



## **Understanding Motivation in Language Learning**

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### **Abstract**

In the sphere of education, technical courses are tailor-made mostly on practical grounds. Students of these courses are exposed to real time experience in the labs. Since learning of this sort is completely needs based seeking active involvement of the learners' cognitive abilities, it is imperative to focus on how cognition of the learners be operated. In this regard curricular practices need to be attuned as per the demands. Especially in development of materials, where student's autonomy is extensively expressed in 1) needs, 2) motivation and 3) lacks, need to be addressed effectively. The present study intends to focus on the second phenomenon, motivation, in ESP. And its inseparable relation with materials which is helpful for the learners to learn things from known to unknown. By viewing the students as the important stakeholders, it is felt essential to conduct study of this sort to upgrade the course books in regular intervals as per the demands.

**Keywords:** Motivation, English for Specific Purpose, Second Language Acquisition

### **Introduction**

Learning second language has become an inevitable need for the students, particularly in engineering education. In order to comply with the demands posed by learners teachers face multiple challenges from every possible nook and cranny. But teaching second language could be an art if the teacher has adequate exposure. There are a number of social and psychological factors working in between this need of learning a second language and the art of teaching. It is a general assumption that an outstanding analysis of linguistic components, and meticulously developed materials with appropriate teaching methods would pave smooth way in second language learning class. But when it comes into practice





it may be difficult to assume that the learning of students would be effective on par with the expectations. Beyond all the curriculum inputs, impact of an invisible factor is found enormous in the learning process. It is apparent to many practicing teachers that some poor performing students ascend drastically in learning process, and sometimes high performing students slide down unexpectedly. Observation and experience suggest that optimum achievement in second language learning is related to motivational intensity of the students.

## Theories of Motivation

As Stevick (1976) opines that “Learning particularly learning of a language is an emotional experience, and the feelings that the learning process evoke will have a crucial bearing on the success or failure of the learning.” The above comment stresses on the importance of motivation which is a psychological factor in learning.

Woodworth (1958) in *Dynamics of Behavior* says, “stimuli are respondent to or disregarded according as they are relevant or irrelevant to O’s (organism’s) ongoing activity.” Based on this view of Woodworth, motivation can be defined as the relevance of second language learning. It is the learner’s motive for attempting to acquire the second language. Pimsleur (1961) considers motivation as one of the two biggest factors in learning a second language. Motivation in second language learning can be broadly of two types: a) individual motivation and b) social motivation. The study of individual motivation in language learning again is different in relation to different age groups or different stages in the language learning. Rivers (1964) says, “different problems of motivation arise at the foreign language study.”

## Gardener Motivation Theory

The assumption that human beings always behave in rational and sensible manner has been challenged with a new dimension. This earlier paradigm demanded the learners to be the programmed computers or designed software to behave in an expected manner. But new theories challenged this tradition treating the human being as the emotional being. Emotional barriers like fears, dislikes and prejudices of the learners’ were started taken into account in the process of learning. To overcome this phenomenon motivation factor has been recognized as a primary factor.





This theory deals with the relationship between cognitive and effective aspects or emotional aspects of the learner. Cognitive aspect of the learner always drags conscious efforts on learning. But, the cognitive aspect is deeply rooted in the emotional reaction to initiate the process of learning.

Gardener and Lambert (1972) have contributed a lot with motivational theory to the educational practices. Initially they worked on the French speaking bilinguals in Canada. They identified there are two types of motivations i.e., instrumental motivation and integrative motivation which influence learning process. Instrumental motivation is driven by external factors like professional or personal needs of the learner. In a way it creates a compulsion on the learner to learn something. English for Specific Purposes based on this theory. Integrated motivation leads the learner to learn something as per his/her internal desire. It is advocated by many educationists that integrated motivation is an ideal one in the learning, since it is an inbuilt characteristic which enables learner to move forward without depending on any external factors.

In the instrumental motivation benefits of the learning need to be articulated to capture the attention of the learner. Here, curriculum aspects need to condition the paradigm of the learner towards learning process. The role of materials and teacher play a crucial role in this environment.

Integrated motivation need not have any external force to push the students towards learning. It creates ample autonomy in their learning process. There would be sufficient scope to develop higher order thinking skills among the learners which are more beneficial than the results of instrumental motivation.

### **Method of Investigation**

The present study tries to examine the motivation factors related to the material aspect. This study based on Gardener's Motivation theory. Random sampling is made from the engineering graduate second year students in Hyderabad. There are forty samples from different colleges. It has recorded the students' first year English language learning experience. The research tool used in this study is a questionnaire which has ten items. First four questions aim at instrumental motivation factor and rest of the six on integrated





motivation. Among the later six questions, three questions focus on the role of the teachers and rest of the three on role of materials inducing motivation in the learners. It examines the reaction of the learner towards the syllabus prescribed for them with regards to their motivational factors. As per the hypotheses whether the course books are appealing to them which could evoke integrated motivation or were the students depending on external factors to learn? In the case of instrumental motivation which factor had more impact? What was the teachers' role when there was a gap between cognitive and emotional aspects of the learners? What sort of material the students are interested in.

## 1.0. Analysis

### 1.1. Self-Motivation of the Students

Ninety five Percent of the students expressed motive behind their language learning is to get a job. With this, it can be opined the overall language learning process is driven by instrumental motivation; however there are few exemptions to this view. Like thirty percent of the students depend on their own sources in finding of the meanings, and almost all the students watch English movies, listen to English songs, read other English fiction for pleasure, while doing these activities their motivation is absolutely integrative.

### 1.2 Teachers' Role

In instrumental motivation it was found that teachers' role was not optimum as per the demands of the ESP classroom. Ninety percent of the students expressed that their teachers have the habit of correcting their mistakes immediately, which indicates teachers' intolerance towards errors, which may have adverse effect on learner's performance. Thirty percent of the students expressed they are ignored or tend to be ignored by the teachers in the classroom interactions. Eighty percent of the students state that their teachers do not use any sort of teaching aids in the class room.

### 1.3 Materials' role

Seventy percent of the students want articles pertaining to their technical domain to be the part of the syllabus. This finding substantiates the opinion that junior level academic textbooks are excellent examples of texts which are based on authentic materials. Ninety





percent of the students feel that the content in the syllabus is familiar to them. Eighty percent of the students consider the existing material is not sufficient to serve their purpose. Sixty percent of the students read the textbooks for the pleasure. As engineering syllabus is needs based, the material included in the syllabus is tailor made according to the needs of the learners, so these adult learners view to be taken into the account while developing the materials.

**2.0. Discussion**

When a learner is reading some text, motivation type will be varied according to the needs. For example when reading a particular piece of writing prescribed in the textbook for examination purpose differs from reading the same text during the vacation. In the first instance the learner is compelled to read, whereas in the second instance he/she reads or wants to read the same text for pleasure. Furthermore, in the first instance type of motivation of the learner is instrumental whereas in second instance it is integrated.

As many educationists argue that integrated motivation is the positive one which increases the higher order thinking skills of the learner. But the present study affirms that despite the student community has ample potential to learn through their integrated motivation, their employability or professional needs are altering their integrated motivation into instrumental motivation to face cutthroat competitive environment which is created by present day professional milieu.

**3.0. Conclusion**

It is dire need for the learners to acquire all-round development by enhancing higher order skills. Curriculum even within lot of social and cultural limitations there is an amount of scope to harness integrated motivation among the learners.

**Appendix I**

**Questionnaire**

**Name:** .....





**Branch & Year:** .....

**Name of the Institute:** .....

**Note: Please read the questions given below, and underline your choice in the given options.**

1. What makes you to attend an English class?
  - a) To improve my grades in the exam.
  - b) To improve my communication skills for a better job.
  - c) I am interested in learning new things.
  
2. What do you do, when you come across a new word in the course book?
  - a) I ignore
  - b) I ask my teacher
  - c) I find meaning in the dictionary
  
3. Do you ever feel to read any lesson in your English textbook just for pleasure?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Can't say
  
4. Listening to English music, watching English movies, and reading English books: how frequently you do these activities for pleasure (time pass or fun)?
  - a) Never
  - b) Occasionally
  - c) Frequently
  
5. How do your language teachers react, when you commit a mistake?
  - a) They correct spontaneously, whenever I commit mistakes.
  - b) They ignore
  - c) They criticize
  
6. How frequently you are asked to interact in the class?
  - a) Never
  - b) Some times
  - c) Very frequently
  
7. Do your English teachers use teaching aids (audio, videos, and LCD projectors) in the class (not in the lab)?



- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Can't Say
8. What sort of material would appeal to you in the language course?
- a) Contemporary fiction to have a relief from regular classes.
  - b) Articles on science and technology to upgrade my knowledge.
  - c) Some classics like poetry, prose, drama etc.
9. Are the concepts in the English textbook familiar to you?
- a) No
  - b) Some what
  - c) Completely familiar
10. Do you feel, the present material in the textbook would fulfill your expected needs?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Can't Say

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