Motivation Factors in Language Learning

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Introduction

Motivation in language-learning plays a vital role. It is motivation that produces effective second-language communicators by planting in them the seeds of self-confidence. It also successfully creates learners who continuously engage themselves in learning even after they complete a targeted goal. In order for English instructors to motivate them, a number of methods are needed both in and outside of class. According to Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz, "positive self-concept, high self-esteem, positive attitude, clear understanding of the goals for language learning, continuous active participation in the language learning process, the relevance of conductive environment that could contribute to the success of language learning" (2001). They state that six factors influence motivation in language learning: attitudes, beliefs about self, goals, involvement, environmental support, and personal attributes (2001). Above all, three specific elements are strongly believed to build motivation towards language-learning: self-confidence, experiencing success and satisfaction, and good teacher-learner relationships as well as relationships between learners. All three factors are believed to be correlated to each other in the process of motivation development. This paper demonstrates analysis of three factors that have a solid connection with motivation

Investigation of Three Factors

Self-confidence

Self-confidence is the most significant in language-learning. It provides learners with the motivation and energy to become positive about their own learning. It also creates the drive in them to acquire the targeted language, enjoy the learning process, and experience real communication. "At the heart of all learning is a person's belief in his or her ability to accomplish the task" (Atsuta, 2003). "In general, successful language learners appear to have higher self-esteem than those who are unsuccessful" (Richard-Amato, 2003). Lack of belief in one's ability hinders him from achieving that task—pursuing a targeted language accomplishment. Moreover, it is widely believed that once students gain self-confidence, it progressively expands, in conjunction with experiencing success and satisfaction as well as good relationships.

Experience of Success and Satisfaction

Experience of success provides students with more power to pursue a new goal. It allows language learners to understand the purpose of trying and have pleasure in communicating with others. Some people might feel successful when they can communicate their thoughts to people; others might feel the sense of success when they complete a challenging task in a targeted language. The feeling of success time and again emerges specifically when he realizes the degree of his improvement and achievement. Some people, on the other hand, appreciate compliments from others. Subrahmanian suggests that external praise for one's improvement is strongly related to fomenting the sense of success (2001). There is a similarity between the experience of success and satisfaction; the experience of success at all times satisfies people not only in language-learning but also in anything. To make it short, it is strongly believed that the experience of success comes hand in the hand with the sense of satisfaction.

According to Lile, "a student will find it difficult to perform in a stressful environment" (2002). He also mentions that "the lessons must be very simple, yet fun and interesting, with a lot of changes from a writing exercise, to a speaking, listening, back to writing, and so on". Nunan states that "students need to be able to use the skills taught in the classroom to do things other than those that they had been specifically taught" (1999). This implies that in order for language learners to experience success and become satisfied, it is essential for instructors to create a relaxing learning environment so that students can perform

successfully. Moreover, a language class needs to contain a variety of materials and activities focusing on all necessary skills. By encouraging students to practice not only one skill but all, the class will become more challenging and effective.

Good Relationships Among Learners and Between Teacher and Students

According to Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz, "teachers need to find creative ways to teach the language and increase the student's motivation to learn the language and to eventually appreciate the language" (2001). There are a number of methods that English instructors can use to motivate students in class, and instructors should flexibly employ the most suitable method for the class. Furthermore, Kabilan indicated that "Teachers should develop a mutual relationship with their learners" (2000). In order to develop a mutual relationship with their learners, teachers need to understand students who are from different backgrounds, have different interests, future goals, aims for English learning, and most importantly, different personalities. Once they understand them better, teachers are able to apply specific teaching and communicating strategies tailored to each student, thereby creating a trusting relationship between a teacher and student. Once a relationship develops, the classroom will become comfortable and enjoyable enough for students to learn positively from the teacher without any hesitation.

Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz mention that "what occurs in the language classrooms must be extended beyond the walls of the classroom so that a link is created between what is learned in the classrooms with what occurs outside of the classrooms" (2001). Languages cannot be learned merely in classrooms. Learning a language requires communication in real life situations. Thus, students need to acquire an array of communication skills that they can use with various kinds of people. It is essential that they learn not only how to communicate in the target language but also the background, history, and culture that defines it.

"Students who remain silent in groups of ten or more will contribute actively to discussions when the size of the group is reduced to five or three. Type of communicative task can also influence students' willingness to speak" (Nunan, 1999). According to Richard-Amato, "In classrooms in which mutual respect is lacking, differing values can lead to conflicts between student and teacher, and between student and peer" (2003). The classroom size and the size of group are to be carefully considered. Language learners tend to feel frightened to make a speech in front of a big group. Thus, teachers need to aid students who need support and encourage them to understand that no one can be as perfect as native speakers. In addition, teachers are required to teach all the students the importance of having respect for one another in a classroom so that each of the students can actively participate in lesson.

Students Voices

I did a survey on motivation using the students in my class. Sixteen college freshmen were interviewed regarding the class contents, materials, and the ideal teacher. Half of them had already experienced studying abroad; the other half had not, but their English abilities were as functional as those of returnees.

More students preferred visual aids for new information and their memorization. This means that when teachers introduce new information, visual aids are necessary for students to grasp main points and details. In addition, the students enjoyed thinking rather than talking and individual studying more than group studying; this proves that even returnees who had more opportunities to participate in group studying abroad feel comfortable with a passive studying style. Furthermore, thinking comes before trial according to the survey. This means that students need to obtain time to use their critical thinking strategy before they actually start trying in language learning.

The students answered the question, "What kind of teacher do you prefer?" like below.

- A teacher who knows how to deal with students, especially teenagers.
- A teacher who does not force ideas on the students.
- A tolerant and responsible teacher with a sense of humor.
- A funny teacher who can be serious when necessary.
- A caring teacher.
- A friendly teacher.
- An active teacher.
- A teacher who can understand what students' expectations are.

- A trustworthy teacher.

Teachers need to acquire what students pursue in teachers in order for students to be motivated in language learning. They certainly have a strong relation with students' motivation status. It is understood that a teacher's personality and behavior towards students have a strong influence. In order to produce successful language speakers, teachers should devote themselves to teaching.

Conclusion

Motivation is vital in language learning. It makes language learners positive about their own learning. It also creates the drive in them to acquire the targeted language, enjoy the learning process, and experience real communication. Moreover, experience of success and satisfaction has a strong connection with motivation. By realizing their improvement and achievement, students always gain the feeling of success. In order for language students to become satisfied with a lesson, it is required to produce a stress-free classroom and develop integrated-tasks lesson. It is necessary that there is a trust between a teacher and the students so that much communication in a targeted language is developed.

In conclusion, these three factors: *self-confidence, experiencing success and satisfaction, and good teacher-learner relationships as well as relationships between learners*, play an essential role in developing language learners' motivation.

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