

Factors affecting language acquisition in the digital switch

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ABSTRACT

These aspects motivational and affective effects of language learning have largely been neglected by researchers despite having a monumental influence on the acquisition of language. For this paper, I would like to address the roles of motivation and affective effects on second language acquisition by addressing the following questions: 1) What are the roles of motivation and affective effects in language acquisition? 2) What are the triggers of these effects and how they affect students learning process? 3) What can teachers do to raise or alleviate these effects for the betterment of language learning? For the first question, this paper will explore the role of motivation in language acquisition by using citations from Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2014), Meniado (2019), Dörnyei, Z. (1990), etc. To answer the second question, the paper will discuss the prompts and input for various affective effects and their influence on students through Garrett & Young (2009). The effects on language would also be discussed using study by Pavlenko & Dewaele (2004), Dewaele (2005), Tran, Thu H. (2013) etc. For the final question, the paper will provide suggestions and approaches to address the motivational and affective elements of language acquisition from Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2014) as well as tasks and strategies to raise motivation from both teachers and students Dörnyei (2003).

Keywords: motivations, second language acquisition, affect

1. INTRODUCTION

proficient English speakers increases to accommodate the volume of trade and administrative tasks conducted daily. Many research and experiments in the past tried to discuss and explain different elements involved in the language acquisition process, many teaching methods and approaches were discussed and experimented to determine the appropriate and effective solution to teaching language. Kramsch (2013) [1] revealed that some students' learning experience varied as some described their language learning process as "traveling to a different place" while others compared their experience to "undergoing a painful medical procedure". Garrett & Young (2009) [2] pointed out that affective reactions to learning provide information about distinct learning behaviors and students' state of mind during the language lessons. Despite the instrumental impacts motivational elements and affective effect have on students, very few studies focused on the influence of motivational and affective effects (feelings, emotions, experience, etc.) on language learning and second language acquisition (SLA). Thus, the purpose of this paper is

to distinguish the function of motivation and affective effects, their triggers and influence on learners and how can teachers manipulate these variables for the betterment of the students while adapting new technologies in their lessons by addressing the following questions:

- 1) What are "motivation" and "affect" in language learning?
- 2) What are the roles of motivation and affective effects in language acquisition?
- 3) What are the triggers of these effects and how they affect students learning process?
- 4) What can teachers do to raise or alleviate these effects for the betterment of language learning?

2. WHAT ARE "MOTIVATION" AND "AFFECT" IN LANGUAGE LEARNING?

The term "motivation" is used commonly by both teachers and students when referring to their success or failure in language learning and are usually taken by granted. The ambiguity of the term and people's vague perception of motivation

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go against what it is defined in psychology and applied linguistic fields. The term “motivation” has been commonly divided into integrative (intrinsic) motivation and instrumental (extrinsic) motivation.

Integrative or intrinsic motivation refers to learners' desire to integrate with the target culture (i.e. getting married or immigration) while students' instrumental (extrinsic) motivation is the needs of using second languages to achieve certain goals (i.e. getting promoted or applying to universities). All of these factors influence and create different learning behaviors among students. Tran (2013) [3] looked at motivation from different viewpoints, motivation could be seen as a “product of external forces through reinforcement”, derived from behavioral responses or conscious choices humans made on their own accord. Another perspective is that “motivation is based upon the premise that each person is motivated in a different way” (Williams & Burden, 1997) [4]

Affective effects refer to the emotional responses which students experience throughout the learning process. These were largely neglected and omitted by psychologists during most of the last century as “Emotion was at the opposite end from reason, easily the finest human ability, and reason was presumed to be entirely independent from emotion” (Damasio, 1999, cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014)[5]. Affective appraisal of stimulus is believed to be the center of cognition and drives our decision-making processes. In other words, positive experience encourages people to seek for the same stimuli in the future while unpleasant ones result in avoidance, by experiencing the world themselves, people develop their own preference and avoidance for different stimulations.

3. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF “MOTIVATION” AND “AFFECTIVE EFFECTS” IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

To the students, the classroom is an interactive community of people, and they would go to great lengths to preserve their status within that community. A situation perceived as threatening by the students to their membership and status in the classroom can hamper their willingness to create and preserve social affiliations. In spite of this, not many studies of SLA have been done to

address student's emotions and feelings for their language learning experience. Bailey's experiment on students' anxiety and competitiveness in 1983 revealed that peer pressure and comparisons between themselves and others resulted in the students considering themselves as inferior. Bailey also pointed out that her desire for acknowledgment from their peers caused more stress and anxiety than her fear for the teacher's approval. This had a more severe effect when she compared herself to those who she thought was more proficient than her in language classes.

Pavlenko and Dewaele (2004) [6] investigated the influence of affective effects in bilinguals and discovered that to express feelings, they would choose the language which they shared the strongest emotional bond. Dewaele also commented in this article that focusing on the affect elements could encourage new teaching materials and approaches that emphasized on “communication of emotion” to promote sociocultural competence and overall language acquisition.

Regarding motivation in SLA, different studies examined and seemed to have different takes on the importance of motivation. It seems evident that motivational students are more likely to enroll in classes. Dörnyei's (1990) [7] measured motivational elements against Course Achievement, Course Attendance, Further Enrollment and Extracurricular Language Use (i.e. learners' self-report on the effort they invested to communicate using the target language) to shed light on how they were affected by motivation. Despite the low correlations, he discovered many distinct and significant trends. Course Achievement and Further Enrollment were reported to have a highly positive correlation only with Need for Achievement, making it the main element of motivation in language learning. Dörnyei's explanation for this was that the influences mainly derived from teachers' personalities and classroom interactions despite the differences in students' motivations.

As stated by Dörnyei (2005) [8]: “...motivation provides the primarily impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent”. This, in other words,

suggested that many students attain a second language despite the differences in aptitude, students lacking motivation even though they possess excellent academic performance and results would fail to attain long-term goals. Zareian & Jodaei (2015) [9] pointed out that motivation can compensate for students' learning abilities in second language learning.

4. WHAT ARE THE TRIGGERS OF THESE EFFECTS AND HOW THEY AFFECT STUDENTS LEARNING PROCESS?

Garrett & Young's (2009) [2] study on Garrett's own language learning experience to give explanations for how affects were formed among students. The authors also revealed the topics that generated the highest affective response rates, which were language awareness, teacher voice, social relations and culture learning. In Garrett's case, it is noticeable that social relation and language awareness accounted for the highest response rate for negative comments. She remarked that she felt competitive and "threaten" when comparing herself to other students, as the class went on, she felt more and more insecure when speaking in front of her peers. Until the end of the course, she still felt inferior when comparing herself to other students and was still not comfortable when communicating in the target language despite her success on quizzes and tests. It is also interesting that Garrett felt more stressed and was more intimidated by classroom relations due to her fear of speaking in class or pair/group work as she did not feel comfortable when comparing herself to others who she considered higher in proficiency. This goes in line with Bailey's, 1983, cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014) [5] commented on how students' self-awareness of their own learning community can have detriment effects on their self-images and emotions towards the language learning experience and language acquisition.

Motivation in SLA is an umbrella and encompass many aspects of psychology and applied linguistic. Dörnyei (2001) [10] proposed a few aspects of motivation including social motivation and motivation and self-determination theory. Social motivation, comprised sources of influence derived from sociocultural aspects rather than the individuals. This means that the needs of the community or the community itself influence the

mindset and "motivation" of the person. Another prevalent theory as proposed by self-determination theory which includes the distinctive differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. This theory places regulators on the two types of motivation to determine how it changes from intrinsic to extrinsic. As a result, five categories were identified including:

"...external regulation (i.e., motivation coming entirely from external sources such as rewards or threats); introjected regulation (i.e. externally imposed rules that students accept as norms they should following order not to feel guilty); identified regulation (i.e., engaging in an activity because the individual highly values it and sees its usefulness); integrated regulation (i.e., involving choiceful behavior that is fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs, and identity); and pure regulation" (Dörnyei, 2001) [10].

The division between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can become blurry at times, learners may have "mixed motives" (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015) [9] meaning that he/she has both types of motivation at the same time. Zareian & Jodaei's proposal for mixed motivation was backed up by Dörnyei's (2005) [8] notion of various types of motivation are continuities of one another. Ryan & Deci (2000, cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014) [5] came up with a model to explain the interaction between the types of motivation, one end of the two extremes is amotivation or the absent of "self-determination" (Levesque, Copeland & Sutcliffe, 2008, cited in Setiyadi, Mahpul & Wicaksono, 2019) [11] and at the other end is intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation floating in the middle. Ryan & Deci (2000a, cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014) [5] based their claim on the argument that amotivation people's actions are without any intentions and this also transfer to their behaviors. Their claim for the amotivation spectrum can be related to Gardner's (2001, cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014) [5] idea that students may not have neither type of motivation at all. A person learning language just for the sake of learning language cannot be considered as motivated entity.

Pawlak's (2012) [12] experiment with 28 high school students learning English revealed great

presence of intrinsic motivation which could be observed as greater determination by the participants as the lesson went on. Extrinsic motivation also role was also significant, especially in the case of low-performing students whose top priority was passing the class. The level of motivation also translates to students' willingness to participate in the class which directly affected their leaning behaviors and language acquisition.

Dörnyei introduced goal theory, which came from educational psychology to further understand its effect on students and learning process Students' goals also play a key role in influencing students' learning behaviors and their actions during the learning process. He pointed out that goal and motivation correlate with each other as they both

decide the concentration and mental investment of a person in a particular task. They also influence a person's decision to execute a task and dictate how long the individual will carry out that task as well as the approaches that person uses.

5. WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO RAISE OR ALLEVIATE THESE EFFECTS FOR THE BETTERMENT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Due to the unique characteristics and ununified definition among different fields, it would be impossible to devise a "one size fits all" approach to address motivation and affect among students. Tran (2013) [3] reviewed Williams & Burden (1997) [4] and pointed out key suggestions for classroom teachers in regard of student's motivation in Table 1.

Table 1. Williams & Burden's (1997) teaching suggestions (adapted from Tran, 2013) [12]

- Teachers have to be cognizant of initiating and sustaining motivation. What initiates and what sustains motivation has not been clearly stated in the literature.
- They need to discuss with learners the reason for carrying out classroom activities.
- Teachers should involve learners in making decisions related to learning the target language such as learning activities, the methods of teaching and learning, and the needed effort for learning.
- It would be wise for teachers to involve learners in setting learning goals, as learners will be able to develop feelings of control and autonomy in learning.
- Teachers should recognize people as individuals by allowing them to learn in ways that are personal and significant to them.
- Teachers need to help learners build up individuals' beliefs in themselves.
- Teachers should help students develop internal beliefs which are the feelings that one is the cause of one's own actions and that one is in control of the results of one's actions.
- Teachers need to help learners move toward a mastery-oriented style because those who are mastery oriented are often in control of their actions and manage to find ways to enhance their performance and to succeed in an activity.
- It is of great importance for teachers to create a supportive learning environment.

Dörnyei's (2001) [10] suggestions for teaching practices was categorizing them in 4 groups: creating basic motivation conditions, generating

initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive self-evaluation. These are comprised in Table 2.

Table 2. Dörnyei's (2001) motivational teaching suggestions (Tran, 2013) [12]

Creating the basic motivational conditions
1. Teachers need to demonstrate and talk about their own enthusiasm for the course material and how it affects them personally.
2. They need to take the students' learning very seriously.
3. They need to develop a personal relationship with their students.
4. They need to develop a collaborative relationship with the students' parents.
5. They need to create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom.
6. They need to promote the development of group cohesiveness.
7. They need to formulate group norms explicitly, and have them discussed and accepted by learners.
8. They need to have group norms consistently observed.
Generating initial motivation
9. Teachers can promote the students' language-related values by presenting peer role models.
10. They can raise the students' intrinsic interest in the process of second language learning.
11. They can promote 'integrative' value by encouraging a positive and open-minded disposition toward the second language, its speakers, and toward foreignness in general.
12. They can promote the students' awareness of the instrumental values associated with the knowledge of a second language.
13. They can increase the students' expectancy of success in particular tasks and in learning in general.
14. They can increase the students' goal-orientedness by formulating explicit class goals accepted by them.
15. They can make the curriculum and the teaching materials relevant to the students.
16. They can help to create realistic learner beliefs.
Maintaining and protecting motivation
17. Teachers should make learning more stimulating and enjoyable by breaking the monotony of classroom events.
18. They should make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the students by increasing the attractiveness of the tasks.
19. They should make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the students by enlisting them as active task participants.
20. They should present and administer tasks in a motivating way.
21. They should use goal-setting methods in their classroom.
22. They should use contracting methods with their students to formalize their goal commitment.
23. They should provide the students with regular experiences of success.
24. They should build their students' confidence by offering regular encouragement.
25. They should help diminish language anxiety by removing or reducing the anxiety-provoking elements in the learning environment.
26. They should build their students' confidence in their learning abilities by teaching them various learner strategies.

27. They should allow the students to maintain a positive social image while engaged in the learning tasks.
28. They should increase student motivation by promoting cooperation among the students.
29. They should increase student motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy.
30. They should increase the students' self-motivating capacity.
Encouraging positive self-evaluation
31. Teachers ought to promote effort attributions in their students.
32. They ought to provide students with positive information feedback.
33. They ought to increase student satisfaction.
34. They ought to offer rewards in a motivational manner.
35. They ought to use grades in a motivating manner, reducing as much as possible their demotivating impact.

Sharing the same importance with motivation, affects also require different approaches as affective elements of language learning can be responsible for students' avoidance or excitement, influencing their cognitive and lower order processes (Garrett & Young, 2009) [2], the differences in emotions and feelings among students multiplies as each students has their own unique response to the lesson and the teaching method. The findings in their 2009 study suggested that: "... the social static pressure of distant communities and immediate communities greatly influenced this learner's affective responses to her language learning experience.". Their theory placed emphasis on the importance of cultural knowledge in communication and social relations in the classroom. Social relations can have propounded impact on students' language learning experience. Garrett mentioned that by working with others, she felt more successful and it affected her well-being in a positive way.

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING

In conclusion, motivation and affect effects have a tremendous goal in the success of student's language learning and even more so when online teaching has becoming more and more prevalent in the curriculum. The online classroom has become its own "microcosm" and requires both teachers and students to regulate and adapt. But it also provides another tool for teachers to revitalize learners' motivation: games and interactive online utilities can bring a breath of fresh air to the class. Most notably of which is

Kahoot, an online game-based learning platform that not only allows teachers to create fun and interactive class activities through various games, but also generate students' internal motivation. On the administrative side, these tools can help teachers gain a better understanding of their students' affects during the lesson and adapt or revise their lesson plans to best accommodate the students. Almost all online conference apps have emoji icons that users can use for various activities in the classroom, students can use these emojis to express their own feelings about any part of the lesson. On the other side of the spectrum, teachers have to pay more attention to students' interaction during online classes as their environments at home are rarely suitable for learning when compared to an actual classroom, frequent physical and mental attendance checks should be implemented to ensure lesson effectiveness and set good classroom ethics.

The effects and causes of affects and motivation mentioned in this paper were the culmination of works from professionals of different fields in order to provide a wider view of how they influence learning behavior. However, this paper has yet to investigate how affect and motivation manipulate SLA due to the lack of research and studies dedicated specifically to these elements. Despite of its limitations, administrators, materials designers and teachers at large should have a more respected view for motivation and affect for the betterment of their students, learners should be aware of their own goals and regulate their own learning behaviors to optimize their own language acquisition.

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Các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến tiếp thu ngôn ngữ trong thời kỳ chuyển đổi số

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TÓM TẮT

Sự ảnh hưởng của động lực và các yếu tố về cảm xúc lên việc học ngôn ngữ đã phần ít nhận được sự quan tâm của các nhà nghiên cứu dù rằng chúng có ảnh hưởng lớn đến quá trình tiếp thu ngôn ngữ. Nghiên cứu này sẽ đề cập đến vai trò của động lực và các yếu tố liên quan khác trong quá trình tiếp thu ngôn ngữ 2 bằng cách trả lời những câu hỏi sau: (1) Vai trò của các yếu tố này trong việc tiếp thu ngôn ngữ là gì? (2) Điều kích hoạt những yếu tố này là gì và chúng ảnh hưởng như thế nào đến việc học ngoại ngữ của học sinh? (3) Làm sao để giáo viên tận dụng hoặc giảm thiểu các tác động này để việc học ngôn ngữ trở nên thuận tiện hơn? Với câu hỏi đầu tiên, bài nghiên cứu sẽ khám phá vai trò của "động lực" trong quá trình tiếp thu ngôn ngữ qua các trích dẫn của Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2014), Meniado (2019), Dörnyei, Z. (1990) và những nguồn khác. Với câu hỏi kế tiếp, chúng ta sẽ thảo luận điều kích hoạt các yếu tố này và sự ảnh hưởng lên học sinh thông qua Garrett & Young (2009). Sự ảnh hưởng đến ngôn ngữ cũng sẽ được phân tích qua các nghiên cứu của Pavlenko & Dewaele (2004), Dewaele (2005), Tran, Thu H. (2013) và các bài nghiên cứu liên quan. Ở câu hỏi cuối cùng, bài nghiên cứu sẽ đưa ra các đề xuất và

những cách tiếp cận vấn đề động lực và các yếu tố liên quan từ Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2014), song song với đó sẽ là các hoạt động và chiến lược để cải thiện động lực của cả học sinh và giáo viên của Dörnyei (2003).

Từ khóa: *động lực, tiếp thu ngôn ngữ thứ hai, ảnh hưởng*

Received: 16/05/2023

Revised: 10/06/2023

Accepted for publication: 10/06/2023