Review Article: Role of Motivation in Language Learning

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ABSTRACT: This study overviews current research on the role of motivation in second or foreign language learning. It deals with the meaning of motivation from different views, and the scope of motivation within the context of language learning. It also deals with the role of motivation in developing language skills, specially reading and writing. It also shows the relationship between gender differences, learning strategies, teachers, and materials with the concept of motivation. Finally, it concludes that motivation has an influential role in all aspects of language learning.

Key words: intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, instrumental/integrative motivation, learning motivation, SLA.

INTRODUCTION

One thing that students, teachers, material developers, and researchers all agree upon is that motivation is an essential part of mastering a second or foreign language. The concept of motivation seems complex since it takes a respectable number of disciplines to arrive at a reasonable understanding of its facets. Dornyei (2000,2001) believes that the complexity of the concept of motivation resides in its endeavors to explain individual's actions on behavior which can not be accounted for by one panacea approach. The problem as Dornyie (1996) asserts is not the lack of theories to explain motivation but rather the abundance of theories and models. Luckily, there is now a very substantial research literature available on the role of motivation in language learning. This article will overview as much of this research as possible, focusing on the most recent studies, and will highlight different facets of motivation.

The Scope of Motivation in Language Learning

Definition of Motivation

Gardner (1985) defined motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (p.10). He believes that motivation is concerned with the question “Why does an organism behave as it does?”. In addition Brown (1994) states that “motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action” (p.152). This view of motivation may refer to the intrinsic motivation which will be discussed later. Ryan and Deci (2000), on the other hand, define motivation as concerning energy, direction, persistence, and equifinality of all aspects of activation and intention. They believe that to be motivated is to be moved to do something. Cheng and Doryie (2007) define motivation as an impetus to generate learning initially and later as a sustaining force to the tedious process of acquiring a target language. Keller (1983) notes that “motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach to avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (p.289). Shearin (1994) maintains that “motivation determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning” (p.12).Brown (1987) states that “countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning” (p.114). From another point of view, Narayanan (2006) defines motivation as the reason or reasons behind one's actions or behaviors. Oxford and Shearin (1994) argue that motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal. Ames and Ames (1989) define motivation as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal setting acts.
According to Ngeow, Karen, and Yeok-Hwa (1998) motivation determines the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning. According to Dornyei (2003) motivation consists of three stages: pre-actional stage, in which motivation needs to be generated, actional stage, in which motivation needs to be maintained and protected, and post-actional, in which students evaluate the activity to which they are motivated. Williams and Burden (1997) also claim that motivation results from a combination of different influences, some are internal and some are external.

As it seems motivation does not have a particular definition. Different people define motivation from different views and it may be due to the existence of different contexts of language learning, but the most important thing is that motivation is a key to learning a language.

**Intrinsic Vs. Extrinsic Motivation**

According to Deci and Ryan (1995) self determination theory is divided into two general types of motivation, one is intrinsic motivation which refers to motivation to engage in an activity, because it is enjoyable and satisfying to do, the other type of motivation is extrinsic motivation which is based on external rewards to the activity itself. It refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome, or to achieve some instrumental ends. Noels (2001) refers to intrinsic motivation into different categories, it can be IM-Knowledge (the pleasure of knowing new things), IM-Accomplishment (the pleasure of accomplishing goals), and IM-Stimulation (the pleasure sensed when doing the task). The extrinsic motivation has also classified along a continuum of three categories according to the extent to which the gals are self determined: external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation. Noels demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is enhanced when teachers allow more autonomy to learners. Hayamizu (1997) argue that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are not bipolar and antagonistic, but rather are located on a continuum of motivation types. Regarding the relationship between motivation and language learning, Kimura, Nakata, and Okumura (1997) find it hard to motivate Japanese learners to learn foreign languages. They find that those learners who need English skills for their present or future careers tend to be motivated intrinsically and integratively as well as instrumentally. Their research suggests that junior high school learners are highly motivated compared to senior high school learners. Noels (2001) investigated the relation between perception of teachers' communicative style and students' motivation, the results showed that teacher's behavior affects the students' generalized feeling of autonomy and competence. According to Ushioda (2008) intrinsically motivated learners are likely to display much higher levels of involvement in learning, and use a wider range of problem solving strategies. Regarding the relationship between motivation and language skills, Lucas (2010) notes that students are intrinsically motivated to learn peaking and reading skills and that they are intrinsically motivated via knowledge and accomplishment. Guthrie (1997) shows that intrinsic motivation has a great influence not only in reading comprehension but in other aspects of reading, like reading breadth. Apple (2005) finds that if Japanese students were already motivated enough to reading, the extensive reading program seemed unnecessary. Tercanlioglu (2001) states that Turkish students have a positive attitude towards reading, because they read both for intrinsic and extrinsic purposes. Ziahosseini and Salehi (2008) find that extrinsic motivation does not correlate meaningfully with the choice of language learning strategies. They believe that Iranian EFL learners are intrinsically motivated. They also find that there is not necessarily a significant relationship between the degree of motivation and choice of language learning strategies. Concerning the types of tasks, Deci and Ryan (1985) states that when students engage in a task or activity in order to satisfy their curiosity the task is intrinsically motivating. It is these types of tasks that are viewed as most beneficial in the classroom. Several studies attempted to prove that intrinsically motivating activities lead to better learning, while extrinsic motives are the least beneficial for the students and resulted in the lowest level of learning. Huitt (2001) states that there are a variety of specific actions that teachers can take to increase motivation on classroom tasks, these actions fall into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Creating and maintaining curiosity, setting goals for learning, and providing games and simulations are examples of tasks which increase intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, giving corrective feedback, providing valuable rewards, and making rewards available are the tasks which increase extrinsic motivation. Sime (2006) indicates instances in which extrinsic motivation is said to disrupt the development of intrinsic motivation, one of which is when rewards are given to learners if they have done the task regardless of receiving something in return. Regarding the notion of gender differences in motivation, Russilo and Arias (2004) report that girls show lower levels of extrinsic motivation than boys, and gender differences are not found in intrinsic motivation. As for the type of academic goals pursued by boys and girls, Anderman and Anderman (1999) state that boys show a greater degree of extrinsic motivational orientation, while girls show a greater intrinsic motivation. Biggs (1985) suggests that intrinsic motivation is an important part of the relationship between metacognitive approaches to learning and academic success. In addition, Landline and Stewart (1998) indicate that there is a positive relationship between metacognition, motivation, and academic success. Hall (2000) in his study, involving American and French middle-school
pupils, concludes that the French pupils had higher degree of self efficacy and intrinsic motivation than their American counterparts. Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) reveal that motivation is a key factor that influences the extent to which learners are ready to learn autonomously, and that teachers might therefore endeavor to ensure motivation before they train students to become autonomous.

**Instrumental Vs. Integrative Motivation**

There are two types of motivation that should be considered when referring to second or foreign language learning. They are language learning motivation and classroom learning motivation. Language learning motivation refers to the motivation to learn or acquire a second language. According to Gardner (1985), it is considered in the socio-educational model of second language acquisition. Based on Clement (1980), it is considered in the social context model. And based on Clement and Noels (1996), it is considered in the self-determination model. It is a general form of motivation relevant in any second language learning context. It is a general characteristic of the individual that applies to any opportunity to learn the language. It is relatively stable, but it is amenable to change under certain conditions. Classroom learning motivation is what Gardner (1985) represents in socio-educational model of second language acquisition, and it is also considered as an integral part of motivation in general. It refers to the motivation in the classroom situation, or any specific situation. It will be influenced by a host of factors associated with language class. So, the teacher, the content of the course, materials and facilities will influence the individual learning motivation. Gardner (2007) believes that both educational context and cultural context play an important role in the formation of motivation. The educational context refers generally to educational system in which the students are registered, and the cultural context refers to one's attitudes, beliefs, personality characteristics, ideas and expectations. He also believes that classroom learning motivation may promote the acquisition of individual elements of the language. On the other hand, Gardner (1985) proposed two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. He claims that an integratively motivated learner shows interest in learning about the culture and the people of the target language, whereas an instrumentally motivated learner has more pragmatic considerations in his/her mind regarding L2 learning, such as obtaining a job, or gaining more money. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) define an integratively motivated learner as one who is motivated to learn the second language, has openness to identification with other language community and has favorable attitude toward the language situation. Shaw (1981) claims that in parts of the world where English is learned as a foreign language, the integrative motivation plays a minor role in the popularity of English and since English is considered by many a bonafide international or interanational language which is not inseparably connected to any particular countries, on the importance of motivation in language learning, Sadeghi (2005) believes that teaching of English has long been a difficult task for both students and teachers in Iran due to some reasons, one of which is lack of motivation. Sadighi and Maghsudi (2000) investigates the effect of two types of motivation, integrative and instrumental, on English proficiency of the EFL senior students in Iran, and the results of their study showed a significant difference between the means of the English proficiency scores of integratively motivated students and the instrumentally motivated ones. Considering the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation, Lightbown and Spada (2000) indicate that integrative motivation refers to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment, while instrumental motivation refers to language learning for more immediate and practical goals. Although both integrative and instrumental motivation are essential in language learning, Gass and Selinker (2001) claim that integrative motivation is superior to instrumental motivation for predicting the success of second language learning. Cook (2001) claims the same, he believes that because students respect the target culture, they may read literature and practice language and thereby be able to improve their language skills. From another perspective, Oxford (1996) claims that instrumental motivation is meaningful for the learner who has had limited access to L2 culture, or foreign language settings. In some of the early research, Gardner and Lambert (1972, as cited in Ellis, 1997) integrative motivation was viewed more important in a formal learning environment than instrumental motivation. Unlike Gardner, Dornyei (1996) claims that instrumental motivation and the learners' need for achievement are more important than the integrative motivation. Vaezi (2008) in her research, language learning motivation among Iranian undergraduate students, has shown that Iranian students had very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English and that they were more instrumentally motivated. She confirms the opinion of some researchers who believe that in a foreign language situation students are instrumentally motivated. Inbar and Shohamy (2004) find that Jewish students who learned Arabic as their second language show more positive attitudes towards Arabic and its speakers, and were more motivated to study it despite the political tension between Jewish and Arabs. Regarding the role of teachers in creating motivation, Winke (2005) suggests that teachers make an effort to understand their language learners' levels of integrative and instrumental motivation by asking them specifically about their language connections. Indeed, a teacher could use students' personal connections to the language to build motivation in the classroom. Lock and Lathman (1990) find that if
teachers help students set specific, short-term, achievable goals for learning, students will be motivated to learn, because very general and unrealistic goals tend to disappoint and frustrate them. In this regard Lucas (1990) finds that if teachers can make students active participants in learning, students will be motivated to learn. Ames (1992) believes that when students find a leaving task interesting, engaging, meaningful, and useful, they tend to be highly motivated to carry it out. Dornyei and Csizer (1998) also find that if teachers can provide students with opportunities to see their own progress and experience success, students will gradually build up their self confidence and be motivated to work hard. Bernus (1992) indicates that the foreign language teacher’s personality and his/her way of teaching affect students’ motivation. According to Littlejohn (2008) the teachers’ job can be seen not only as motivating learners, but also as avoiding their demotivation, through paying particular attention to the structural organization of learning and teaching. Based on the findings of Hussin, Maarof, and D’Cruz (2001) six factors influence motivation in language learning: attitudes, beliefs about self, goals, involvement, environmental support, and personal attributes. Above all, Ebata (2008) believes that three specific elements strongly influence motivation: self confidence, expressing success and satisfaction, and good teacher-learner relationship. Gardner (1993) states that both instrumental and integrative motivation lead to success, but lack of either causes problems. On the importance of motivation, Krashen (2002) claims that learners with high motivation, self confidence, a good self image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language learning. Low motivation raises the affective filter and form a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition/learning. Taguchi (2006) finds that motivation and academic gains are not significantly correlated, and this maybe due to the complex mixture of factors described by different motivational theories and language learning processes. Furthermore, Salem (2006) in her study reveals that motivation in general does not correlate with EFL proficiency. Considering both instrumental and integrative motivation, Rahman (2007) demonstrates that Bangladeshi students learn English for instrumental reasons, rather than integrative ones. Wong (1982) finds that motivational orientation of Chinese English learners has no correlation with their achievement in language learning. On the other hand, Lukmani (1972) shows that there is a significant correlation between instrumental motivation and performance. Instrumental motivation scores correlated significantly with English proficiency scores. The findings of Burstall (1975) indicate that in pupils’ achievement in NFER primary French project their performance was closely associated with both instrumental and integrative motivation. Oxford and Shearin (1994) prove that apart from the instrumental and integrative motivation other social-psychological factors such as intellectual stimulation, seeking personal challenge contribute to language learning process. Khanna (1994) believes that a learner’s motivation to learn a foreign language will depend on his attitudes and willingness to identify with the linguistic and non-linguistic features that characterize the speakers of the target language. Regarding the factor of motivation in second language learning strategies, Sadigii and Zarafshan (2006) claim that integratively-motivated students employ more strategies than instrumentally-motivated ones. They find that motivation does not have a significant effect on language learning strategies at p<0.5 level. Gardner and Macintyre (1993) report that those learners who are substantially motivated tend to adopt more learning strategies and use them more frequently than less motivated ones. They also claim that the highly motivated learners are better language learners. Based on Oxford and Nyikos (1989) “the degree of expressed motivation to learn the language is the most powerful influence on strategy choice” (p.294). Oxford and Shearin (1994) declare that it is of utmost importance to understand students’ motivation which directly affects the utilization of language learning strategies. Tamada (1996) indicates that differences in motivation orientation significantly influence the use of language learning strategies. In her study Hassanpur (1999) finds that integratively motivated students employ more memory and cognitive strategies than instrumentally motivated students. Chang and Haung (1999) prove that there is a significant relationship between motivation and language learning strategies. They report that instrumentally motivated learners employ more memory and affective strategies, while students with integrative motivation use higher range of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. Compensation strategies were used almost equally by the two groups. Sedaghat (2001) declares that integratively-orientated language learners use more social strategies than instrumentally-oriented learners. In other strategies the difference was not found. Mohideen Obeidat (2005) states that learners are more integratively motivated to learn a second language. Zughoul and Taminian (1984) find that motivation involved in learning and using English in Jordan is instrumental in nature, whereas that involved in learning and using Arabic is basically integrative. Considering the relationship between motivation and gender, Svanes (1987) finds that there is no significant sex differences in integrative motivation in any of the groups of the study. Concerning instrumental motivation, men show somewhat higher instrumental motivation than women do. In the Canadian and Israeli melting pot contexts in which Abu Rabia (1996) examines the motivation of Arab students, results reveal that their motivation toward learning Hebrew is instrumental in nature. The results also reveal that female students show higher integrative motivation. The results of a study by Netten (1999) suggest that male are less motivated to learn French than females after grade 9.
Czieran and Dornyei (2005) show that male students are less motivated L2 learners. Gambrell (1993) finds that girls are more positive in their ability, beliefs, and motivation about reading than boys. In an exploration carried on by Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) on Japanese learners' motivation in English as an L2, the results show that those with high motivation tend to communicate more in the classroom and to ask questions or talk to teachers more frequently outside the class. Concerning the concepts of transfer and motivation, Ngeow (1998) suggests that transfer and motivation are mutually supportive in creating an optimal learning environment. If the learner perceives what he is learning to be relevant and transferable to other situations, he will find learning meaningful and his motivation to acquire the skill or knowledge will increase. Holihan (2007) believes that factors such as visualization, immersion, team play, challenge, opportunity, and quality of instruction can motivate students while learning a second/foreign language. Berwick and Ross (1989) find that Japanese students possess instrumental motivation in learning English and the underlying reason for studying English is the entrance exam requirement for university. Once students gain entrance to a university the motivation to continue English study is sometimes diminished. Regarding the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation, Brown (2000) makes the point that both integrative and instrumental motivation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, learners rarely select one form of motivation when learning a second language, but rather a combination of both orientations. Lukmani (1972) finds that instrumental motivation is more important than integrative motivation in non-Westernized female learners of L2 in Bobbay. Kachru (1977, as cited in Brown 2000) also points out that in India, where English has become an international language, it is not common for second language learners to be successful with instrumental purposes being the underlying reason for study. Ellis (1997) notes that instrumental motivation has only been acknowledged as a significant factor in some research, whereas integrative motivation is continually linked to successful second language acquisition. It has been found that generally students select instrumental reason more frequently than integrative reasons for the study of language. Those who do support an integrative approach to language study are usually more highly motivated and overall more successful in language learning. Considering the relationship between motivation and reading skill, Blay, Mercado, and Villacorta (2009) declare that only two aspects of motivation, competition and challenge, emerge as having a positive relationship with reading comprehension. Wiggfield and Guthrie (1997) find that learners' engagement in reading can not be explained based on cognitive skills that are at work during the reading process but can also be understood based on motivational factors that influence reading activity. Taboatao and Barbosa (2006) believe that students who are motivated by learning situation are more likely to achieve success in L1 reading comprehension. Takase (2004) reveals that intensive reading program did not work for participants who were not motivated to read for some reasons such as difficulty of books. Baker and Scher (2002) studied several factors that might affect the beginning readers' motivation for reading in the United States. They revealed that the beginning readers had gradually positive views about reading, and parental identification of pleasure as a reason for reading predicted children's motivation for reading. Rowe (1991) indicates that involvement in reading activities at home has significant positive influence on students' motivation and interest in reading. Concerning the role of parents in giving motivation to children, Xi Chen (2005) states that parents have an important role in motivating children to read. Results of his study revealed that Chinese children whose parents express the view that reading is important, interesting, and useful exhibit higher motivation levels than children whose parents do not. On the other hand, Tercanioglu (2000) suggests that students read for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons and do not avoid any difficult reading activities. Regarding the notion of motivation in writing skill, Potter (2001) finds that students' motivation for writing was heavily influenced by the extent to which they perceived they were encouraged to write authentic, personal texts whose messages were respected by caring teacher. Concerning the relationship between motivation and anxiety, Carreira (2006) reveals that there is not a strong correlation between motivation and anxiety. In his investigation on intensive ESL program, Lyons (1983) finds that many students are motivated instrumentally rather than integratively, and that they study English in order to get some measurable extrinsic value of learning outcomes. Kwan (2004) in his study, motivation for learning English in CMI and EMI classes in Hong Kong, finds that both CMI and EMI students have high instrumental or extrinsic motivation for learning English. In addition, EMI students also have integrated or intrinsic motivation for learning English. Lui (2006) categorized four types of motivation among Chinese learners of English, namely integrative, instrumental, expressive, and truly extrinsic. He argued that very limited number of learners is integratively motivated. Besides, for learners with purely extrinsic motivation, English is a compulsory course. Boyle (2000) points out that "China's motivation for learning English is very definitely pragmatic and job oriented" (p.151). Pang, Zhou, and Fu (2002) agreed that "for most Chinese people, English is learned for patriotic and utilitarian reasons, and for national modernization as well as personal achievements and material gains" (p.203). In addition, Nui and Wolf (2003) in their research done on 1000 students, reveal that students are motivated to learn English with the belief that they will be paid off financially in the future. Morie (2002) notes that "in Japan where EFL students have very limited contact
with the target language and culture, it can be assumed that their desire to integrate themselves into the target community is rather weak, and consequently can not be discriminated from other reasons for reading English” (p.9). Nakata and Okumura (2001) discover that it is nearly impossible to separate instrumental from integrative reasons for studying English, no matter the level of education, from junior high school through university.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to shed light on the role of motivation in language learning through reviewing some of the most influential and considerable research in the field. Following this review, it has been possible to draw attention to the following important conclusions on the role of motivation in language learning:

- The concept of motivation can be understood differently by people coming from different contexts.
- Gender differences are somehow influential in individuals' motivation.
- Individuals can also be simultaneously influenced by different motives.
- Individuals' motivation can go up and down depending on the context of language learning.
- Motivation can be affected by different factors such as attitudes and goals.
- Motivation has an influential role in the development of language skills.
- Parents and teachers play a vital role in motivating students to the learning of a second/foreign language.
- Motivation affects the use of language learning strategies.
- Although great advances have been made in the field of motivation and its role in language learning, as the literature on this field shows, great effort should be made to study the following points in the domain of motivation:
- Factors which affect learners' motivation in a classroom order.
- The role of peers in developing one's motivation.

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