Motivation in the ESL/EFL Classroom: Rhetoric and reality
Parrill STRIBLING, International Pacific College, New Zealand

Motivational theory and practical applications for the language classroom will be discussed. The development of the different motivational perspectives and resulting outcomes as presented by Dornyei, Williams and Skehan will be briefly examined as well as the research of Biggs, Brophy, Dweck and Pintrich in educational psychology. While these motivational constructs have been generally accepted within language acquisition and educational psychology, what actually happens in the classroom may be somewhat different. The last part of this presentation will include a discussion on the practical applications of various motivational theories for the ESL/EFL classroom. This will examine motivating and de-motivating approaches or factors. Appreciating various stimuli of student attitude, and differences in learning goals, could encourage more learner autonomy, responsibility and maturity in accomplishing the students’ or course goals.

INTRODUCTION

Don’t worry about parts one and two. Just study part three. That’s what they ask you. They never change test (sic). They ask questions in same order as the book. I don’t know the questions. I just memorized the answers. So I passed.

An ESL student explaining how to study for the written part of the NZ driving test.

All second language motivational research have been a reaction to R. Gardner’s (1960; 1985) motivational constructs. Gardner’s current critics, Dörnyei and Williams believe there is too much emphasis on integrative motive at the exclusion of instrumental motive. Williams’ major criticism of Gardner's motivational theory is that his influence has been so strong, it has not allowed other researchers’ opinions to be heard (Williams, 1994). Integrative motivation may be important in a second language context such as learning French in North America, but could assume an instrumental orientation in other situations (Dörnyei, 1994; Williams, 1994:78), such as learning English in the Philippines (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) or Bombay (Lukmani, 1972). Skehan (1989), has respect for Gardner's empirical research, but cautions that research has not substantiated whether integrative motivation has a significant relationship to achievement.

Educational psychologists believe the motivation to learn is predisposed by the task itself, performance goals, the environment, class room management, and by learning approaches. The terms instrumental and integrative would not be understood among educational psychologists. Terminology they are more familiar with are extrinsic, intrinsic and some discuss achievement motivation.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsically motivated people experience enjoyment in the pursuit of their interests and in the absence of external rewards or controls (Deci & Ryan, 1985:34; Pintrich, 2000 ). Learning to socialise is a natural step towards development and it is also an important factor for assimilation into society (Deci & Ryan, 1985:116). External values and beliefs become internalised and thus intrinsic. An accommodation to external values and the environment allows the individual to pursue self-determined interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985:130).

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

Achievement motivation is different from intrinsic or extrinsic motivation because it includes the expectancy and incentive value of success (Harter & Connell, 1984). Achievement motivation is where the individual assumes control over the learning situation and does what is necessary to get what he /
she wants. Empirical research has shown it retains information longer than surface motivation (Maehr & Archer, 1987), but this is not indicated when cases are examined immediately after studying the target material (Snow, 1989:445).

**EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION**


Different learning and performance goals produce different results. Performance-goal children are satisfied with outcomes where they believe they have displayed their abilities. Learning-goal children are satisfied with outcomes where they have exerted effort in pursuit of their goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dweck, 1986:1042; Good & Brophy, 1995; Pintrich, 2000). Strenuous challenges can negatively effect performance-goal-oriented students. These children need to believe their abilities are substantial before attempting a challenging task and will normally choose tasks that ‘conceal their ability or protect it from negative evaluation’ (Dweck, 1986:1041; See Table 1 below).

Table 1.Two Goal Orientations; Approach and Avoidance Forms (Pintrich, 2000:477)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approach focus</th>
<th>Avoidance focus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery orientation</td>
<td>Focus on mastering task, learning understanding.</td>
<td>Focus on avoiding misunderstanding, avoiding not learning or not mastering task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of self-improvement standards, progress, deep understanding of task.</td>
<td>Use of not being wrong standards, not doing it incorrectly relative to task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>Focus on being superior.</td>
<td>Focus on avoiding inferiority.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of normative standards; i.e. getting best or highest grades, being top or best performer in class.</td>
<td>Use of normative standards of not getting the worst grades, being lowest performer in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-enhancing ego orientation, relative ability goal.</td>
<td>Self defeating ego orientation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS**

Co-operative learning defines and gives recognition to the classroom goal structure and provides group cohesiveness. The weaker students are supported by the more proficient students who assist their weaker classmates, achieve self determination and learning autonomy (Brophy, 1985; Dörnyei, 1997).

Task-based instruction requires the student to become expert on a particular aspect of the course objectives. It asks for target language usage in a real and natural manner (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Skehan, 1998). There is a recognisable goal (which everyone understands).

Table 2. Sources of Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation

| Intrinsic Motivation | Deep & Achieving Approaches | Extrinsic Motivation | Surface Approaches | Applications |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|

English Australia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>Meaningful tasks with clear expectations</th>
<th>The task is valued and worth doing</th>
<th>Busy work is not valued</th>
<th>An excessive workload particularly 'busy work'</th>
<th>Task oriented work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Positive associations of pleasure</td>
<td>Establishing a positive classroom environment</td>
<td>Negative reinforcement (such as threats of punishments)</td>
<td>Use of negative reinforcement</td>
<td>Explain periodically what and where the class is in regards to the curriculum and course goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>The right mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar</td>
<td>Applying to new or untaught areas or topics Learner activity.</td>
<td>Unpleasant memories</td>
<td>Tasks that are either too easy or too difficult to complete</td>
<td>Design tasks and tests where a simple answer is not sufficient. The responses require a manipulation of multiple language skills and cognition to complete. The responsibility of meeting the course goals falls on the students. The instructor is facilitator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Ownership of task</td>
<td>Responsibility neither given nor encouraged on assigned tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Social reinforcement (such as praise from admired figures to model and imitate)</td>
<td>Interaction with others Hierarchical interaction Peer interaction</td>
<td>Distrustful surveillance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Divide class into study groups of three to four people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Public recognition of task proficiency</td>
<td>Inappropriate rewards that are not related to the given task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course grade is based on participation, attendance, written &amp; oral material, attitude and tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Respected rated levels of competence</td>
<td>A person has a good chance of completing the given task</td>
<td>Excessive and inappropriate assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Test only what has been covered in class or students know they are responsible for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Instructor has a well structured knowledge base</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have pedagogical standards concerning grades and attendance, etc. Have personal standards concerning personal appearance, attendance and completion of tasks. Follow a methodological plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Defining the curriculum goals appropriately and enacting them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Define and discuss curriculum and course goals in class with students at beginning of term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Well-planned and researched directions clearly established

Confusing demands or irrelevant requirements

Give hand outs describing evaluation policies, testing and presentation schedules and any other material students will be responsible for. Explain possible tests formats. Give examples of acceptable and unacceptable material. Follow a comprehensive yearly plan. Design tasks that allow students to learn while completing them.

Elaborating knowledge

Challenging misconceptions

Note:
1. The above listed items are a mixture of Biggs & Moore (1993), Skehan (1989; 1998b) and Stribling (2000).

Goal-setting, tests and exams can be powerful motivators in long-lasting behaviours such as language learning and as markers of progress. Goals should be specific, hard but achievable, accepted by the students and accompanied by feedback (Brophy, 1985; Dörnyei, 1994:276; Biggs & Moore, 1993).

A controlling environment can hinder intrinsic development. Extrinsic controls produce rote learning, diminish conceptual learning and hinder the understanding of a particular task. It can also affect other educational factors. When teachers are pressured by administrators, when their own autonomy in the classroom is not supported, they will become more controlling with the children. (Deci & Ryan, 1985:261–267; Williams, 1994).

Brophy concurs stressing also the importance of education as a means of socialization. He is concerned with how the environment affects learning

Table 3. Attributes of Successful Teachers (Good & Brophy, 1995)

1. Social Attractiveness - a positive disposition, emotional maturity, and sincerity.
2. Ego Strength - self-confidence, listens without being defensive and avoids win-lose conflicts.
3. Realistic Perceptions - open-minded and tolerant.
4. Enjoyment of Students – friendly, not familiar; and able to relax with the group without becoming a group member.
5. Teacher Roles – understands and is at ease in fulfilling them.
6. Patience and Determination with difficult students.
7. Acceptance of Individuality, but not of inappropriate behaviour.
8. The Ability to State and Act Firm – has clear expectations, keeps rules to a minimum and is able to relax them.

CONCLUSION

Language acquisition motivational research has much to offer the language classroom. Clear definitions and an understanding of motivation theoretical constructs within an educational psychology framework can assist both students and teachers achieve their goals.

hiser-stribling@xtra.co.nz

English Australia
REFERENCES


Lukmani, Y. M. (1972,). Motivation to learn and language proficiency. Language Learning 22 (2), 261-273. (Dec)


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