

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AS A SINGLE FACTOR IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to investigate the various aspects and models of motivation that affect Second Language Learning (SLL). The primary focus is on the learner and the internal factors that encourage and facilitate their pursuit of language achievement (i.e. intrinsic/integrative). It is evident that there are external factors that also influence this process (i.e. extrinsic/instrumental). So, the significant question such as; whether one can identify which type of motivation an individual will exhibit and whether this will lead to a greater or lesser success than another type, are also addressed in this paper. In line with William and Burden (1997), motivations from both internal and external influences are to some extent intertwined and rooted within individuals. However, with that being said, a common ground among scholars who may have opposing views in this topic, would agree that the individual themselves are or should be aware of the motivation that drives them in second language acquisition.

Key Words: Second Language Learning, Models of motivation, Intrinsic, Integrative, second language acquisition

Introduction

There are a numbers of factors that influence second language (L2) learning. However, what is often singled out as the most significant factor in the overall process for language acquisition is a learner's motivation and desire to learn a particular language. This has been widely discussed by scholars of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), such as Dornyei and Gardner, particularly focusing on how it affects L2 learners' performance in various aspects of the L2 language and learning process. For example, a strong motivation is often cited as a key

contribution to help L2 learners succeed and improve (Melendy, 2008). Thus, motivation refers to a process that starts with a need and leads to a behaviour that moves an individual towards achieving a goal (ibid). Dornyei and Csizer (1998) indicate that motivation is responsible for achievement in language learning, and without adequate motivation, learners with distinctive talents will not be able to fulfil such objectives, even if they have a good curriculum and/or teachers. This paper will discuss and define the concept of motivation as an important aspect in L2 learning. The area of focus will address the theory of motivation, as outlined by Dornyei (1994) in his devised model of motivation for a FL setting.

Defining Motivation

Hall (2011) suggests that motivation is a key factor in order to accomplish a particular activity. He states, “It is difficult to imagine anyone learning a language without some degree of motivation” (ibid: 134). Moreover, teachers often ascribe that language learners’ achievements or disappointments mostly depend on the absence or presence of motivation (ibid).

Loewen and Reinders (2011:119) define motivation as “a psychological construct that refers to the desire and incentive that an individual has to engage in a specific activity”. This broad definition provides a strong foundation for the overall concept of this area of study. However, Dornyei (2005:65) narrows the understanding of this, by contextualising it in terms of language learning and defining it as one of the significantly affect language learning process because “it provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” Thus, motivation refers to a process that starts with a need, and leads to a behaviour that moves an individual towards achieving a goal (Melendy, 2008). Dornyei (2001) also explains why an individual ultimately chooses to undertake a certain action, the amount of effort they exert towards it and also how determined they are completion. In addition, Williams and Burden (1997:120) argue that motivation is “a state of

cognitive and emotional arousal”, which “leads to a conscious decision to act”, and gives rise to “a period of sustained intellectual and /or physical effort” in order to “attain a previously set goal or goals”.

Furthermore, Gardner (2010) views motivation as an abstract and complex concept that is used to describe human behaviour. With a plethora of definitions, this continues to highlight just how complex motivation is, more so as a variable factor for L2 learners due to the dependency on different situations and conditions. For instance, some learners in L2 are less motivated to communicate with the target language society, whereas, it is the exact opposite for other learners. Gardner (ibid) also adds that learners’ motivation in L2 is affected by individual attitudes and willingness to engage in the language learning process, which means motivation, is strongly associated with attitude. A number of points arise from the above definition particularly the need for teachers to effectively engage and maintain the learners’ interest, and appreciate their efforts until their goals are achieved. It is important to note, that the achieved goal can vary; whether it is conducting various types of activities in a classroom or learning a language for a long period of time (Hall, 2011).

Literature Review

In the study of SLA, motivation has been considered as an important aspect of investigation because researchers have assumed that the more motivated language learners are, the more they increase in learning. In a study conducted by Noels, et al. (1999), the process of how students’ extrinsic and intrinsic motivational orientations are related to their teachers’ communicative style. Thus, the extent in which teachers are seemed to support students’ independence and to provide useful comments in relation to the students’ learning progress were discussed. The results determined that stronger feelings of intrinsic motivation were related to positive language learning outcomes, including greater motivational intensity, and greater self-

evaluations of competence, thus perceptions of the teacher's communicative style were connected to intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, relationships between an instrumental motivation and some kind of incentive to learn a second language have been investigated in different contexts. For instance, in a study conducted by Gardner and MacIntyre, (1991), 46 university psychology students were rewarded \$10 if they succeeded in a paired-associate (English-French) vocabulary task, while another group of the same number were just told to "do their best". The findings of the study showed that the students who were offered the reward did significantly better and spent more time viewing the pairs of words in comparison to the second group. However, when the possibility of rewards no longer existed, students' motivation was reduced. Therefore, this study indicates important key aspects in relation to the language learning process. The importance of rewards, for example, is highlighted as a mean of identifying the type of learners, as it can be assumed they are instrumentally orientated as opposed to integratively. However, what this study further highlights is a degree of unpredictability that exists when learners acquire a second language in return for a tangible outcome.

In the study carried out by Muchnick and Wolfe (1982, in Ellis, 2008), the importance of both integrative and instrumental motivation in studies of foreign language learners was highlighted. The results of the study revealed that the measures of integrative and instrumental motivation of 337 students of learning Spanish in high schools across the United States were not able to separate between the factors of this dichotomy of motivation. Although, instrumental motivation for learning a foreign or second language appears to be more lucrative and yields success, a combination of both seems more important in SLA.

Nevertheless, offering students with incentives, such as money, may urge them to spend more time studying. However, the critical point of instrumental motivation is that learners'

motivation stops immediately when the incentives stop (Ellis, 2008). Consequently, the question that needs to be asked is who drives language learning motivation: the learners themselves or the outsider factor such as rewards? (Dornyei, 2001). One may further highlight the importance of teachers' motivation, in order to further pinpoint, where such responsibility motivation lies within an L2 setting.

Dornyei's (1994) Model of L2 Motivation

Dornyei (1994) created a model of FL learning that could account for, and include some of the expanding views of motivation. In his model, three distinct levels of elements were emphasised, which not only allowed for the presence of orientations, but also for specific situations that involved the learner and the surrounding context. These elements are discussed in detail within this section.

Dornyei's model includes both integrative and instrumental motivational elements as the first language level. These elements focus on reactions and attitudes towards the target language. At the learner level, the second element focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation. At this level, different cognitive theories of motivation are included, for instance, motivation is considered as a function of an individual's views, not as an instinct, need, drive, or state. Thus, the source of action, then, is when information is encoded and transformed into a belief (Dornyei, 1994).

The learning situation at the third level takes into account specific motivational elements, which are connected to all those that an individual interacts with, such as the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners (Dornyei, 1994). In addition, the following sources contain motivational components. For instance, course-specific motivational components include the syllabus, material, approaches and tasks. Teacher-specific motivational components include the teacher's manners and teaching method. As for group-specific

motivational components, they are strongly connected to four aspects of group dynamics, outlined by Dornyei (1997:487) as “classroom structure, group cohesion, goal-orientedness and the norm and reward system”.

Concerning classroom group structures, Ushioda (1996), notes that cooperative learning can produce appropriate conditions for intrinsic motivation. Hence, for some students working in groups, rather than individually, it is preferred because it provides them opportunities to collaborate and share ideas or experiences with one another, which in turn increase the potential for superior learning.

This is further supported by Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994), who point out that group cohesiveness is considered a fundamental factor of L2 motivation. In relation to “goal-orientedness”, Dornyei (1997) suggests that group members differ in terms of level of responsibility they possess, in order to fulfil the aims of their group. Nichols and Miller (1994) adds that learners participating in cooperative learning are more goal-oriented, which indeed highlights how, they are different in terms of their commitment to the group’s overall objectives based on their personal views. According to Dornyei (1997), rewards are dependent upon the performance of the whole group. One could therefore argue that support is very significant in learning and leads to a positive attitude.

To sum up, most of the concepts of motivation describe the individual level of the process, though sometimes the performance of groups shows specific motivational features that reflect the group rather than individuals (ibid).

Types of Motivation

There are different types of motivation that have been analysed and presented within literature. As a result of the detailed research by Gardner (2001), motivation for language learning has traditionally been viewed as integrative and instrumental. This has somewhat evolved,

particularly during the 1990s where researchers expanded on such models and experiments, terming different perspectives; namely, intrinsic and extrinsic. This essay aims to explore these differences and analyse how such factors affect language learning and its learners.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as desire to do something because it is worthwhile (Williams and Burden, 1997). Based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci (2000:55) define intrinsic motivation as “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”. This in turn has a positive impact on L2 learners based on an internal desire, in high-quality learning and creativity (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Therefore, intrinsic motivation has an important role to play, as indicated further by Ryan and Deci (ibid), as it allows people to engage with the task and people in good relationship. A notable aspect of this type of motivation however, is that it can only be for specific tasks, which appear among individuals and the activity itself, such as, reading a newspaper every morning or going to work. However, as Ryan and Deci, (2000: 233) state, “this active engagement, this involvement and commitment with interesting activities, requires the nutriments of need fulfilment, and, indeed, people will become more or less interested in activities as a function of the degree to which they experience need satisfaction while engaging in those activities”. Therefore, while certain literature illustrates intrinsic motivation as an individual’s interest in a precise task, others define it as the satisfaction of being involved in the task overall.

Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation is a willingness to do something because of its benefits, for instance, to obtain a good position and well paid job or passing an exam. Ryan and Deci (2000:233) state that “extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome”. This means, there are external factors that individuals to be motivated to achieve a

particular goal in their life. Based on the behaviourist approach, reward systems can be the most effective tool to motivating desired behaviours. Thus, a behaviourist would tend to consider motivation largely in terms of external forces, mainly the specific conditions that give rise to different behaviours, and how the consequences of that behaviour affect whether it is more or less likely to happen again (Williams and Burden, 1997:113). In addition, Ryan and Deci (2000) indicate that, learners can behave extrinsically motivated actions if they have an extrinsic motivation performance with discontent, opposition and unconcern. Thus, having an internal approval performance will help them gain advantage. They also emphasise that teachers should be conscious of the different types of extrinsic motivation and also think of the ways, how to enhance and promote them, as they cannot depend on intrinsic motivation to promote learning (ibid).

Moreover, there are fundamental differences between people who are motivated intrinsically or extrinsically in terms of their language development. For instance, learners with intrinsic motivation are better in a learning course and achieve a high level, whereas learners who are externally motivated may face a great risk of performing in academia (Lei, 2010). Thus, students can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest, or alternatively, with an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task. As Hall (2011) emphasises, that L2 learners should be prompted by a mixture of both forms of motivation. Hence, a learner may be “intrinsically motivated by the inherently enjoyable” (i.e., the language environment) in order to achieve such goals or goal (i.e. passing an exam).

Overall, performance is stimulated by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Most teachers claim that each types of motivation play a vital role in the learning process and they are certainly connected to each other (William and Burden, 1997).

Integrative motivation

Integrative motivation has frequently been cited and considered strongly related to second language learning achievement (Hedge, 2000; Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Lins, 2007; Loewen and Reinders, 2011). As a number of scholars have pointed out, it is defined within the context of SLA, as an individual's desire to learn a language because of its value in helping them integrate with speakers of the target language as well as for cultural enrichment. In other words, integrative motivation is described as a learners' desire aspiration to identify with the culture of the second language community (Ellis, 2008). Therefore, when L2 learners are highly motivated integratively, the goal is perceived as more significant and of value, which in turn will encourage successful learning. Additionally, three subcomponents of integrative motivation explained by Ellis (2008), are in line with Dornyei's (1994) clarification of terminological confusion: (a) integrativeness (including integrative orientations, interest in foreign languages and attitudes towards the second language community); (b) Attitude towards the learning situation (i.e. attitudes towards the teacher and the second language course) and (c) Motivation (i.e. the effort, desire, and attitude towards L2 learning (Ellis 2008). Furthermore, Gardner (2010:168) states that, "motivation to learn a second language is influenced by group related, context related attitude, integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situations respectively", however, he argues that many other variables may also be implicated in learning the L2, including instrumental elements (ibid).

The above definitions of integrative motivation may lead us to realise the role of other motivational factors in terms of influencing language learners' orientations in second language acquisition achievements. However, scholars and experts have addressed the issue behind applying the concept of integrative orientation (i.e. a general interest versus a desire to integrate into the target language community), which is defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972 cited in Ushioda, 2006: 149), as "reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture

represented by the other group". Ushioda's (2006) discussion on the concept of 'integrative motivation' leads to highlight that there is no specific target group of speakers and that this problem arises particularly in the case of English as a target language, given its status as an increasingly global language market (Crystal, 2003). In addition, English as a lingua franca is employed as a common communication between speakers from different language backgrounds. Consequently, one should consider to what extent this concept of 'integrative' attitude has when ownership of English does not necessarily associate to a specific community of speakers (i.e., British or American English speakers, or speakers of different World English varieties (Jenkins, 2003).

Instrumental motivation

Loewen and Reinders (2011) explain that instrumental motivation refers to a need of fulfilment towards some objective or the motivation that drives from a perception of the real benefits that learning the second language might bring about. In short, instrumental motivation includes a group of factors that associate with motivation arising from external goals, for instance, passing exams, or financial rewards, good position or to accomplish a school requirement (Williams and Burden, 1997). Thus, some argues that instrumental orientation in a foreign language setting has a greater influence on L2 learners (Dornyei, 1994).

There are some arguments about the terminology of integrative and instrumental motivation. Brown (2007) argues that these two elements are not actually types of motivation as such; however, it is more appropriately termed as orientations. This means a different need exists depending on a learner's context or orientation, for instance, academic or career associated (instrumental), socially or culturally oriented (integrative) (ibid). It is therefore reasonable to consider integrative motivation to be associated with a higher achievement in L2; however, this is more prominent in a second language context (i.e. learning French in Canada).

Contrastingly, instrumental motivation is highly important in the society that uses English as a foreign language (i.e. Japan is a prime example of this, as success in employment and education relies on achievement in English) (Williams and Burden, 1997). To sum up, both elements have a significant role in leading to better success in the L2, because the lack of either causes problems (Cook, 2001: 118).

Teachers' Motivation

It is extremely noteworthy to discuss the relationship between teachers and students, as it is an important element in creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom (Chambers, 1999), which in turn may raise learners' motivation and enhance their L2 performance. Dornyei (2001:156) alludes to this, stating, "The teacher's level of enthusiasm and commitment is one of the most important factors that affect the learners' motivation to learn". Subsequently, when teachers believe their teaching is valued, they will work hard in order to succeed and support good students' results. In turn, this will further motivate students and create better language performances. In this regard, Dornyei (2001) identifies four types of motivational aspects of teachers' motivation.

Firstly, the intrinsic component, which refers to the strong inner wish to teach people, transfer information and develop the community. Dornyei (2001) considers intrinsic motivation the main factor in teacher motivation. Secondly, social contextual influences affect teacher motivation. In this regard, Walker and Symons (1997; cited in Dornyei, 2001: 160) indicate that "the environment plays a fundamental role in job motivation that is, it is the work, not the worker, which affects persistence and performance". Within this, Dinham and Scott (2000) classified two main points of contextual influences that influence teachers' satisfaction in different ways: macro and micro factors. Macro contextual factors are characterised in teaching, because the job is to complete one of the most essential social duties of educating the

society. Micro contextual motives are linked to the environment of institution, where the teacher teaches and involves the teaching atmosphere (e.g. the classroom, curriculum and the students).

The third aspect of teacher motivation according to Dornyei refers to the temporal dimension of teacher motivation. Dornyei (2001) states that teacher motivation is not related only to the interest in teaching but the motivation to teach as a career. In this situation, I would argue that a teacher is combined by two key motivational factors (specifically, intrinsic and extrinsic) in order to fulfil their career, as well emotional needs. Lastly, the final factor that is addressed any negative influences on teacher motivation. These include five demotivational factors: inherent stress, the lack of teacher autonomy (such as setting curriculum), lack of training, repetitive context and restricted possibilities for improvement and insufficient job structure.

Overall, motivation approaches have a shared characteristic, which is established on the idea that all learners are motivated to learn under the suitable situations, which can be set by the teacher in the class (Dornyei, 2001).

Conclusion

This paper addresses the various aspects and models of motivation that affect language learning. While the primary focus was on the learner and the internal factors that encourage and facilitate their pursuit of language achievement (i.e. intrinsic/integrative), it is evident that there are external factors that also influence this process (i.e. extrinsic/instrumental). Therefore many questions are raised as to whether one can identify which type of motivation an individual will exhibit and whether this will lead to a greater or lesser success than another type. I am inclined to agree with William and Burden (1997), in that motivations from both internal and external influences are somewhat intertwined and rooted within individuals. However with that being said, a common ground among scholars who may have opposing views in this topic,

would agree that the individual themselves are or should be aware of the motivation that drives them in second language acquisition.

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