

Motivation and Language Learning: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Motivation plays an important role in human life. Some people succeed and others fail in their life because of their motivation. This condition has attracted many experts to study it. They have proposed some concepts of motivation, the role and its influence especially in learning. It also encourages language expertise to investigate the effect of motivation and its correlation in language learning. These phenomena prompted this study to explore the theoretical views of motivation and its connection to language learning. Data collected from various books and journals that were related to the study. Furthermore, the implication to the language learning was explained on discussion section.

Keywords: *Motivation, Language learning*

ABSTRAK

Motivasi memegang peranan penting dalam kehidupan manusia. Beberapa orang berhasil dan yang lainnya gagal dalam hidup mereka karena motivasi mereka. Kondisi ini menarik banyak ahli untuk mempelajarinya. Mereka telah mengajukan beberapa konsep motivasi, peran dan pengaruhnya khususnya dalam pembelajaran. Ini juga mendorong keahlian bahasa untuk menyelidiki pengaruh motivasi dan korelasinya dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Fenomena ini mendorong penelitian ini untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan teoritis tentang motivasi dan hubungannya dengan pembelajaran bahasa. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai buku dan jurnal yang berhubungan dengan penelitian. Selanjutnya implikasinya terhadap pembelajaran bahasa dijelaskan pada bagian diskusi.

Kata Kunci: *Motivasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa*

A. INTRODUCTION

Motivation has been considered as one of the important aspects in almost all of human activities. It has attracted serious concerns from educational studies, researchers, psychologist, and educational institutions. Richard, Platt, and Weber (1985, p. 185) define motivation as “the factors that determine a person’s desire to do something”. It is often suggested to have an impact on the successes or the failures of a person who works in any fields or disciplines.

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In language learning, many researchers (such as Dornyei et al. 2006; Dörnyei, 2005, 2003, 1994; Noels, et al., 2003; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, 1968) found that motivation has correlation with second language acquisition. Many psychologists have long been aware that if a goal (or long-term motivation) is perceived as being of high value, it takes on a more dynamic quality. For example, the welfare of one's family, the service to humanity, or a sincere interest in another culture, can sustain the individual long enough to achieve his or her final goal. Thus, this study aims at highlighting the motivation theory and to investigate the connection between motivation and language learning.

B. METHOD

The books and articles were searched by using library and online database (Sage, Science, Direct, Elsevier, Springer Plus, Google Scholars). The books and articles published were from 1950 to 2006. The selected time period was on account of discussion rapidity of motivation and its correlation to language learning in sources. Search for articles is carried out using the keywords motivation, and language learning.

There were twelve books and ten journals which were selected based on the topic of discussion. The books and articles had been reviewed and sorted according to the purposes of the study, which were to explore the motivation theory and to find the correlation between motivation and language learning. The articles and books were employed as the sample to be further identified. Furthermore, the chosen samples were related to an idea of motivation in learning, its definition and characteristics, and the

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. An Overview of Motivation

Theories of motivation have been proposed by three schools, namely, Behavioural, Biological, and Psychoanalytic. Behaviourists, whose perspectives tend to be applied in language learning techniques, point out that motivation originated from basic drives and that learning resulted from a system of rewards and punishments or pleasure-pain principle (hedonism). However, this theory argued by other behaviourists such as McDougall (1908), Tinbergen (1951), and Hess (1962). They claimed that instincts were the source of motivation.

The behaviour theory was supported by Skinner, Pavlov, and Thorndike. Skinner applied his investigation of rats' behaviour to the teaching of human beings. He concluded that the pleasure-pain principle is basic to learning. In language learning, the subject is given a reward for the correct reply and a punishment for the wrong response. The correct response will reinforce the student's correct answer, and the incorrect response will motivate the student to further learning. Even though this theory plays an important role in the development of motivation for learning, its contribution is extremely limited.

Inevitably, much of human behaviour is similar to animal behaviour, particularly at the level of basic instincts. In seeking a more realistic or functional definition of human motivation, however, there are other factors that not available to those lower in the animal kingdom than homo sapiens.

In biological theory, motivation is connected to biological survival, for instance, in the desire for food, water, or warmth. It separated motivated behaviour into three characteristics; persistence, variation, and emotional overflow. Persistence refers to an underlying state of agitation or tension, which continues to initiate new actions. In variation characteristic, motivated behaviour will lead to diversified actions to achieve the goal if tension is not relieved by one pattern of action – for example, a hungry child will beg for food, cry, become aggressive, and so forth. On the other hand, the individual who is strongly motivated but there is a delay in reaching a goal will react emotionally with anger, tears, pleading, silence, and so on. This characteristic is called emotional overflow.

The Biological School emphasises that tension provides the persistent physiological foundation which trigger and determine the dynamics of motivation. The word “tension” and “agitation” can be interpreted to mean a dynamic impulsion to action and extend the third characteristics of motivated behaviour to include “emotionally-toned processes,” that is, the intense feelings fostered by parental and community attitudes, self-concepts, and individual personality structure. Alike Behaviourists, this school has offered limited explanation about human attitudes and motivation.

With regards to the Biological theory, Maslow (1970) developed hierarchy of human needs, they are physiological needs (e.g. air, food, and water), security needs

(e.g. shelter and protection), belonging needs (e.g. personal identity), esteem needs (e.g. appreciation and independence), and self-actualisation needs (e.g. intellectual and creativity to achieve goals). Physiological needs which are in the first stage of human needs must precede cognitive, creative, or affective needs. Attitude and motivation must include the need to think rationally – the ability, for instance, to consider alternatives in the choice of a long-term goal, and to pursue such a goal despite intervening obstacles and short-term failures. All these needs, which had been neglected by both Behaviourists and Biological Schools, are essential components of human motivation.

Maslow's enlightenment of human motivation is not only functional, but also appealing to those who wish to apply his hierarchy of needs to the learning situation. Furthermore, it answers for human motivation on physiological and the affective, as well as on the cognitive level.

The cognitive approach to learning underlies the outstanding contribution of Jean Piaget to developmental psychology. Piaget (1965) assumes that learning is subject centred in which a child learns inductively through all the senses, as a result of his or her personal experiences in the surrounding world.

Another approach that was developed by Bruner (1960) is spiral approach. He believes that in order to stimulate the student's desire to learn, the student himself has to feel that the material is worth knowing and of use for his future life, beyond immediate learning situation. The example of this in instructional is the reintroducing concepts at broader, deeper levels and with increasingly complex forms in order to facilitate a restructuring of learning.

2. Motivation in Language Learning

Aligned with Piaget's theories to second language learning, Finocchiaro (1974) and many other methodologists describe cognitivism in practical term: the student, on the basis of model experiences with language and strategies for learning which he or she has actively developed through previous learning experiences, forms concepts and restructures new learning in his or her own way. Intensive and extensive use of these concepts in a variety of communication situations enables the learner to store the knowledge acquired in his or her memory bank, and to call upon that stored memory when needed.

Theory of motivation for second language learning had also been laid by the Psychoanalytic School. This school concerned with personality theory. Much of most recent research in attitudes and motivation is based on this school of psychology. Freud, the founder of the school, states that the dynamic laws that govern the behaviour of organisms are based on the pleasure principle which corresponds to the Id, and the reality principle corresponding to the Ego. The Id makes simple, direct, infantile demands for the gratification of innate desires, while the Ego corresponds to more adult behaviour in its ability to postpone immediate gratification for the purpose of achieving a valuable long-term goal.

Relating to Freud theory of Id, Mowrer (1950) states that infant satisfies its basic biological and social needs by imitating and interacting with its parents or other caretakers. On other words, infant is absolutely reliant on these adults in his or her environment to gratify his or her physical and emotional needs. When it learns first language, its behaviour is rewarded through positive reinforcement, such as praise, food, or displays of affection. The approval of infant's basic emotional and social needs for love, affection, or understanding will influence and encourage his or her learning.

One of the most important studies on motivation in second language learning is *Attitudes and Motivation for Second Language Learning* which was carried out by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They have encompassed all three levels of personality development posited by Freud and his followers when they make the following statement: "A process such as identification, which is extended to an entire ethnolinguistic community, combined with inquisitiveness and sincere interest in the other group (the integrative motive) must underlie the long-term motivation needed to master a second language." This is the functioning of superego, while the ego is represented by "instrumental motivation" which reflects practical utilitarian values such as achievement either in school or in one's occupation.

Aligned to these types of motivation, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) point out that instrumental motivation is for improving career or academic progress. On the other hand, integrative motivation is for integrating with native speakers.

Relating to integrative motivation, Dornyei (2003) has different definition of this term. He defines integrative motive as positive interpersonal/affective disposition toward the second language group and the willingness to interact with and even become

similar to valued members of that community. He also states that integrative may involve “psychological and emotional identification”. He (1990) argued that the identification can be oversimplified not only to the cultural that related to the target language, but also to the real second language itself. For example, Acehese learners of English in remote area who may not have met any native English speakers in their lives, go alone to any English-speaking country. Moreover, Dornyei (2001b), Gardner and MacIntyre (1992), state that “integrativeness and instrumental” may not the exact types of motivation; it is rather identified as orientation. Along these lines, some studies (Dornyei, 2005; Noels et al., 2003) have placed four orientations on their research: travel, friendship, knowledge, and instrumental orientations.

Regarding to cognitive approach, there are three influential concepts: self-determination theory, attribution theory, and goal theories. Self-determination theory (SDT) has been one of the most important approaches in motivational psychology. It connected to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is more motivating for student in learning second language than a setting reward which is external. Noels et al. (2003) found that instrumental orientation had strong correlation with the SDT external regulation orientations, while travel, friendship, knowledge orientation were quite highly intercorrelated with identified regulation and intrinsic motivation.

Attribution theory associates people prior experiences with their future attainment efforts. What people experienced in the past either succeed or fail might shape their motivational character. Another cognitive approach is goal theories. Language learning “goals” can be referred to as orientations.

D. DISCUSSION

Chomsky (1965) points out that first language acquisition as a biological function, an innate development. This theory is not an argumentation to the previous theory; both seem to be complementary to each other. Language is innate, and it is developed and nurtured by the social and emotional environment in which the child grows. Without the stimulation of the environment, there is either retardation or complete atrophy of first language development.

Moreover, Oxford and Shearin (1994) have developed the theory of language learning motivation in which some of it is based on need for achievement, originated

from fear of failure, and other motivation links to fear of success. Furthermore, they state that in order to have high motivation in language learning, learners should have high expectancy and value of success. In addition to this, the goals must be apparent, demanding, and accessible, and there must be feedback on goal achievement.

Another suggestion which teachers should do in order to enhance learner's motivation to pursue language learning either as immediate or as a long-term goal is described by Finocchiaro (1974). She presented it in mnemonic:

1. F - Freedom from fear: e.g. Learners should not be embarrassed if they have not done their assignment, if they make errors in production, or if they cannot respond immediately.
2. U - Understanding: e.g. Teachers must consider the socioeconomic, cultural, and emotional background of the learners in order to help them maintain their pride in themselves.
3. E – Experiences: e.g. Learners must engage in a wide variety of activities in order to fulfil their need for thinking, learning, doing, or choosing.
4. L – Loves: e.g. The teacher often has to take the role of the substitute parent and be aware of the hunger for affection of the learner who, rightly or wrongly, feels rejected by family or peers.
5. B – Belonging: e.g. Learners should participate with the class “community” in all facets of planning and decision-making during the learning process.
6. A – Achievement and Actualisation: e.g. Learners should be helped to perfect today what they might have been able to do only haltingly yesterday. They should receive continuous feedback of their progress; they should be able to use what they have learned to communicate their own aspirations and ideas.
7. G – Grouping and Individualisation: e.g. The teacher should be aware of the level at which each student is capable of operating at any moment in time, of his or her optimal way of learning, of the time he or she needs to learn and should gear classroom group and individual activities to take all these factors into account.
8. S – Success: e.g. The learner should experience numerous small intermediate successes and attain short-term goals which will then motivate him or her to continue working toward individual, school, community, or nation-wide goals (depending on his or her age level and learning).

To extend motivation and improve attitudes demand a well-balanced combination of the teacher's art and skills. It is not enough for the teacher to make use of psychological principles of whatever school to motivate learners. The teacher can also foster motivation through his or her own sense of security resulting from adequate linguistic and methodological preparation.

E. CONCLUSION

The successes and the failures of learners in language learning may be affected differently by different types of orientation. Furthermore, they may be influenced by their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These mean that there is no two personalities are the same, and that each individual has a different set of habits, drives, needs, and impulse. Due to this fact, teachers have to make continuous discoveries of what these factors are in each learner in order to motivate each to achieve both his or her immediate and long term goals. For adult learners, they should have high motivation and high expectancy of success, for examples, by having clear goals and applying some strategies of language learning that fit to their needs.

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