

SPEAKING MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, SAUDI OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT: *Motivation is known as one of the most important factors that helps the learning process. In learning a language speaking is less motivated since it need the highest degree of confident among the other skills. Therefore, the focus of motivation should be directed first to speaking. This paper is an attempt to view some of the challenges that face Saudi students in speaking skill particularly. It also endeavors to discuss some implications that would help English teachers to motivate their students to overcome these challenges. Moreover, it displays the concept of motivation including its theories and models. After that, it links motivation to the speaking skills in the Saudi context as it defines the meaning of speaking skill, views its importance and how it should be dealt with in Saudi Arabia.*

KEYWORDS: motivation, speaking skill, EFL classroom and learners, Saudi

INTRODUCTION

Recently, English Language learning has been rapidly developing and improving to adjust in the dynamic global arena that is hungry for genuine and progressive education. There are many factors affecting the foreign language learning experience. One of these factors is motivation. It is one of the key issues in language teaching and learning and it has long been believed to have a good impact on success or failure of a language learner. Therefore, initiating any goal needs first to be preceded by a desire or wish that provides this action with the necessary means for implementation and accomplishment. Skills and techniques to motivate students to practice the four basic skills, especially speaking skill, are essential for language teachers. Motivating foreign language learners has been widely discussed and explored by many researchers and scholars. In fact, it is not yet clear to what extent motivation might influence language learning as it is not an easy task to accomplish. This paper attempts to review the concept of motivation, motivation theories and models and to relate motivation to the speaking skills in the context of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it seeks to clarify the meaning of speaking skill, its significance in language learning and to how it is viewed from a Saudi perspective. Finally, it endeavors to discuss some factors that might help in motivating Saudi learners to improve their English speaking skills and their communicative competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Motivation

Despite the fact that motivation is present in all discussions and aspects of academic success, its meaning, or rather definition remains ambiguous. It has met with plentiful and varied definitions while at the same time, remaining the center of a certain degree of disagreement as to its nature. Therefore, a definition of the term “motivation” is not easy to give. Generally, there are internal and external factors that stimulate

desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal. Williams and Burden (1997, p.119) state that:

Motivation is concerned with such issues as why people decide to act in certain ways and what factors influence the choices they make. It also involves decisions as to the amount of effort people are prepared to expand in attempting to achieve their goals.

So, motivation here is the most important factor in accomplishing a set of one's goals. It is the desire that animates a person to do certain things. In short, motivation is the power that makes someone move and work toward getting certain aim. Dornyei (2001,p. 17) concludes that "Motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activities."

Motivation in Second Language Learning.

Besides the previous mentioned general definition there are specific definitions for second language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) were first to shed light on the role of motivation in second language acquisition .According to them, motivation has three components: desire to achieve a goal, effort expended, and attitudes to learning a language. Gardner (1985) points out the important role of effort and desire to achieve the learning goal, "Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language." (p.10). Similarly, Ellis (1997) offers a definition in which he clarifies the role of attitudes and effective states "Motivation involves the attitudes and effective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn an L2." (p. 75)

In the past there have been many attempts to describe what motivation is and find an appropriate model to facilitate it. For instance, Freud's model that argues that human behavior is motivated by the life and death instincts , behaviorist approach which concentrates on stimulus-response associations and cognitive approach which suggests that action can only be understood in connection to unobservable cognitive factors, such as attitudes, thoughts, beliefs and interests. However, the most influential model of language motivation in the early sixties through the eighties of the previous century was that developed by Gardner. The model is known as the Socio-educational Model (Gardner, 1985). In addition, there are some other new approaches in which scholars wish to close the gap between theories of motivation in educational psychology and in the L2 field. Like when Dornyei (1994) divides motivation into three levels: language level, learner level and learning situational level. All are just examples for many theories, which made attempts to describe the nature of motivation. They all suggested useful contributions, but none really succeeded. Human behavior is very complex and so it is almost impossible to include all factors influencing it in one model. In what follows I'll try to shed the light on some of the remarkable theories of motivation.

Motivation Theories

Gardner's Socio-Educational Model

The socio-educational model of second language acquisition has a great influence on the field of second language. Gardner started to develop his socio-educational model about the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning in the1960s and has revised and updated it until the present days. He emphasizes upon the need to appreciate and define the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the contexts. This model comprises four parts named social milieu, individual differences, second

language acquisition contexts and outcomes. First, Social milieu determines the learner's beliefs about language and culture and suggests the extent to which these characteristics will influence language learning, in different contexts. Also, it involves cultural expectations of learner's language community affects child's relative degree of achievement in SLA. Second, there are two main individual differences in language learning: ability and motivation. Individuals with higher levels of ability and motivation will do better than the students with lower levels, because they will work harder and will be goal directed. According to Gardner, these four individual differences are the most influential in acquiring a second language. Third, second language acquisition can occur in formal or an informal contexts .In formal context (such as classroom training, drills and error corrections) individual differences play a primary role while in informal context (like Society; without instructions) cognitive factors play a direct role. Forth, there are linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. Linguistic outcome refers to structural aspects of language and specified language skills whereas Non-linguistic outcomes refer to those aspects which are related more to second language culture, and the more positive attitudes of learners towards second language and its people

Gardner and Lambert (1985) modified the model by adding the concept of integrative and instrumental motive. Integrative motivation happens when learners want to match with the culture of the target language people. When speaking the target language, learners admire the culture and have a desire to become part of the society in which the language is used (Falk, 1978). Thus, it is the interest in the people and culture of the language that create student motivation in L2 learning and this type of motivation is related to intrinsic need domain. Instrumental motivation is the desire to attain something practical from learning L2 (Hudson, 2000). Ellis (1994, p.75) states "Some functional reasons such as to pass an examination, to get a better job or to get a university place motivate learners to learn an L2 because it opens up educational and economic opportunities for them.". In other words, it's when learners use the target language as an instrumental to get specific purpose such as getting good marks in the exams or finding a job, and it comes under the external need domain. These models provide the basis for the new researches, which are carried out for improvement.

Dörnyei and Ottó Process-Oriented Model

A process-oriented approach is important when trying to account for the evolution of motivation over time, or when examining motivation in relation to specific learner behaviors and classroom processes. When Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) created their process model of motivation, they had two aims. First, is to press a process-oriented approach of motivation to substitute the product-oriented approach. Second, is to use various lines of research on motivation in the L2 field.

This model divides the motivated behavioral process into three main stages:

preactional stage, actional stage” and the “postactional stage. The preactional stage is when learners are in the process of forming an intention to act, and in selecting an action plan in order to realize the intention to act. Here the learners set their goals and form their intention. Then, the actional stage when learners have translated their intention into action. In the actional stage, “learners are engaged in executing a task, they continuously appraise the process, and when the ongoing monitoring reveals that progress is slowing, halting, or backsliding, they activate the action control system to save or enhance the action” (Dörnyei,2005, p. 81). Finally, in the postactional stage, learners evaluate the outcome of their action. In other words, they evaluate what they have accomplished by comparing their original goal to their actual achievement wither they completed the intended outcome or not.

Deci & Ryan Self Determination Theory.

In Deci's & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985), they clarify the difference between types of motivation based on the varied reasons or goals that leads to an action. The most basic distinction is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation refers to the inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that is derived from inner potentialities and latent resources. An individual here is doing something because he/she finds it interesting or joyful. This type of motivation has a very significant role in most of L2 learners' success or failure. For many learners, the reason for learning an L2 is the admiration in the culture and the target language speakers or the positive attitudes towards the target language speakers while for some others may be attracted by the learning tasks and activities and teaching methods. In short, intrinsic motivation according to Ellis (1994) Involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and can ebb and flow as a result of such factors as learners' particular interests and the extent to which they fell personality involved in learning activities.

Extrinsic motivation refers to motivation that comes from outside an individual. The motivating factors are external rewards. These rewards provide satisfaction and pleasure that the task itself may not provide. An individual here is doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. It derives from an outside influence, including the influence of the teacher, the learner's desire to please certain people or the wish to succeed in an external exam, or peer group influence, which are different from the wish to learn for its own sake or interest in learning tasks.

Speaking Skill

Definitions of Speaking

Speaking plays a major important role among the language four skills for it helps to identify who knows or does not know a language. Pattison (1992) cites that when people mention knowing or learning a language, they mean being able to speak the language. Speaking is interaction between two or more people in exchanging ideas and arguing something. Brown (2001) maintains that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. In addition, he points out that when someone can speak a language it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably competently. Thus, Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language. Nunan (1991, p.51) states: "success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language". Therefore, speaking skill is the art of communications that must mastered in learning foreign language.

Another point is that, it is denoted that spoken language is essentially different from the written one. Bygate (1987,p.12) ,maintains that First, spoken language is affected by the time limitations, and the associated problems of planning, memory, and production under pressure. Second, it is reciprocal activity, which has a crucial effect on the kinds of decisions to be made. A recent study by Šolcová (2011) recommends that teachers should help their students understand the important differences between speaking and writing and instruct them in the ways to use this knowledge effectively when speaking and not to expect their students to speak in full sentences as if, in fact, they were producing written texts. Overall, speaking skill is related to communication. It can be said that it is the skill which we use the language accurately to express meanings in order exchange knowledge and information from other people in the whole life situation.

The Motivation to Speak in English within the Saudi Context

With the rapid growth of education in Saudi Arabia, teaching of English also has taken a new shape. It is quite noticeable that presently the government, policy makers, teachers and students are aware of the significance of English. English language is considered to be one of the most important subjects that Saudi students have to learn and master. Recently, English becomes the medium of instruction in all Saudi universities. For example, English is regarded as one of the most required skills that the Saudi citizen has to acquire in order to be qualified to enter the highly competitive job market particularly communication skills. Despite all this, L2 motivation research has not given the needed attention in the Saudi educational context.

Currently, most students who are enrolled in English programs at universities, after studying English for seven years at local and private schools, are not usually able to express themselves clearly or communicate with English speakers in English. Also, they are unwilling to take part in speaking activities in English. One of the problems Saudi learners are facing is that they use Arabic at home and during their interaction with friends and classmates. They have rare opportunities to speak in English. In addition to that speaking activities are limited and classes do not actually activate the interactive teaching as they are teachers-centered rather than learners-centered. Also, the teacher talk time (TTT) covers the largest section of the class time leaving no space or little for students to practice the language as a mean of communication. As result, students are reluctant to speak English.

Speaking is making use of language in ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making speech. Therefore, speaking can be as the way to carry out feeling through words. It is then important for teachers to be percipient of how motivate their student to speak and achieve this challenging task. Alotaibi (2004) recommends that teachers' institutional memos should include sections on the role of motivation in language learning .

IMPLICATIONS

Factors contribute in Motivating Learners to speak in EFL classrooms.

Teacher Role

Whatever is done by a teacher has a motivational impact on students. Dornyei (2001, p.120), describes teacher's behavior as a powerful 'motivational tool'. It is approved that teachers' motivational behaviors lead to enhanced motivation in their L2 learners. A teacher can attract students to engage in tasks by setting clear instructions and creating useful and relevant to their interests' activities. Students feel reluctant to speak due to lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes .The teachers, therefore, should point out students' speaking ability, give immediate praise and encouragement so that they will have no fear but enough bravery to speak. Moreover, to create students interest to learn and speak, the teacher is expected to be enthusiastic, friendly, helpful and tolerant. For example, the teacher smiles instead of getting angry when students make mistakes. Doing so will arise student motivation to speak more. Alison (1993), suggests to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the learners, by means of talking with them on a personal level. This mutual trust could lead to enthusiasm.

Environment

Classroom climate can negatively affect learning and demotivate learners .On the other hand, learner motivation will be the best in a safe classroom climate in which students can express their opinions and feel that they do not run the risk of being mocked. Moreover, the teachers should create and establish the classroom culture where speaking English aloud is the norm. Creating a supportive environment in class

for discussion activates might also be of great help in encouraging and relaxing shy students to speak more. Apparently, an effective motivation is unlikely to be developed in a muddled and disorganized classroom, it is important that the teacher manage the classroom as an effective learning environment.

Speaking Topics in the Textbook

In order to inspire learners to concern themselves with most learning activities, we should find out their goals and the topics they want to learn, and try to incorporate them into the curriculum. It is interesting to find out about their motivational power. Thus, students should be asked about what they like or dislike in their textbooks and what topics they find attractive or unattractive so that teachers can adopt new and updated materials according to their students' needs and interest. Teachers can replace boring topic with joyful evoking topics using variety of methodologies that encourages all kinds of student to speak according to their personality and type of learner.

4. Conclusion

Motivation should be viewed as an indispensable aspect of the EFL learning process. Students' knowledge of their choices and teachers' awareness to accept their students' personalities and work on those minute details that constitute their social and psychological needs, should be increased. Considering the need in enhancing students' speaking skill in Saudi Arabia, further studies should have an insight look into some other aspects such as the role of pair work and group work, the role of visual aids, the breaking down class size and the improvement of the textbook.

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