

IMPROVING MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING AMONG NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the literature, motivation has been largely proven as a key factor in the development of English learners' capacity. Numerous research papers and reports have shown that with the right motivation, most second language learners can achieve satisfactory success in their learning (Alizadeh, 2016). Ngo (2022) also suggested that the two most important factors which determine second language (L2) learners' success are motivation and persistence.

Previous research in L2 teaching has indicated that non-English major students may lack motivation to learn English (Alotumi, 2021; Tran and Baldauf, 2007). As suggested by Alizadeh (2016), although students' nonachievement in learning may stem from other personal reasons such as health, family conditions, this may also indicate a lack of motivation which often manifests itself in reduced focus and self-perceived obligations to engage in learning activities. Motivation has long been proven by the academia to be a complex factor in SLA. Nonetheless, within the scope of this secondary research, I aim to present some major findings from the previous studies on motivation in English learning. Through reading and analysis of research papers, an overview of students' motivation will be presented, which can subsequently be applied and tailored to the case of Thuyloi university students. Besides, the report also suggests ways to help improve students' motivation in English learning.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Definition of motivation

There have been some discrepancies in definitions of the term "motivation" by second language acquisition (SLA) researchers. Gardner (1960) traditionally interpreted motivation to learn L2 as learners' "long-term drive to acquire all aspects of the language". Crookes and Schmidt (1991) considered motivation as learners' inclination towards their purpose in learning English. Gardner (2006) affirmed that motivation is a complex construct because it consists of many facets and is often viewed differently depending on how researchers approach the term. In the behavioristic approach, motivation equates to the expectancy of reward. Meanwhile, from a cognitive standpoint, motivation is regarded as a decision made by learners after they have taken into account both the possible learning experience and outcome. Although different aspects of motivation are emphasized in different schools of thought, researchers seem to agree on the importance of the "need" factor in motivation, mentioning the prospect of contentment once students' needs are fulfilled.

2.2. Different types of motivation

As traditionally put forward by Gardner and Lambert (1959), motivation is classified into two basic types: integrative and instrumental. A learner considered to have integrative motivation acquires a second language (L2) for personal development. For

example, he or she learns it in order to gain more knowledge and become a member of that target language community. Meanwhile, instrumental motivation originates from a need to perform functional tasks and cope with external demands, such as the need of passing an exam or meeting a requirement for promotion at work. According to Dörnyei (1998), in reality, motivation in an individual L2 learner is often composed of both integrative and instrumental motivation. Besides, he also pointed out the interplay and close interrelationship between these two types of motivation.

2.3. Results of previous research on students' motivation to learn English

In the field of English education, L2 learners' motivation to learn has been widely examined in the last several decades. Researchers have studied students' motivation in different contextual settings with different sample sizes. In general, most studies agree on the key importance of motivation in English language acquisition. Al-Otaibi (2004) concluded that motivated learners normally learn a language more effectively than unmotivated ones. As reported by Al-Hazemi (2000), learners who have a strong aspiration to learn English can finally gain a high level of English competence. Moreover, past research has largely suggested that non-English majors are often instrumentally motivated to learn English. Warden and Lin (2000) surveyed 442 non-English majors in Taiwan and reported that most of their participants were short of integrative motivation but quite instrumentally motivated to learn English, e.g. to pass an exam. Bradford (2007) conducted a study on 168 university students in Indonesia and found that they mostly learned English for pragmatic reasons (e.g. to have a better job, to meet an employer's requirement) but hardly possessed integrative motivation to assimilate into a foreign culture. More recently, Nguyen and Habok (2021) investigated the

motivation to learn English of 1,565 non-English-major students in Vietnam and acknowledged that the students surveyed had a higher level of instrumental motivation than other types of motivation historically classified in the literature.

3. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN

In order to successfully implement an English course at the tertiary level, at first, educators, syllabus designers and teachers should have clear understanding of their students' motivation and attitude towards English learning (Purmama et al., 2019). Teachers can do so by interviewing students, carrying out surveys or even informal talks. Besides, teachers should help learners examine their motivation and realize the need of acquiring L2. Students should be given opportunities to engage in simulations of real-life activities that often require English usage such as interviews, tourist talks, presentations etc. If students are instrumentally motivated, English courses at university can be constructed in close alignment with their academic and career purposes (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). Activities in class should present students with useful real-life and occupational situations which will serve them well in the real world and in their future workplace. As instrumentally motivated students wish to learn English to function in their day-to-day tasks, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses should be made available since in these courses, the English language and students' major subjects can be taught in unison (Rahman, 2015).

A multitude of researchers including Alotumi (2021), Khasbani and Hidayat (2020) have also emphasized the important role of a welcoming classroom in fostering English learners' motivation. Therefore, English teachers should design diversified, engaging learning activities to booster students' interest in the subject.

4. CONCLUSION

In summary, motivation to learn has been widely acknowledged in the literature to be one of the decisive factors in L2 students' learning experience and outcome. The term 'motivation' can be interpreted differently pursuant to different researchers' standpoints but is unanimously believed to arise from learners' needs to acquire the language. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to understand their students' needs and help them establish a purpose in learning. Besides, there are strategies that teachers can employ to help improve students' level of motivation. Firstly, teachers should figure out whether their students are integratively or instrumentally motivated to learn English and build courses that cater for their type of motivation. Secondly, it is important for L2 teachers to build a relaxing, friendly and supportive learning environment with more engaging, stimulating activities that can build

and retain students' interest in class and ultimately will help keep up their motivation to learn English outside the classroom.

5. REFERENCES

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