Motivation: A Supporting Factor of the Success in Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract: Motivation in second language acquisition is one of the influencing factors that determine the success or failure in mastering the language being studied. Since motivation is personal in nature and its intensity is relative, it needs to be kept constant and then promoted. The teachers in the classroom setting, besides the students themselves, play important roles in maintaining and promoting the intensity of motivation. In order to be able to keep constant and increase the intensity of motivation, the nature of motivation is necessary to be understood in depth.

Introduction

A leaner learning a second language may fail or succeed. The success or the failure is determined by at least two factors: linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors (Sadtono, 1995). The *linguistic factors* refer to the language components that may create problems for the learners. Included in these factors are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, language style, dialect and culture contained in the language. Interference of the learner's mother tongue or other languages he has ever learned before belongs to the linguistic factors as well. The *non-linguistic factors* that may influence the language learning are teachers, students, teaching methods, teaching materials, teaching-learning facilities, time allocation and the frequency of the lessons, native speaker, society, exposure, teaching-learning objectives, and the government policy on the teaching and learning of foreign language. The learner's age, talents, needs and motivation are some other factors that belong to the non-linguistic factors.

In his book *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching,* Brown (1987) discusses at some length the cognitive variations and the affective domain of second language acquisition. He divides the facets of *affective domain* into two: the *intrinsic side of affectivity*—the personality factors within a person that contribute in some way to the success of language learning and the *extrinsic factors*-sociocultural variables that emerge as the second language learner brings not just two languages into contact, but two cultures, and in some sense must learn a second culture along with second language. The *personality factors* in human behavior discussed by Brown cover self-esteem, inhibition, risk taking, anxiety,

empathy, extroversion, Myers-Briggs Character Types, and *motivation*, which can be categorized into instrumental and integrative motivation.

The inclusion of motivation as one of the factors that determine the success the acquisition of language as shown above proves that motivation is worth considering in second language learning. Harmer (2001) states, "It is accepted for most fields of learning that motivation is essential to success: that we have to want to do something to succeed." He further claims that without such motivation we will almost certainly fail to make the necessary effort. If motivation is important, therefore, it makes sense to try and develop our understanding of it. Are all students motivated in the same way? What is the teacher role in a student's motivation? How can motivation be sustained?

The importance of motivation in second language learning is also proven by a great deal of research on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning. Overall findings show that positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in second language learning (Gardner in Lightbown and Spada, 1993). Unfortunately, the research cannot indicate precisely whether how motivation affects learning. Does motivation produces successful learning or does successful learning enhance motivation?

All of the above questions make motivation interesting to understand comprehensively. In connection with the questions above, this paper focuses on describing some relevant aspects to motivation, i.e. the definition of motivation, the sources of motivation, motivation to learn a foreign/second language, and motivating in the second language classroom.

The Definition of Motivation

Each expert has his/her own definition of motivation. Differences and similarities among the definitions make definition complete one another. Williams and Burden (1997: 20) in Harmer (2001:51) suggest that motivation is a 'state of cognitive arousal' which provokes a 'decision to act' as a result of which there is 'sustained intellectual and/or physical effort' so that the person can achieve some 'previously set goal'. Brown (2000) in Hammer (2001: 51) points out that a cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement.

Another definition that sounds more operational is presented by Dörneyi (2001:8). He states that perhaps the only thing about motivation most researchers would agree on is that it, by definition, concerns the direction and magnitude of human behavior, that is: the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it. In other words, motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it.

At its most basic level, motivation can be defined as some kind of internal drive that pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something (Harmer, 2001: 51). This definition implies that motivation is personal in nature. Thus, motivation is relative, in the sense that its intensity in varied from person to person. Harmer also shows that in discussions of motivation, an accepted distinction is made between *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* motivation, that is motivation which comes from outside and from inside. Most researchers and methodologists have come to the view that intrinsic motivation is especially important for encouraging success. Even where the original reason taking up a language course, for example, is intrinsic, the chances of success will be greatly enhanced it the students come to love the learning process. This implies that intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic motivation.

The Sources of Motivation

Motivation is a matter of degree; its intensity is relative. Williams and Burden in Harmer (2001: 51) point out that the strength of that motivation will depend on how much value the individual places on the outcome he or she wishes to achieve. Adults may have clearly defined or vague goals. Children's goals, on the other hand, are often more amorphous and less easy to describe, but they can still be very powerful. In order to be able to maintain or enhance his/her learner's motivation, a teacher needs to know the sources of motivation. Harmers (2001: 51-2) mentions four sources that affect the language learner's motivation: the society the learner lives in, significant others, the teacher, and the method.

The Society the Learner Lives in

Outside any language classroom there are attitudes to language learning and the English language in particular. A positive attitude towards English and/or toward language learning and its culture, for instance, will positively affect the learner's attitude to the English language being studied. The attitude will in turn enhance the degree of motivation the student brings to class to continue.

Significant Others

Besides by the society, the degree of the learner's motivation is greatly affected by the people who are close to him/her. The attitude of parents, siblings, and peers to English and language learning, whether it is positive or negative, potentially affect the degree of the learner's attitude that in turn influences hi/her motivation in learning English.

The Teacher

The third source of motivation is the teacher, a major factor in the continuance of a student's motivation. Teacher's attitude to the language

and the task of learning is vital. An obvious enthusiasm for English and English learning, in this case, would seem to be prerequisite for positive classroom atmosphere.

The Method

That both teacher and students have some confidence in the way teaching and learning take place is vital. When either loses this confidence, motivation can be disastrously affected. However, when both are comfortable with the method being used, success is much more likely.

From the first three sources of motivation above, an inference can be drawn that attitude and motivation are closely related. Unlike in the earlier time in which the attitude and motivation were usually lumped together into a cluster of factors held jointly responsible for relative success or failure in second language learning, today the distinctive roles of attitude and motivation have been redefined. Therefore, it is argued that attitude is directly related to motivation, which in turn is directly related to second language learning. In other words, attitude should be viewed as a motivational support and not as a factor that has a direct effect on second language learning. In addition, motivation to learn a language is not only determined by attitude, but also by other 'motivational props' such as the desire to please teachers and parents, promise of a reward, or experience of success, etc. Also, the relation of attitude to motivation is dependent on the type of motivation (van Els, 198: 117).

Motivation to Learn a Foreign/Second Language

One of the experts who has studied a lot on motivation is Gardner, whose ideas are broadly quoted and discussed by many other experts. In educational psychology motivation is divided into two: intrinsic and extrinsic. In second language learning, Gardner along with Lamberts, as quoted by Oxford (1990: 250), Dörneyi (2001: 48), Stern (1986: 378) and von Els (1984: 117), suggest that motivation to learn a second language be categorized into two: *instrumental* and *integrative* motivation. A student is said to be instrumentally motivated 'if the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement, such as getting ahead in one's occupation' and he is said to be integratively motivated if he 'wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that group'.

Some studies (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Spolsky, 1969 in Oxford, 1990: 250) indicate that integrative motivation is a more significant influence on language proficiency than is instrumental motivation, but other studies (e.g., Lukmani, 1972 in Oxford, 1990: 250) show that instrumental motivation sometimes results in better language learning than does integrative motivation. It is because the relative

importance of these two motivational orientations on language proficiency are influenced by many factors such as the environment where the language is being learned, perceived target community support, and learner attitudes towards the target community. Moreover, there may not be as great a difference between instrumental and integrative motivation as once thought, since they correlate with each other statistically; and other motivations besides instrumental and integrative may also operate in learning a new language.

A key issue in Gardner's (1985) motivation theory as quoted and discussed by Dörneyi (2001: 48-9) is the relationship between motivation and orientation (which is Gardner's term for a 'goal'). *Orientation* is not part of "motivation' but it functions merely as motivational antecedents. Gardner further explains that motivation proper subsumes three components: *motivational intensity*, *desire to learn the language*, and *attitudes towards learning the language*. Thus, in his view, 'motivation' refers to a kind of central-mental 'engine' or 'energy-center' that subsumes effort, want/will (cognition) and task enjoyment (affect). He also argues that these three components belong together because the truly motivated individual displays all three. The role of orientations, then, is to help to arouse motivation and direct it towards a set of goals, either with a strong interpersonal quality (integrative) or a strong practical quality (instrumental).

Gardner's motivation theory as discussed briefly above contains two meaningful implications. First, any discussion on motivation should cover intensity, desire and attitude since motivation subsumes these three components. Second, as what Harmers' (2001: 51-2) has indicated above when dealing with the sources of motivation, the inclusion of attitude as one of the components of motivation support the fact that attitude and motivation are closely related. Again, it strengthens the argument that attitude is directly related to motivation. Thus, it can also be argued that attitude may influence the intensity of motivation, not the reverse.

Motivating in the Second Language Classroom

In accordance with the importance of motivation in the success in second language learning, teacher skills in motivating learners should necessarily be seen as central to teaching effectiveness. In order to be able to motivate his/her students, a teacher needs to know what he/she can actually do to motivate his/her students. To help teachers motivate their students, Dörneyi and Ottö (Dörneyi and Ottö,1998 in Dörneyi, 2001) offer a practical framework of motivational strategies to decide how to organize the long list of relevant motivational techniques in separate 'themes'. The key units in the process-oriented model include: 1) *creating the basic motivational conditions*, which involves setting the scene for the effective use of motivational strategies, 2) *generating student motivation*, corresponding roughly to the preactional phase in the model, 3) *maintaining and protecting motivation*, corresponding to the actional

phase, and 4) *encouraging positive self-evaluation*, corresponding to the postactional phase. Each of these strategies is discussed at some length below.

Creating the Basic Motivational Conditions

Certain preconditions must be in place prior to any further attempts to generate motivation. Without such condition, motivational strategies cannot be employed successfully. The most three important conditions are: 1) appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students; 2) a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and 3) a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

A teacher can help himself/herself shape his/her appropriate behaviors and a good relationship with his/her students through his/her personal characteristics, verbal and non-verbal 'immediacy' behavior, active motivational socializing behavior, and classroom management practices. What is important to notice is that everything a teacher does in the classroom has motivational influence on students; his/her behavior is a powerful 'motivational tool'. Persuading/attracting the students to engage in on-task behaviors, mutual trust, respect with the learners, and enthusiasm in teaching are some examples of behaviors that may create basic motivational conditions.

A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom that enhances the basic motivational conditions can be achieved through the prevention of the emergence of anxiety in the classroom, the giving of ample opportunities to the students to learn, and the teacher's encouragement to support learning efforts. Another condition to create the basic motivational conditions is the cohesiveness of the learner group with the appropriate group norms. There are several factors that promote group cohesiveness, namely the time spent together and shared group history, learning about each other, proximity, contact (situation offering spontaneous opportunities to meet), interaction, the rewarding nature of group experience, cooperation with each other, intergroup competition, common threat, solidarity against a common enemy, developing group legends, public commitment to the group, personal investment in the group, and active presence of the leader.

Generating Student Motivation

Ideally, all learners are eager to learn because they are driven by their inborn curiosity to explore the world so that the learning experience becomes a constant source of intrinsic pleasure for them. The fact, however, rarely lives up to these ideals. In such situation, teachers are expected to contribute actively to generating positive student attitudes toward learning the subject matter through the following strategies.

The first strategy is *enhancing the learners' language related values and attitudes*. The learners' language related values and attitudes

need to be enhanced due to the two facts. First, the individual's value system is subjective because it is a more or less organized collection of internalized perceptions, beliefs, and feelings related to one's position in the social world that is developed during the past as a reaction to past experiences. Second, these values largely determine the individual's internal preferences and basic approaches to activities. Adapting Eccles and Wigfield's (1995) value typology to the specific domain of second language learning, Dörneyi distinguish between the three main value dimensions: 1) the intrinsic value of on going process of second language learning associated with the interest in and anticipated enjoyment of the language-learning activity, 2) integrativeness that involves a composite of various second language related attitudes as well as a general interest in foreignness and foreign language, and 3) instrumentality that refers to the consequences that might arise from the mastery of the second language.

The second strategy is *increasing the learners' 'goal-orientedness'*. It is true that very often the students do not really understand why they are involved in a learning activity. It is because of the goal of the learning activity set by the outsiders (e.g. policy and curriculum makers) to attain the official goal (i.e. mastering the course content) may not be the only group goal or even may not be a group goal at all. Due to the inherent goal diversity prevalent in any classroom, it would seem beneficial to increase the group's goal orientedness by initiating a discussion with the students to outline the group goal, personalizing learning 'itineraries' and 'contracts', identifying the goal features that increase student performance, constructing activities that can accommodate different kinds of goals, and resolving the common conflict between individual learner goals and institutional constraints.

The third strategy to generate student motivation is *making the curriculum relevant for the learners*. Although in a good school it may happen that a subject matter does not arouse high intrinsic motivation of the students and that rewards and punishments are not salient, the average students may tend to do the work assigned to them. It my happen so since these students share the belief of the curriculum designers that the program is desirable and valuable. In other words, the students will be motivated to learn if the materials taught to them are worth learning. Thus, in making the curriculum relevant for the learners, the teachers need to follow the general principles: find out your students' goals and the topics they want to learn, and build these into your curriculum as much as possible.

Lastly, generating student motivation can be achieved by *creating realistic learner beliefs*. As the students may have preconceived notions and prejudices that likely to hinder second language attainment, the teacher is supposed to help the students rectify their erroneous assumptions. This can be done by helping them develop an informed understanding of the nature of second language acquisition and reasonable criteria for progress and by making them aware of the fact that

the mastery of a second language can be achieved in a number of different ways, using diverse strategies, and therefore a key factor leading to success is for learners to discover for themselves the methods and techniques by which they learn best.

Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

Motivation is not constant, meaning that its intensity may increase or decrease. That is why motivation should be actively nurtured and protected during the actional phase of the motivational process. In other words, the intensity of motivation should be maintained and protected. Dörneyi suggests five areas to maintain and protect motivation.

First, motivation can be maintained and protected by *setting proximal subgoals*. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) as quoted by Dörneyi (2001) offer four main principles that are applicable to the setting of proximal subgoals in classroom context:

1. Goals should be clear and specific, referring to concrete outcomes.
2. Goals should be challenging and difficult, but not outside the range of the students'   capabilities.
3. Both proximal and distal goals should be set. For example, teachers can design a learning agreement, or a 'contract', with each student that specifies a series of subgoals that lead to larger goals.
4. Teachers should provide feedback that increases students 'self-efficacy' for obtaining the goal. Such feedback can involve informational input or extrinsic rewards that are contingent on actual academic performance.

Second, motivation can be maintained and protected by *improving the quality of the learning experience*. Drawing on neurobiological research, Schumann (1988) as quoted by Dörneyi (2001) argues that environmental stimuli are appraised along a number of different dimensions; he distinguishes five major environmental facets: novelty, pleasantness, goal/need significance, coping potential and self and social image. An improvement on quality of the learning experience encourages the learners to continuously assess the intrinsic enjoyment they experience and the personal and goal-specific relevance the various tasks offer. They will check how well they are doing, how much they are approaching their overall goal, and how their personal and social image is affected by the actions they are expected to take as part of task completion. The intrinsic enjoyment of participating in learning tasks can be increased by, for example, making the tasks varied and challenging to including novel elements and relating the content of the tasks to the learners' natural interest. And, the social image of the learners can be enhanced by avoiding criticisms and corrections that can be considered humiliating, and by working on the group as a whole in order to establish norms of tolerance and acceptance.

Third, motivation can be maintained and protected by *increasing the learners' self-confidence*. There are several ways of successfully

increasing the students' self-confidence. Teachers can foster the belief in their students that competence is a changeable and controllable aspect of development and they can help to dispel misconceptions and unrealistic fears. Favorable self-conceptions of second language competence can be promoted by providing regular experiences of success and emphasizing what learners can rather than cannot do. Learners, even the hard-to-reach ones, can be motivated by giving them the feeling of making a useful contribution and creating classroom situations where they can demonstrate positive features and come forward to offer help (Alison, 1993 in Dörneyi, 2001). Sometimes a small personal word of encouragement is sufficient. Finally, teacher can reduce classroom anxiety by making the learning context less stressful and by providing learners with strategies to cope with anxiety-provoking situations.

Fourth, motivation can be maintained and protected by *creating learner autonomy*. Contemporary language-teaching methodologies make the assumption (either overtly or covertly) that taking an active, independent attitude to learning—that is, becoming an autonomous learner—is beneficial to learning. Benson (2000) as quoted by Dörneyi, (2001) distinguishes five different types of practice associated with the development of autonomy:

1. *resource-based approaches* (emphasizing independent interaction with learning materials),
2. *technology-based approaches* (emphasizing independent interaction with educational technologies),
3. *learner-based approaches* (emphasizing the direct production of behavioral and psychological changes in the learner, e.g. strategy training),
4. *classroom-based approaches* (emphasizing changes in the relationship between learners and teachers in the classroom and learner control over planning and evaluation of learning).
5. *curriculum-based approaches* (extending the idea of control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole).

Fifth, motivation can be maintained and protected by *promoting self-motivating learner strategies*. It has been discussed in the previous sections that teachers play important roles in and are responsible for promoting student motivation. Some strategies are offered to the teachers to apply. In reality, there are students who are constantly motivated and thus successful in learning a second language even without any teacher assistance. The underlying reason of this phenomenon is that the students can motivate themselves. Fuelled by this recognition, recent research in educational psychology has turned increasingly to explore what the students can do to save the action when the initial motivation is flagging. The role of the teachers in this context is to raise the students' awareness of relevant strategies and to remind them at appropriate time of the usefulness of these strategies. As quoted by Dörneyi (2001), Corno and

Kanfer (1993) propose four large classes of volitional strategies to promote self-motivating learner strategies as follow:
1. *Metacognitive control strategies*, which involve intentionally ignoring attractive alternatives or irrelevant aspects and adopting a 'let's not ruminate and procrastinate any longer but get down to doing it' attitude.
2. *Emotion control strategies*, which involve managing emotional states that might disrupt or inhibit action.
3. *Motivation control strategies*, which involve enhancing the motivational basis of intention to pursue a goal.
4. *Environmental control strategies*, which involve manipulating aspects of the individual's environment in a way that the resulting socio-environmental pressure or control makes the abandoning of the intention more difficult or by creating safeguards against understandable environmental temptations.

Encouraging Positive Self-evaluation

This is the last strategy to motivate the students learning a foreign/second language. This strategy focuses on the way to help learners evaluate their achievement in a more 'positive light' (i.e. to more appreciate their advances in progress and mastery), and to encourage them to take credit for these accomplishments by attributing them to sufficient ability plus reasonable effort. For this purpose, Dörneyi has selected three areas of postactional strategies whose classroom relevance has received ample confirmation by research findings: 1) promoting attributions to effort rather than to ability, 2) promoting motivational feedback, and 3) increasing learner satisfaction and the question of rewards and grades.

Failure that is ascribed to stable and uncontrollable factors such as low ability hinders future achievement behavior, whereas failure that is attributed to unstable and controllable factors such as effort is generally regarded by learners as less detrimental. In order to promote effort attributions, in failure situations teachers should generally emphasize the low effort exerted as being a strong reason for underachievement because this communicates to students that they can do better in the future. In situation when failure occurs in spite of obvious hard work on the student's part, the best strategy is to point out the skills/knowledge that were missing and communicate to the student that these are unstable and can be mastered. With regard to student success, it should not be attributed entirely to effort (even if the person did work hard) but also to a stable cause such a talent.

Feedback can be divided into two types: *informational feedback* and *controlling feedback*. Informational feedback comments on progress, while controlling feedback judges performance against that standard (Brophy and Good, 1986 in Dörneyi, 2001). Some important points to notice when providing motivational feedback are: 1) that observing

model is an important source of self-efficacy, 2) that effective feedback contains a positive persuasive element and concerns information about how well learners were applying strategies and how strategy use is improving their performance, and 3) that certain aspect of teacher feedback can also have negative impact on learner behavior. Communicating pity instead of anger after failure, the offering of praise after success in easy task, and unsolicited offers of help are some instances of negative impact a teacher feedback may convey (Graham, 1994 in Dörneyi, 2001).

Learner satisfaction and the question of rewards and grades need to be increased as well in order to encourage positive self-evaluation. Feeling of satisfaction is a significant factor in reinforcing achievement behavior. That is why satisfaction becomes a major component of motivation and motivational strategies to increase learner satisfaction that focuses on allowing students to create finished products that they can perform, encouraging them to be proud of themselves after accomplishing a task, taking stock from time to time of their general progress, celebrating success, and using motivationally appropriate rewards.

Conclusion

The success of a learner learning a second language is determined by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Or, affectively speaking, the success is influenced by both the intrinsic factors inside and the extrinsic factors outside him/her. Motivation, one of the intrinsic factors, that is divided into instrumental and integrative, may be affected by several sources: the society the learner lives in, significant others, the teacher, and the method. Knowing the sources of the motivation is beneficial for those, in particular teachers, who are concerned with the keeping of motivation. In the process-oriented model of motivating in the second language classroom, four stages are suggested to follow. They are   creating the basic motivational conditions, generating student motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging positive self-evaluation.

Suffice it to say, a teacher knowing or realizing that his/her students are lack of motivation is necessary, but realizing that his students are lack of motivation and helping them to maintain and promote the motivation makes him/her a teacher.

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