A number of characteristics are commonly thought to contribute to successful language learning (Candlin and Mercer, pp28-9 ). These are motivation, aptitude, personality, intelligence and learner preferences. With regard to motivation, it is difficult to quantify exactly how much of an effect this has on learning, for the following reasons. It is difficult to observe and measure qualities such as motivation and personality. As stated in Candlin and Mercer, these are just broad labels for an entire range of behaviors and characteristics. It is difficult to measure the effect that motivation has on language proficiency. It has however been shown that motivation may have a stronger relation to certain aspects of language proficiency than to others; however, on the whole, findings are inconclusive. It is difficult to compare successful learners and the effect that motivation has on them. Does success breed motivation, or did a learner's high motivation bring success in language learning? Nevertheless, it is generally believed that motivation does have a significant effect on language learning. Dornyei (1998) states that "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning foreign language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process". Obviously, teaching and learning English process cannot lack of motivation, for example, in learning foreign/second language, even average students who are more motivated ones tend to use more strategies than less motivated students, hence, they tend to be more successful. This author also confirms that without sufficient motivation, learner cannot accomplish long-term goals. On the other hand, high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions. Furthermore, motivation directly influences how students use language learning strategies, how much students interact with native speakers, how much input they receive in the language being learned, how well they do on curriculum-related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency skills after language study is over (Oxford and Shearin, 1996). As explained, success in learning a language can depend on a number of factors, including motivation, aptitude, personality, intelligence and learner preferences. The teacher may be unable to change some of these factors but may use their knowledge of the learner to create the optimum conditions and environment to positively influence every learner in the class group. As far as young learners are concerned, the second language is superfluous because the learner can use their first language to communicate and participate actively in society. The teacher's job is therefore to generate an interest in the new language. As Cook explains ( Cook 1996, p98 ) teachers of French in England try to compensate for their students' lack of both instrumental and integrative motivation by reminding their students of the career benefits of knowing a second language and by building up their students' interest in the foreign

culture, for example through foreign exchanges, French movies or cookery. Cook adds that learner interest may not mean that learning is necessary taking place, and little research has examined the concrete effect of motivation on learning in the young learner classroom.

## MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

Candlin and Mercer point out a number of strategies that teachers can employ in order to motivate learners. These could be described as general strategies that could be said to work in most educational settings:

- Motivating students into the lesson by keeping them informed about forthcoming activities
- Varying the activities, tasks and materials to avoid boredom and stimulate attention
- Using cooperative rather than competitive goals. This helps to increase self-confidence and make weaker participants feel needed.

As mentioned above, successful learning can increase motivation, just as high motivation can bring about successful learning. The teacher can bring this process under control by creating successful learning. As Cook puts it (Cook), short-term motivation towards the day-to-day activities in the classroom can also have an effect. In this way, the teacher can improve motivation by providing effective instruction. Candlin and Mercer point out that several dimensions of teaching have been found increase the effectiveness of instruction. These include classroom management, structuring, tasks and grouping.

- Classroom management: Good organization and management of learners increases motivation and raises expectations of success.
- Structuring, or making one's teaching intentions clear and giving clear instructions improves students' attention rate.

### Tasks

Appropriateness for learners, order, pacing, grading ( so that different learners are expected to produce different results ) and materials are all factors to be considered in designing and implementing tasks to increase the motivation of learners. In addition, the amount of time students actually spend actively engaged in learning tasks, as opposed to time wasted for non-instructional activities is a factor directly related to effective learning. The course book, as part of the teachers' materials, is a factor which will hinder or increase student motivation. The teacher may or may not have control in the course book used. A course book which features English speakers interacting in their native environment with little attention paid to use of English in a multi-cultural setting, may be of limited interest to monolingual students in distant cultures such as in Asia.

**Grouping:** Using different kinds of grouping during class activities can promote or impede learning

### Motivation in the classroom

It only makes sense that the more interesting an assignment is, the more likely students are to immerse themselves in the task and stick with it through completion. Even highly motivated students need schoolwork that actively engages themselves by building on their interest and prior knowledge. Nevertheless, what makes a test more interesting? What causes students to be more engaged by one

project over another? How can teachers design work that will keep students' attention at the same time that it draws them more deeply into the process of learning ? One of the suggestions for designing more engaging in-class activities and increasing amount of time students spend on task is the class management to design projects that allow students to share new knowledge with others given out by Strong Silver & Robinson (1995). It is obvious that teachers makes a positive contribution to student's motivation to learn if classroom are placed that students enjoy coming to because the content is interesting and relevant to their age and level of ability , the learning goals are challenging yet manageable and clear, and the atmosphere is supportive. It is also certain that the way the teachers behave in different kinds of activities will change according to the nature of activities. It's the teacher's responsibility to organize the classroom as a setting for communicative activities. To create cooperative learning environment in classrooms and maximize students' talking time, group students, especially pair-work and group-work needs to be used more often. The teachers play many roles to manage class such as a controller, assessor, organizer, participant etc As I have shown, the extent to which motivation is linked to successful learning is not fully clear, but some kind of relation is evident. Psychological and social factors affect second language learner motivation in adults and children alike. In understanding these factors and being aware of the techniques involved in effective educational practices, the teacher can improve learner motivation and thus raise the likelihood that successful learning will take place among all students.

## SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE VIETNAMESE CONTEXT

I do agree that young learners do not really have a natural motivation to learn a second language because their first language gives them all they need to function socially and develop. However, younger learners (aged 7-10 ) are naturally curious and generally enthusiastic about the world around them. Therefore, I do try to provide a short-term motivation for my younger students to promote an interest in learning in the classroom. I try hard to take into consideration the four dimensions mentioned by Candlin and Mercer when I consider how to maintain the motivation of my students. I try to ensure that my classroom is well-organized, the activities are interesting and involve all students, and that the lesson is well-paced. I also try to foster a cooperative learning environment that accommodates learners of different abilities I also try to respond to the varying motivations of my students, particularly teenagers and above. If one of my students is instrumentally motivated, that is, they have a need of English in order to further their career, I will supply materials which will be of practical use in their jobs or search for a job. I am aware that some students see English learning as "subtractive" in that English-speaking culture is a threat to their own and so try to be aware of this in order to minimize the perceived threat and make learning an additive experience for my students. The issue of motivation and the successful acquisition of English in Vietnam is complex. In order to find out the implications for the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Vietnamese context, it is necessary to explore a number of factors which contribute to the way in which English education is conducted in Vietnam. In a traditional point of view, a teacher is a person who educates students and controls the process of learning and students had to be obedient and do whatever teachers asked. Nowadays the understanding of this role has changed. A teacher can be a counselor, a facilitator, a guardian, a mentor, a coach and so on, students can develop their ability and creation in learning. Being educators whose primary tasks is to build skills and transfer knowledge, *it is important:* to stimulate students to

learn English, to help them to overcome difficulties which are connected with the learning process, to give them opportunities to express themselves in the context of the lesson. By doing so, students are indeed really interested in learning English. By this way, students feel more comfortable, confident and practical. In general, we can see both instrumental and integrative motivation in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Vietnamese context are suitable. However, most school teachers still use the grammar translation teaching method in the classroom to meet the expectation of the national curriculum. Schools and teachers are forced to educate students in a manner which will prove most useful to them. So the focus of what is taught in high school is geared toward passing General Certificate of secondary Education exams and University entrance examination. As a teacher of English at a high school, I see that listening and speaking skill of many school teachers are still very poor. Teaching at high school, teachers are forced to focus on grammar, reading skill and writing skill only. They have no chance to practice their listening and speaking skill. Thus, improving teachers' listening and speaking skill is firstly necessary. Then teaching and learning a foreign language needs to pay attention to listening and speaking skill in order to meet the requirement of daily life. Thus, the teachers should find out the way to motivate students in learning. As for me, some strategies below may help teachers motivate students in learning a foreign language:

- Be animated, enthusiastic, and motivated yourself.
- Arouse the students' curiosity
- Vary the types of activities you conduct during the day.
- Keep records of progress made by students, books reviewed, or tasks completed.
- Create failure-proof situations for poorly motivated students and offer challenging situations for highly motivated learners.
- Use audio-visual media, concrete objects, and educational games to create interest.
- Write brief messages of praise or encouragement on students' papers rather than just a score or a grade.
- Use a color other than red to mark papers and put the number of correct answers rather than the number wrong.
- Videotape a special presentation, debate, panel discussion, or activity and schedule a "movie premiere" with popcorn for the students to critique their "performance"
- Set up a classroom mailbox, communications bulletin board, or journals so that you and your students can exchange messages.
- Use a popular song (Choose carefully!) as a basis for a lesson in language arts.
- Instead of the textbook, teach from a newspaper
- Compute averages, figure percentages, and make graphs in math class from the data that students collect.

- In social studies class, assign different groups of students to present daily news broadcasts each day.
- Use magazine and newspaper articles, excerpts from a book, or poetry to create interest and provide background information for a topic of study.
- Create an environment to reflect what you teach.

## CONCLUSION

I believe that motivation is the most factor to second language learning. Thank to motivation, learners may step by step get higher achievement and self-confidence, fear and insecurity will have been replaced with courage and students will feel the need to show what they can do. Thus, teachers should help students increase their motivation in the second language learning classroom so that they can get the highest achievement that they expect.

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