

<研究ノート>

A Study of Motivation in the EFL Classroom

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This paper will describe the different kinds of motivation at work in the foreign language classroom, through the exploration of ten research studies. Seven of these studies are from EFL contexts including three in Japan-two in the university context and one in the language school context. A joint study at the university level was carried out in Japan and China. Two studies deal with EFL in Hungary, one with secondary school students and one with adult learners. The seventh study, based in Egypt, deals with adult learners. The other three studies are in second language contexts and have possible implications for the foreign language context. These are a study by Gardner(1991)on instrumental motivation, a study by Swanes(1987) which found some differences in motivation among learners from developing countries and those from the richer western countries and those from the richer western countries including differences between men and women, and finally a study by Okada et al (1996) which found differences in motivation according to language difficulty.

The paper first considers the role of motivation as an individual difference in SLA after which Gardner's (1993) theory of motivation is described. Then the differences between the ESL and EFL motivations are discussed, followed by a discussion of the studies outlined above. Finally, in view of these studies, the last part of the essay deals with implications for the EFL classroom. The lack of research into intrinsic moti-

vation is commented on.

Motivation as an Individual Difference in Second Language Acquisition:

There is no doubt that motivation is a potent force in language acquisition. Ellis (1994) in a discussion of individual differences in L2 acquisition, maintains that both motivation and language aptitude account for “a substantial amount of the variance in learners’ L2 proficiency.” However, whereas aptitude seems to be “a stable factor, perhaps even innate” which we as teachers can do little or nothing to change, motivation can change over time and is moreover, an area over which we as teachers can have influence.

Oxford & Shearin (1996a) believe that motivation “determines the extent of active, personal involvement in foreign or second language learning.” They maintain that because unmotivated students are insufficiently involved, they are unable to develop their language skills to potential.

Two kinds of motivation

Motivation has been described by Gardner (1993) as a ‘complex of factors’ including the desire to achieve a goal, effort expended in that direction and reinforcement or satisfaction associated with the act of learning. Gardner and Lambert (1959) write about motivation as being of the instrumental or integrative nature, integrative motivation being seen as a desire to communicate and become similar to members of that L2 community. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is seen as the desire to learn the L2 for pragmatic gains such as getting a better job. They found that of the two kinds of motivation those students who were integratively motivated made the most of practice opportunities, volunteered

more answers in the classroom, were more precise in responses and were generally more successful students.

Motivation in the ESL and EFL Settings

Given the importance of motivation as a factor in SLA the purpose of this paper is to investigate the kinds of motivation that affect learning in a foreign language classroom and the resulting implications for us teachers. Studies for many years centered on work done by Gardner and his associates, which was mostly based in the ESL setting of Canada. However in recent years many researchers have figured that learning a second language in a foreign setting involves different kinds of motivations, some of which show different facets of the instrumental/integrative dichotomy which Gardner has focused on.

Discussion of Studies

Dornyei (1994) notes that the main emphasis of Gardner's motivation model has been on general motivational components grounded in the "social milieu rather than in the foreign language classroom." He contends that instrumental motivation may be more important for foreign language learning because students have limited or no experience with the target community and as a result are 'uncommitted to integrating with that group.' Furthermore he asserts that foreign language learners have a different kind of integrative motivation which is more culture-general than culture-specific.

Dornyei (1990) studied adult EFL learners in Hungary. Dornyei describes Hungary as a "unicultural society" where "person-to-person contact with native Anglophones is minimal and English is seen as an ordinary school subject." The learners in his study had voluntarily regis-

tered and paid for English courses. He found that instrumental goals did indeed play a prominent role in the learning of English, but only up to the intermediate level. In fact those learners whose interest in learning included sociocultural and nonprofessional reasons demonstrated the highest degree of desired proficiency-that is they wanted to master English rather than acquire a minimal working knowledge of it. These learners expressed a desire to spend an extended period of time abroad, so intended contact rather than actual contact was the main factor in their integrative motivation. Even in an EFL context Dornyei found that student motivation was socially grounded though in a different way.

Chihara & Oller (1978) carried out a study of similar type learners to those of Dornyei-an adult EFL setting-in the YMCA in Osaka, Japan. They found a weak relationship between attitudes to the L2 culture and proficiency which contrasted with a study by Oller, Hudson & Liu (1977) of Chinese ESL students in the U.S.A. Like Dornyei, they concluded that there were good reasons to suppose that the relationship between attitudes and proficiency might be quite different for learners who are only exposed to the target language in the classroom context. These learners expressed a wish to visit another country as the most important reason out of seven factors for learning English, corresponding to Dornyei's "intended contact", whereas 'to pass exams' and "to get a better paying job" were ranked among the least important. This is not surprising given the Japanese context where the majority of workers do not change jobs, staying with the same company for life (though this is changing somewhat in recent times) and where passing exams is mainly a matter of form once you have managed to get a place at a university. It is not surprising that these instrumental factors were not taken up by the learners. However if other factors such as "understanding English mov-

ies” had been included in the survey, the results might have been different. The reason which was rated least in importance for learning English was “to have English speaking friends”, which again points to the main difference between EFL and ESL settings, which is the lack of such opportunities for foreign learners.

A study of foreign adults learning Norwegian was carried out by Svanes (1987) in Norway. She found that European and American students were more integratively motivated than the Middle Eastern, African and Asian students who were found to be more instrumentally motivated. Swanes reflects that westerners can have “luxury motives for coming to Norway to study”, whereas for students from developing countries their motivation is “to get an education”.

In Swanes’ study there was also a significant difference in the grades recorded, with Europeans having the best and Asian students the poorest scores. According to Swanes, and corresponding to Dornyei’s findings, this indicates that integrative motivation rather than instrumental motivation may lead to better proficiency. He points out that familiarity with the culture and the language will make it easy to communicate and learn the language. She maintains that such a closeness in culture develops an integrative motivation towards the target language culture which fits in with Schumann’s (1978) theory that the social distance an L2 learner has with the TL community is a major factor in language learning. Asian women were found to be significantly less instrumentally motivated than Asian men but no such differences were found among the other groups. Such a low instrumental motivation could be due to lack of opportunities for women at least until recent times. No survey has been done which looks at this factor in the Japanese context in particular but there is a good chance that this difference may exist here

also.

In a recent study, Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy (1996) investigated learners of English in an adult EFL setting in Cairo. Egypt would be representative of the developing countries which Swanes talked about in his research, the difference being that these learners were “on home turf”. The authors were interested in finding out what “spurs thousands of Egyptians to exert the effort required and pay the fees for private instruction in English”. Schmidt found a significant instrumental motivation which compares to Dornyei’s study (1990). Schmidt argues that instrumental factors are important for adults who have chosen to study English privately in contrast with young learners who take English as a school subject and who are not yet faced with career choices or the need to be concerned with making a living.

The remaining studies deal with younger learners-at the secondary and university level. Clement, Dornyei & Noels (1994) looked at secondary level Hungarian students. They found that although these learners viewed English as an ordinary school subject with few chances for communication with the target culture on a personal level, they did think that contact with English was possible through the media and technology and English was widely recognized as the lingua franca of international communication. They found an instrumental orientation based on the acquisition of knowledge, rather than on the achievement of pragmatic outcomes and an integrative one based on expected foreign friendships through travel and an interest in English culture. This anticipated contact in the study resembles that of the adult learners in Dornyei’s previously cited study, indicating that adults and younger learners in an EFL context share similar integrative orientations.

The authors included the instrumental-knowledge orientation in

the integrative motive, putting an end to what they and Oxford (1996 a) consider the “misleading use of a simplistic integrative-instrumental dichotomy”. They also found two other motivation components-linguistic self-confidence and classroom group dynamics. They argue that group dynamics in the classroom setting have particular relevance to L2 instruction since communicative methodologies stress interaction between learners.

Oxford (1996b) has stressed the need for longitudinal studies in order to monitor developmental changes in learners’ motivation. Two studies, one by Teweles(1996)and the other by Berwick & Ross(1989) are longitudinal in nature. However, although Teweles claims his paper to be part of a longitudinal study, he fails to point out any changes that occurred during the period of the study and indeed doesn’t mention how long the study itself was.

Teweles found differences between Chinese and Japanese university students, with the Japanese showing more of an integrative motivation than the Chinese who showed more of an instrumental motivation. This difference in motivations between the Japanese and Chinese learners is partly explained by the fact that English assumes a very specialized role in the Chinese context, with courses offered in connection with special needs such as ‘Business English’, but it could also have something to do with the difference Swanes(1996)found, as Japanese learners are way more affluent than their Chinese counterparts and perhaps also feel less of a social distance with the west. Teweles quotes Berwick & Ross’ (1989) comment that there is a considerable decline in “instrumental interest” once the college entrance exams are over, as the reason Japanese students tended to score higher in integrative motivation.

Berwick & Ross(1989)assessed the motivation of university stu-

dents at the beginning and end of their freshmen year. Their analysis indicated a limited development of an orientation towards personal growth through widening of their horizons and a desire to study abroad. While they support the idea that it is difficult to bring students back from the boredom of exam fever they also maintain that the curriculum is at fault, by not being relevant to learners' needs and motives for language study. They contrast this 'motivational vacuum' with the extraordinary interest in language learning among adults in Japan and emphasize that universities must do much more to motivate students in this direction.

Greer (1996) claims that a motivation survey of Japanese female junior college students he teaches, is a useful tool in curriculum development. By understanding why students learn English, he uses the results to shape the course of classes he teaches especially when choosing textbooks or deciding how much conversation practice to do. He has found that integratively motivated students respond better to texts weighted towards conversation and more instruction. The majority (68%) of students he surveyed were integratively motivated.

In a comparative study, Okada, Oxford & Abo (1996) found that the motivation of American learners of Japanese was far greater than that of learners of Spanish and concluded that motivation must be higher when one tries to learn a more difficult language because greater persistence and determination are needed to cope with the stress of a difficult situation. Conversely one might assume that for EFL learners in Japan, English is a difficult language to learn and so, such persistence and determination must also be present in order for language learning to be successful. However this is rarely the case and unlike the U.S.A. where generally the motivated and able students choose to study Japanese, in Japan everyone has to learn English so teachers have to search for ways to mo-

tivate these less able students.

It could be argued that one way to motivate these less able students is to offer incentives. Gardner & MacIntyre (1991) studied the effects of both instrumental and integrative motivation among university students. Results showed that both types of motivation facilitated learning but that those who were instrumentally motivated studied longer than those who were integratively motivated. They offered financial incentives for high performance on vocabulary tests and found that when the incentive was removed, students stopped applying more effort. Gardner & McIntyre stress this as being the major disadvantage of such instrumental motivation, but add that if the goal is continuous, instrumental motivation would continue to be effective.

Implications for the EFL Classroom:

Dornyei (1994) stresses that the question of how to motivate students is an area on which L2 motivation has not placed sufficient emphasis in the past. He points to the lack of research into extrinsic motives such as grades and praise. Financial incentives such as those offered by Gardner & Lambert(1991)are not often feasible but other types of incentives such as certificates may work well especially with younger learners.

Access to the Internet and other media such as newspapers and magazines in schools may take advantage of the “acquisition of knowledge” factor which Dornyei(1994)found to be important for the students in his study. Such knowledge can be seen as ‘intrinsic motivation’ or motivation brought about by the stimulating or interesting presentation of the subject of study itself, an area where the teacher has the most influence and is therefore of paramount importance. However, as Ellis(1994) noted, there has been very little systematic research of the effects which

pedagogic procedures have on motivation.

This lack of focus on intrinsic motivation has been borne out by the studies in this paper. Intrinsic factors have been touched on but have not been the focus of research. As it has been found by Chihara & Oller, Schmidt, Teweles, Berwick & Ross that intended contact of some nature with the target culture plays an important role in motivation, a combination of strategies to motivate learners integratively and intrinsically is probably the key to enhancing language performance. Indeed, Berwick & Ross (1989) maintain that motivation to learn a language can be expanded by offering programs that offer attainable short-term goals, exchange programs with foreign colleges, short-term homestay programs overseas and programs with foreign students in Japan. These would seem to be a combination of intrinsic and integrative factors.

Oxford (1996b) contends that intrinsic motivation in the form of the classroom experience can be a big determiner in motivating power and with Okada et al (1996) maintains that it is desirable to use activities in the classroom that “engage and enhance the learners’ motivation.” They consider that learners are not just interested in language but also in culture. Therefore motivation might be stimulated by weaving culture into classes more effectively in the form of “content of conversations, tapes, readingssociolinguistic aspects, cultural elements in games, simulations, and role plays which also reduce anxiety.”

Dornyei (1994) recommends 30 different ways to promote motivation among students. These serve as a very practical checklist for teachers, covering areas related to language, learner and learning situation plus teacher-specific and group-specific motivational components.

As teachers in the foreign language classroom we have to be aware of the kinds of motivations our students bring with them but we

also have to be aware of our own power to enhance those motivations and/or introduce different kinds which will further develop language learning.

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