Affective Factors: Motivation in Second Language Acquisition, Case of Uzbek Learner

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ABSTRACT

The article gives an overview of various learning affective factors in second language acquisition, particularly focusing on motivation and represents some data about one of the Uzbek learner's cases with research method and findings.

Acquisition of a foreign language shows an intensively studied issue, its psychological foundation being based on the individual differences of various learners. The learning process depends on a series of factors: cognitive factors such as language aptitude, learning strategies, affective factors including attitudes, motivation, anxiety, meta-cognitive factors and demographic factors. We have chosen to analyze how affective factors, particularly motivation, contribute to students' English proficiency. They were tested with questionnaires and an interview. There were identified significant differences in how affective factors influence learning a foreign language.

Affective factors are the most important factors in SLA and English teaching. These factors include emotion, feeling, mood, manner, attitude and so on. All these factors, especially, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, decide the input and output of the second language. The affective factors will surely help the teachers to improve their teaching quality and students to cultivate an all-round development.

Motivation is defined as the extent ones strive to acquire the language because of the desire to do so and the satisfaction derived from it. Motivation is considered significant in its role in language learning success. Along this line of thoughts, students' motivation toward English language learning can, to a certain degree, influence their learning results. It is worth investigating how students become successful or failed in learning English because it might affect their motivation and the way they learn the language. The learner's enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are the key determinant of success or failure.

Motivation has long been identified as one of the main factors affecting English language learning. We examined the type and level of English language learning motivation (instrumental or integrative) of 26 years old participant who is working as an IT developer in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. Based on this study's findings, some relevant and useful motivational learning implications are recommended for enhancement and improvement of the students' motivation.

The first of affective aspects has to do with internal factors that are part of the learner's personality. Although learning a language and using it are basically interactive activities that

depend on varying types of relationships with others and with the culture as a whole, the second language acquisition process is strongly influenced by individual personality traits residing within the learner. The way we feel about ourselves and our capabilities can either facilitate or impede our learning; accordingly, the learner-intrinsic factors will have a basically positive or negative influence, though there can sometimes be a mixture of liabilities and assets for each. It should be noted, of course, that the various emotions affecting language learning are intertwined and interrelated in ways that make it impossible to isolate completely the influence of any one of them. We now turn to one of these factors that are of especial importance for second language learning.

Second language acquisition theory leaves no doubt about the crucial importance of a further affective variable, motivation, which is actually a cluster of factors that energize behavior and give it direction. Chomsky points out the importance of activating learners' motivation: "The truth of the matter is that about 99 percent of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material". Motivation involves the learner's reasons for attempting to acquire the second language, but precisely what creates motivation is the crux of the matter. In the early work of Gardner and Lambert (1972), motivation was seen to be divided into two very general orientations: integrative and instrumental. The former refers to a desire to learn the language in order to relate to and even become part of the target language culture, and the latter has to do with practical reasons for language learning, such as getting a promotion. One type of motivation is not necessarily always more effective than the other; what is important is the degree of energizing and the firmness of the direction it provides, and that will also depend on other variables within the learner.

This basic social psychological model for language learning motivation has been elaborated further by Gardner (1985) and his associates and by other SLA researchers. In fact, the abundance of mature theorizing about the concept in recent years would seem to indicate that language learning motivation research is definitely coming of age. Several frameworks have been proposed to explain motivational aspects of language learning. At the present time we must still wait for empirical verification of many of their components and for further elaboration, clarification and discussion of the relationship among the components, as well as their unification in a definitive model.

Extrinsic motivation comes from the desire to get a reward or avoid punishment; the focus is on something external to the learning activity itself. With intrinsic motivation the learning experience is its own reward: Intrinsic motivation is in evidence whenever students' natural curiosity and interest energize their learning. Discussing the optimal conditions for the development of intrinsic motivation, Deci highlights 'autonomy support, competence-promoting feedback and interpersonal involvement'. Research indicates that, while extrinsic motivation can also be beneficial, learning is most favorably influenced by intrinsic orientations, especially for long-term retention. Studies have shown that adding extrinsic rewards can actually reduce motivation. In experimental situations subjects have been shown to exhibit reduced efficiency and pleasure in an intrinsically interesting task when an extrinsic reward was introduced. With their emphasis on teacher-directed classrooms, grades, tests and competitiveness, most schools encourage only extrinsic motivation. This has the effect of leading students to work to please teachers or authorities, rather than of developing a love of knowledge in independent minds. Bruner (1962) speaks of 'the autonomy of self-reward', affirming that one of the most effective ways to help children think and learn is to 'free' them from the control of rewards and punishments. It is reasonable to assume that our language learners will generally have a better chance of success with the development of intrinsic forms of motivation in which they learn for their own personal reasons of achieving competence and autonomy, although feedback leading to increased feelings of competence and self-determination is one extrinsic reward shown to further intrinsic

motivation. In any event, what matters is how learners internalize the external aspects, making personal sense of them. Some suggestions for stimulating the growth of intrinsic motivation in the L2 classroom would be: (1) help learners develop autonomy by learning to set personal goals and to use learning strategies, (2) rather than over-rewarding them, encourage learners to find self-satisfaction in a task well done, (3) facilitate learner participation in determining some aspects of the programme and give opportunities for cooperative learning, (4) involve students in content-based activities related to their interests which focus their attention on meanings and purposes rather than on verbs and prepositions, and (5) design tests which allow for some student input and which are face-valid in the eyes of students; provide comments as well as a letter or numerical evaluation.

Very closely related to intrinsic motivation is the concept of *flow*, developed by University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmi. Flow, or optimal experience, is a state of effortless movement of psychic energy. Goleman underlines its connection with affect: flow represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performance and learning. In flow the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized and aligned with the task at hand. It is so relevant because it is the ideal state for effective learning: Because flow feels so good, it is intrinsically rewarding. It is a state in which people become utterly absorbed in what they are doing, paying undivided attention to the task, their awareness merged with their actions.

In language learning, as in many other activities, this pure enjoyment may not be present in the initial stages when some of the more elementary processes have to be made automatic in order to free energy for higher level learning, which can be more engrossing. At the beginning, then, teachers may need to be concerned with ways to encourage students to make the necessary effort. At this point external incentives (grades, possible job qualifications) may lie useful. But learners should move beyond the extrinsic.

For an activity to enter the flow channel, it must be neither so easy that it produces boredom nor so challenging that it leads to anxiety. Extensive studies have outlined the major components of flow. Flow can occur with a task if we have a reasonable chance of completing it and if we are able to concentrate on it. The task should have clear goals and provide immediate feedback. A deep but effortless involvement keeps everyday worries at bay. There is a sense of control over one's actions, and concern for the self disappears, paradoxically actually strengthening the self. Finally, the sense of time is often altered.

These components readily suggest important implications for language learning, and, although we have been looking at intrinsic motivation and flow from the point of view of the language learner, the concepts are no less relevant for language teachers. Teachers for whom their work is a source of flow, who themselves are motivated by the pleasure of participating in the learning experience, are highly motivating models for learners.

Domyei (1994) refers to cognitive theories in educational psychology in which motivation is seen to be a function of a person's thought processes; these formulations, however provide a clear example of the difficulty of isolating the cognitive, for at many points affect inevitably enters the picture. He mentions three major conceptual systems described by Weiner (1992) which are related to motivation: attribution theory, learned helplessness and self-efficacy.

Attribution theory states that what we see as the causes for our past successes or failures will affect our expectations and, through them, our performance. Failure attributed to lack of ability is much more limiting than failure attributed to bad luck or other non-stable factors. As Weiner explains:
success and failure perceived as due to internal causes such as personality, ability or effort respectively raises or lowers self-esteem or self-worth, whereas external attributions for positive or negative outcomes do not influence feelings about the self. It is a question of shifting the

causal dimension. Language learners can be encouraged to attribute failures to causes which can be remedied and which do not lead to a devaluation of the self.

With *learned helplessness* learners are convinced through past failures that attempting to change the situation is useless and thus have learnt not to try. They are submerged in a helpless state that engulfs them and they feel that they cannot possibly achieve their goals, no matter what they do. They should be taught to formulate realistic goals which are within their grasp so that success in achieving them will bring them greater self-confidence.

Self-efficacy has to do with learners' opinions about their ability to carry out a task. Within the educational setting, Ehrman defines it as the degree to which the student thinks he or she has the capacity to cope with the learning challenge. Oxford and Shearin point out that learners must believe they have some control over the outcomes of the learning process and they must feel a sense of effectiveness within themselves if they are to make the effort necessary to learn the new language. They suggest that teachers can encourage self-efficacy by providing meaningful tasks at which students can succeed and over which students can have a feeling of control…(and) by giving students a degree of choice in classroom activities.

In all three cases motivation could be increased by encouraging learners to use positive self-talk, which can help to replace feelings of limitation by those of empowerment. Many learners, especially low-achievers, have been strongly affected by years of negative self-talk, much of it on a semi-unconscious level.

Participant Profile. Student, Bakhtiyor Begmatov is a 26-year-old Uzbek male. He was born in Karshi which is located in the southern part of Uzbekistan. He stayed in his hometown until he finished high school. He started learning English when he was in primary school as a compulsory subject. In both primary and high school, English lesson focused on grammar and reading comprehension so as to prepare students for the entry into higher educational institutions.

In 2011, when he was 21, he passed the entrance examination of Tashkent Information Technology Institute of Karshi branch which is located in his hometown. Although he wanted to study IT, he was not very interested in English. An interest in English was sparked by an incident in 2014 when he found out that his main major IT can be acquired better in English speaking countries.

Although student Bakhtiyor Begmatov's language learning goals change from time to time, his ultimate learning goal is to improve his oral skills. In the interview with him, he says:

"I want to speak English very well someday."

Keeping the interview going, he again tells about his desire to improve his communication skills rather than focusing on grammar:

"I would like to learn natural English conversation…even if the grammar is wrong, as long as people understand what I say…"

When it comes to his cultural background, he grew up in Uzbek family where all family members speak mainly in Uzbek language and Russian as a second language as well. Following this, participant took knowledge in native school and attended local university. An interest of participant to English language started from university years when participant realized all his major related to being English language proficient in order to be successful IT developer.

Research Design. At the beginning of case study, it was hard to choose what research method would be appropriate for analyzing motivation level of the participants in SLA. After addressing literature review, we came to the idea that self-test and interview would be one of the best choices for it. At the end, one can find out what results turned out from test questionnaire for motivation factors and interview gives the idea of how participant acquired second language and affective factors particularly motivation impact on the process.

We have chosen research materials according to the level of the participant. His level is relatively pre-intermediate and he has 2

years' experience of English language. Some of the questions used in the questionnaire were adopted from Prapphal's Attitudes Testing to gather information on participants' motivation. There were 20 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: integrative motivation (items 1-10) and instrumental motivation (items 11- 20).

Data Collection and Findings. According to some research, it is clear to state that pre-test and interview methods really worked well for finding out participant's motivation in SLA. Here are some findings from data which is collected during the procedure:

When it came to motivation of participant, he stated that great deal of encouragement came from love to his major which is information technology. He said that following year, he tends to continue his master degree in the USA, so he thinks English plays an important role to get this goal. As well as to this reason, another motivation to urge him to learn English is his ambition to travel all around the world.

The findings indicated that the most common reasons for studying English as a second language were for communication with people overseas, finding employment in a high profile career, processing international information, and understanding other cultures. These findings were related with the work which suggested that a person's need for studying a second language is for the ability to socialize with the learning language community or integrative motivation and the ability to gain knowledge applied from that learning language or instrumental motivation. Moreover, the study showed that high English proficiency subjects are more motivated than low English proficiency subjects with low English achievement.

The overall results reveal that the participant is highly motivated to learn English. Based on the comparison and assessment, it is discovered that the student is slightly more strongly instrumentally motivated to learn English which can answer the research question of the motivation found is more integrative or instrumental. All these findings have relevant implications and should therefore lead to recommendations for further training or studies.

The participant's inclination toward instrumental motivation could be of great value for the enhancement through new focuses on language enhancement programs. At the same time, we should also take into account the potentials and strategies for the participant's integrative motivations to learn English and ultimately improve his proficiency. It might be beneficial for me to implement the on-going language programs or activities to encourage interaction and enhance the exposure and the language usage.

Based on the findings of this study, the results are unique for this particular participant: i.e his high motivation in both instrumental and integrative aspects and even with a slight dominance in instrumental motivation.

As the English learning motivation is one of the most important learning factors, the need to determine the actual motivational situations of any students group is worthwhile. This is for the benefit of their language-learning effectiveness and proficiency.

In conclusion, this study was conducted to provide some insights into the level and type of motivation of participant. The study provides useful knowledge and information to improve English courses. Although the data source of the study may not represent all other student group, we are still confident that the results will give a relative representation and be of a great value to authorities or researchers concerned. Motivation in English language learning of the students can be a great source of knowledge and understanding to implement relevant programs or activities to stimulate the more motivating learning atmosphere. Students with adequate motivation will become efficient language learners with ultimate language proficiency.

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