



ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH: A STUDY OF FIRST YEAR ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT V.R.SIDDHARTHA ENGINEERING COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT



Learning a Foreign Language is a difficult thing for most of the people because of the various factors that affect the process of learning.

Researchers have often stressed the importance of motivation, self-confidence and anxiety in second language learning. Among these factors Motivation is considered to be one of the most important factors, which affect the learner's language input and intake.

The main aim of this study is to understand the factors that affect language learning. This study also examined the type of English language learning motivation (Instrumental or Integrative) of twenty First year Engineering students studying in V.R.Siddhartha Engineering College. A modified Gardner's Attitude / Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to collect the data. The data were analysed and the main findings of the study show that the students studying Engineering were more 'instrumentally' motivated to learn English.

Keywords: *Motivation, Instrumental Motivation, Integrative Motivation*



INTRODUCTION

Why do people feel the need to learn a second language, what motivates them? For a few countries where a number of languages are spoken, the answer seems to be obvious. But for the rest of the world, the demand for learning a foreign language, especially English, seems to be growing at an exponential rate (Crystal, 2003).

"Learning a foreign language always entails learning a second culture to some degree, even if you never actually set foot in the foreign county where the language is spoken. Language and culture are bound up with each other and interrelated. People do not exist in a vacuum any more than club members exist without a club. They are a part of some framework: a family, a community, a country, a set of traditions, a storehouse of knowledge, or a way of looking at the universe. In short every person is a part of a culture. And everyone uses a language to express that culture, to operate within that tradition and to categorize the universe. So, if you are planning to carry on some sort of communication with people who speak or write a given language, you need to understand the culture out of which the language emerges." (Brown, 1989, p. 65)

Learning a foreign language depends on various factors like cognitive factors (language aptitude, learning strategies), affective factors (attitudes, motivation, self confidence and anxiety), metacognitive factors, and demographic factors.

"Learners affective factors are obviously of crucial importance in accounting for individual differences in learning outcomes. Whereas learners beliefs about language learning are likely to be fairly stable, their affective states tend to be volatile, affecting not only overall progress but responses to particular learning activities on a day-by day and even moment-by-moment basis." (Ellis, 1994, p. 483)

It can be said that affective factors determine the proportion of language learners input and intake. The affective factors include certain emotions, such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and so on in the process of acquiring a second language. These negative emotions prevent efficient processing of the language input, and on the contrary, the positive emotions promote the

efficiency of the process. When language learners with high motivation, self-confidence and a low level of anxiety, they have low filters and so receive and take in plenty of input. On the other hand, learners with low motivation, little self-confidence and a high level of anxiety have high filters and therefore obtain little input.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is considered to be one of the most important factors, which affect the learner's language input and intake. H. Brown (2001, P. 34) defined it as, "Motivation is the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit." Gardner (1985) explained it as a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitude towards learning the language.

The concept of motivation has been defined in various ways. Ramage (1990, p. 189)) pointed out that "identifying students motivations for foreign language learning was a prerequisite to developing interventions that promote interest and continuation in foreign language study". Williams and Burden (1997) mentioned the role of motivation in sustaining interest and investing time and energy into putting in the necessary effort to achieve certain goals. So, it can be said that motivation is the process by which goal-directed behavior is stimulated in language learning. It drives and directs behavior. Research shows that motivation directly and profoundly influences how often students use foreign language learning (FLL) strategies; how much input they receive in the language being learned; how high their general proficiency level becomes; and how long they persevere and maintain FLL skills after language study is over (Oxford, 1992).

ATTITUDE

Allport stated that attitude is the most powerful determinants of behaviour. Oroujlou & Vahedi (2011) emphasize that it is important to realize that it is mandatory to take into account the place of the English language in the world today as the foundation of an attitude towards this language. Negative attitude and lack of motivation of learners can become obstacles to language learning.



Therefore, it takes positive attitude to increase students' efficiency in foreign language classes.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is considered to be another significant factor, which profoundly influences the learner's language performance. The students who lack confidence are usually found to be extremely fearful and timid, reluctant to express their opinions and even unable to utter a complete meaningful sentence in class. H. Brown (2001, p. 23) phrased this factor as "I can do it" or self-esteem principle, i.e., a learner believes in his or her own ability to accomplish the task. "The eventual success that learners attain in a task is at least partially a factor of their belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing the task." Of all the possible characteristics that can affect language learning, self-confidence is very important for the following reasons. The first reason is that self-confidence will encourage a person to try new learning. One would be willing to take some risks in order to be successful. Another reason is that a confident person rarely gives up. With these abilities, a confident student can succeed in language learning. Finally, the studies of self-confidence have meaningful implications for language teachers. What should be solved is how to help students to establish and strengthen their self-confidence when they learn the second language. Successful language learning only takes place in an environment where learner's values and positive attitudes are promoted, where learners approach learning with confidence and joy, where learners can use the target language at ease. Therefore, teachers should spare no efforts to create conditions that can be conducive to student's self-confidence.

ANXIETY

Anxiety is another particular affective factor. It is one of the most prominent and pervasive emotions. According to Arnold (2000: 59), "language anxiety ranks high among factors influencing language learning, regardless of whether the setting is informal (learning language „on the streets) or formal (in the classroom)." According to Krashen (1981, P. 23), "The students who feel at ease in the classroom and likes the teacher may seek out more

intake by volunteering ... and may not be more accepting of the teacher as a source of input."

Robert Gardner and his colleagues have proposed that the knowledge of the other community's language might serve as a mediating factor and developed the socio educational model for that reason.

Gardner's (1985) socio-educational approach, which attempts to identify the issues that stimulate the individuals into learning a second language, has been one of the most influential of the models that deal with language learning. In that study, he (1985, p.10) defined motivation as, "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity." Gardner's socio educational model is based on two orientations and three components. The orientations are called instrumental and integrative and the components motivational intensity or the effort, desire to learn the language or the want and attitudes towards learning the language. The orientations are precursors of the components and their role is to create motivation. The integrative orientation involves language learners' attitude toward the community of the target language, their desire to interrelate with the members of this community and their desire to become members of this community. This characteristic was amended later as "individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). The second orientation Gardner (1985) identified was the instrumental orientation which encompassed practical reasons for learning a foreign language such as job prospects or credits for a course.

According to the socio-educational model, people learned a foreign language because they wanted to communicate with other communities whose culture they were interested in or to whom they wanted to relate (see, e.g. Gardner, 1985; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Schuman, 1986) or because of a practical aspiration such as a promotion or even a better grade or job (Gardner, 1985). This may be true for a handful of countries but for the rest of the world. English has become practically a



global language and in more than 100 countries, learning a foreign language has become almost synonymous with learning English (Crystal, 2003)

Dörnyei & Kormos (2000) found the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations was quite distorted. Contrary to these results, Csizer and Dörnyei (2005) not only found distinct instrumental and integrative orientations but also that instrumental orientation was the antecedent of integrative orientation.

In order to ascertain the motivational orientations of 20 students pursuing their B.Tech toward learning English, a study was carried out in V.R.Siddhartha Engineering College using a questionnaire.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to identify whether the first year engineering student's motivation for English is more instrumental or integrative.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The study was conducted in V.R.Siddhartha engineering colleges. A questionnaire was administered in to 20 first year Engineering students seeking to identify their motivational orientations.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The research strategy that the study utilizes is the descriptive method as it intends to present facts concerning the nature and status of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study and to describe present conditions, systems based on the impressions or reactions of the respondents of the research.

The researcher used the quantitative method in analyzing the data collected. A qualitative method of research has also been used by the researcher to represent the perceptions of engineering students in learning English during interviews conducted, apart from the survey conducted through questionnaires. Conclusions are drawn by triangulating the data and the information received.

CONTENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

For this study the questionnaire is adapted partly from that of Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), originally developed by R.C. Gardner (2004) with minor modifications. The questionnaire contained 12 items to elicit information from the students. It consists of two parts. Part one consists of questions 1-7 dealing with the back ground information of the target group participants. Part two consists of questions 8-12 inquiring about various factors of attitude and motivation for learning English.

MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATION

In item 8 and 9 the students were asked to give their rankings to the alternatives mentioned using Likert five point scale as they refer to them. The following instructions were given to them. Read the statement and rank the alternatives as they refer to you. Mark 1 to 'strongly disagree', 2 to 'disagree', 3 to 'neutral', 4 to 'agree' and 5 to 'strongly agree'.

The statement was 'I am learning English because'.

The alternatives were:

- a. I think it will be useful in getting a good job
- b. It will help me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life
- c. I think it will help me to understand English
- d. It will be helpful to interact more easily with native speakers of English

To the Statement 'a' of the 8th question i.e., I am learning English because, I think it will be useful in getting a good job, 10 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 8 students mentioned that they agree and remaining 2 students were neutral about their answer.

To the Statement 'b' of the 8th question, It will help me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life, 6 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 4 students mentioned that they agree and remaining 9 students were neutral about their answer. One student mentioned that he strongly disagreed with the statement.

To the Statement 'c' of the 8th question, I think it will help me to understand English, 10 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 9



students mentioned that they agree and 1 student was neutral about his answer.

To the Statement 'd' of the 8th question, It will be helpful to interact more easily with native speakers of English, 14 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 6 students mentioned that they agree with the statement.

As the Ninth question a statement, 'knowledge of English will help me' was given with 10 alternatives and Likert five point scale was used to elicit the information from the participants.

- a. To talk to people in my country whose language is unknown to me
- b. To get social recognition
- c. To go to foreign countries for studies
- d. To think and behave as English people do
- e. To write reports of the experiment and project work and for studies in India

To the Statement 'a' of the 9th question i.e., knowledge of English will help me to talk to people in my country whose language is unknown to me, 12 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 6 students mentioned that they agree and remaining 4 students were neutral about their answer.

To the Statement 'b' of the 9th question i.e., knowledge of English will help me to get social recognition, 4 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 7 students mentioned that they agree 6 students were neutral about their answer two students disagreed with the statement and one student strongly disagreed with the statement.

To the Statement 'c' of the 9th question i.e., knowledge of English will help me to go to foreign countries for studies, 8 students mentioned that they strongly agree, 8 students mentioned that they agree 3 students were neutral about their answer and one student strongly disagreed with the statement.

To the Statement 'd' of the 9th question i.e., knowledge of English will help me to think and behave as English people do, none of them strongly agreed with the statement, 8 students mentioned that they agree 10 students were neutral about their answer one student disagreed with the statement and one student strongly disagreed with the statement.

To the Statement 'e' of the 9th question i.e., knowledge of English will help me To write reports of the experiment and project work and for studies in India, 10 of them strongly agreed with the statement, 7 students mentioned that they agree and 3 students were neutral about their answer.

Questions 10, 11, 12 were specifically included in the questionnaire to ascertain the type of motivation. For the tenth question, If English were not needed for securing a good job I would have learnt yet, three options were given to students i.e., option a. Agree, b. Disagree, c. Neutral. 11 students out of 20 agreed with the statement. 7 students disagreed with the statement and 2 students were neutral about their commitment.

The eleventh question is the sequel to the tenth one which tries to understand the reasons for their agreement to the tenth question; three options were given to them. Option a. it is useful for my studies, b. it will help me to settle in English speaking countries and in MNCs. Option c. It will help me to get social recognition. 11 students out of 20 opted 'a' as their answer. 7 students opted 'b' as their choice for agreement and 2 students mentioned that learning English will help them to get social recognition.

For the twelfth question, I do not like English but I speak it because it is helpful, three options were given to students i.e., option a. Agree, b. Disagree, c. Neutral. 5 students out of 20 agreed with the statement. 7 students disagreed with the statement and 8 students were neutral about their commitment.

The present study confirms that most of the students pursuing their engineering in this college have both 'integral' and 'instrumental' motivation in learning English. From the study it is evident that most of them learn English to be successful in their lives. It is also clear from the study that students realize that they have to learn English in order to secure good job and lead a respectful life

From my observations in the class and through my private interviews it is understood that all most all the students agree with the view that students need to be communicatively competent in English in order to secure a job. All the students



seemed to agree in the interviews that proficiency in English is launching pad to find a job and start a career, It appears that students are motivated by globalization and the realization that they have to work anywhere in the world for which English needs to be learned and improved.

CONCLUSION

Motivation is one of the most important factors in learning English. Whether it is instrumental or integrative depends on the individuals and their desire to learn English. From this study it can be concluded that first year students of Engineering have displayed more 'instrumental' factors of motivation in learning English.

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