

Motivation and Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive discussion on "Motivation & Second Language Acquisition." It defines motivation and analyses its theories from several perspectives. It also encompasses the ideas of improving language competency by focusing the positive and adventitious aspects of motivation. Finally, the article concludes with the implication of further research in the field of motivation which bears the potential of bringing revolutionary changes in Second Language Acquisition.

Definition of Motivation

Gardner defined motivation in his social-psychological model as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitude toward learning the language." It is an inner state or condition that power up behavior and gives it direction, a desire that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior, an influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behavior, and the arousal, direction, and persistence of behavior. Student motivation naturally has to do with students' desire to participate in learning. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated, the source of their motivation may be different.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

In general, motivation can be considered as either intrinsic (behavioral, needs) or extrinsic (cognitive and humanistic, reinforcement). Intrinsic motivation is generally possessed by people having persona interest (s) in doing something and helping to set their goals. People are intrinsically motivated not because accomplishing the activity they do brings a reward, but because doing the activity itself is a reward. Mark Lepper notes that a student with intrinsic motivation participates in his / her learning "for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes." The feelings of competence and self-determination are significant factors of intrinsic motivation. According to Deci, one must feel a sense of self-determination as well as that of competence through interaction with others to perceive that s / he takes the initiative in her / his own action and not to feel that someone forces her / him to do so.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, derives from an anticipation of rewards such as praise, awards, prizes, and evaluation, and fear for punishment. An extrinsically motivated student do the activity "in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself", and this kind of motivation "refers to learning situations where the reason for doing a task is something other than an interest in the task (or broader learning endeavor) itself. In addition, undertaking the task may be something the person feels pressured to do rather than genuinely wants to do ". There are some negative aspects of extrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan state that learners will lose motivation and reason to do something when rewards are no longer available, and that giving external rewards to them previously with intrinsic motivation can harm the good effect of it. However, researches show that extrinsic motivation is effective for those with no motivation, and when it is a positive feedback.

Comparing these two types of motivation in a classroom, it becomes clear that intrinsic motivation produces more potential benefits than does the extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated students tend to try harder and think more deeply. It is also found by researchers that they tend to prefer "i +1" when others tend to choose easier tasks.

Theories of Motivation

There are a number of theoretical frameworks some of which could help teachers understand student motivation in the field of SLA. In this review, I would like to choose and categorize them into 4 groups: behavioristic, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and humanistic, and refer to the general ideas in each of them.

Behavioristic

Behavioral psychologists, the best known of whom is BFSkinner, explain motivation as reinforcement theory. Behavior is shaped and sustained by the consequences the individual receives. Thus, with positive reinforcement, behaviors can be maintained, and with negative reinforcement, they can be reduced or eliminated. By the nature of these approaches, they emphasize extrinsic rewards and punishments, and seem counter to the objective of increasing students' intrinsic motivation by increasing their control over learning.

Contiguity

Guthrie's contiguity theory specifies that "a combination of stimuli which has accompanied a movement will on its recurrence tend to be followed by that movement". According to Guthrie, all learning is a consequence of association between a particular stimulus response. Furthermore, Guthrie argued that stimuli and responses affect specific sensory-motor patterns; what is learned are movements, not behaviors. Rewards and punishment play no significant role in learning since they occur after the association between stimulus and response has been made. Learning takes place in a single trial (all or none). However, since each stimulus pattern is slightly different, many trials may be necessary to produce a general response. One interesting principle that arises from this position is called "postremity" which specifies that we always learn the last thing we do in response to a specific stimulus situation.

Classical (Respondent) Conditioning

Classical conditioning was the earliest type of learning discovered and studied within the behaviorist tradition as its name shows. The major theorist in the development of classical conditioning is Ivan Pavlov. Skinner renamed this type of learning "respondent conditioning" since in this type of learning, one is responding to an environmental antecedent. Pavlov explained that Classical conditioning is Stimulus (S) elicits Response (R) conditioning since the antecedent stimulus causes the reflexive or involuntary response to occur. Classical conditioning starts with a reflex: an innate, involuntary behavior caused by an antecedent environmental event. No new behaviors are learned. Instead, an association is developed between the Neutral Stimulus and the Unconditioned Stimulus so that the learner responds to both events and stimuli in the same way; restated after conditioning, both the US and the CS (Conditioned Stimulus) will cause the same involuntary response.

Operant (Instrumental) conditioning

This theory of Operant Conditioning theory of BF Skinner is based on the idea that learning is a function of change in overt behavior. Changes in behavior are the result of an individual's responses to events (stimuli) that occur in the environment. A response produces a consequence such as defining a word, hitting a ball, or solving a math problems. When a particular Stimulus-Response (SR) pattern is reinforced (rewarded), the individual is conditioned to respond. The

organism can give forth responses instead of only eliciting response due to an external stimulus. Reinforcement is the key element in Skinner's SR theory. A reinforcement strengthens the desired response. It could be verbal praise, a good grade or a feeling of accomplishment or satisfaction. The theory also includes negative reinforcement (punishment) that result in the reduction of undesired responses.

Social Learning

The Social Learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura states: "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and no later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. " Social Learning theory tells us that if learners see enthusiastic teachers, they will tend to model these behaviors. If they see their peers rewarded and recognized for being dedicated learners, they will model their behaviors.

Cognitive

Information Processing

GEORGE A. Miller has provided two theoretical ideas that are fundamental to the information processing framework. The first concept is "chunking" and the capacity of short memories. Miller presented the idea that short-term memory could only hold 5-9 chunks of information where a chunk is any meaningful unit. A chunk could be digits, words, or people's faces. The second concept is TOTE (Test-Operate-Test-Exit) suggested by Miller, Galanter & Pribram. They suggested that TOTE should replace the stimulus-response as the basic unit of behavior. In a TOTE unit, a goal is tested to see if it has been achieved and if not an operation is performed to achieve the goal; this cycle of test-operate is repeated until the goal is eventually achieved or abandoned.

Cognitive Dissonance

According to Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance theory, there is a tendency for learners to want consistency in their cognitions. When

there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to get rid of the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that the attitude will change to serve the behavior. Dissonance occurs most often in situations an individual must choose between two opposite beliefs or actions. This theory applies to all situations involving attitude formation and change. It is especially relevant to decision-making and problem-solving.

Attribution

One of the most commonly accepted theory in the psychological field is this "Attribution theory" dealing with the effect of cognition against motivation suggested by Weiner. He explains the way people look at their success or failure and attribute the causes to the events. The causes are categorized into four basic causes: ability, task difficulty, effort, and luck according to two viewpoints: stability (stable or unstable) and locus of control (internal or external).

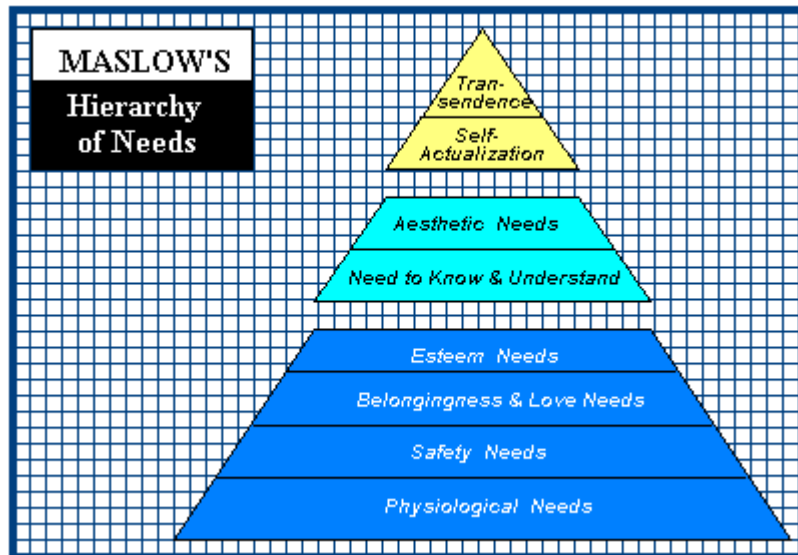
	Internal	External
Stable	Ability	Task difficulty
Unstable	Effort	Luck

Humanistic

Humanistic psychology tells that the mind is strongly influenced by determining forces in society and in the unconsciousness, and that some of these are negative. But it emphasizes the independent dignity and worth of human beings and their conscious capacity to develop personal Competence and self-respect.

Maslow: Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's work specifies that people have a hierarchy of need ranging from basic need for survival and safety to higher-level needs for self-esteem and self-actualization. The lower-level, more basic needs must be fulfilled in order for the individual to be able to move on to the higher-level needs. Understanding the five needs described in Maslow's hierarchy is very important for teachers in recognizing students' state of motivation.



Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation theory, a valuable framework for understanding motivation in school, was developed by David McClelland. He found that some learners prefer challenging and moderately difficult tasks. They attempt to succeed in them, seek feedback, and always measure their own success. McClelland's work showed important variation in the extent to which learners have and show needs for achievement. He also found, however, that most learners can be taught to increase their focus on achieving designated results. He worked with students, providing training in which they learned to set specific objectives and measure their progress toward these objectives. His work was similar to that of other researchers who have studied ways to foster a sense of "personal agency" in learners by helping them to establish and achieve realistic goals.

Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

The most dominant work in SLA studies of motivation has been done by Gardner and his associates. In his socio-cultural approach, attitudes play an important role. He stated that "motivation to learn a second language is influenced by group related and context related attitudes, interactiveness and attitudes toward the learning situation respectively". A person who has positive attitudes to the target culture and people is thus considered well-motivated. In general, Gardner's model of integrative / instrumental motivation precisely describes the particular features of motivation in SLA.

Integrative Motivation

Gardner's idea was developed from Mower's idea that to be like a valued person is important in individual development. Gardner and Lambert described the motivation as wanting to be esteemed and identified in a foreign setting, to be like the foreign people, to understand the culture and participate in it, and called this concept "integrative motivation". Integrative motivation is basically a motivation to be a member of a target society in a foreign setting but it also includes a motivation coming from just an interest or a favorable feeling to a target culture or people. McDonough noted that there are two types of integrative motivation; "assimilative motivation", strong motivation to "belong" to the target group, and "affiliative motivation", weak motivation and a desire for wider social contact with target language speakers. Dickinson notes: Gardner's "Integrative attitude, with its emphasis on learning the target language because one wishes to associate with or integrate with the speaker of the language, can be perceived as a subject-specific example of intrinsic motivation. Learners with an interactive attitude have a compelling purpose for learning which is intrinsic to a target language ". Learners who are interactively motivated seems to have a strong intrinsic motivation to learn a language.

Instrumental Motivation

Gardner and Lambert described "instrumental motivation" as a motivation to acquire some advantages by learning a second language. A learner with instrumental motivation regards language as an instrument to get a reward. Though "Instrumental motivation" also influences second language learning, "to the extent that an instrumental motive is tied to a specific goal", "its influence tend to be maintained only until that goal is achieved." "On the other hand, if the goal is continuous, it seems possible that an instrumental motivation would also continue to be effective ".

Conclusion

Motivation is one of the crucial factors which determine the success of language learning. Intrinsic motivation is the most fundamental motivation, which is derived from the feeling of being competent and self-determinant. People are motivated to be approved by others and to feel competent. Whereas intrinsic motivation is essential for successful language learning, it does not seem sufficient itself, and intrinsic motive is mediated by "cognition" and "society", which is when motivation occurs

within self. Some ideas to foster motivation to learn in the classroom are suggested: (1) teachers should view learners as "active socialization agents capable of stimulating ... learner motivation to learn", (2) classroom climate should be valued, (3) various task dimensions work, tasks should be moderately challenging and yet achievable, (4) tasks with specific, short-term goals can help learners to success, (5) teachers should offer extrinsic rewards with caution. As the study of motivation in SLA is relatively recent movement, many more researches and applications will take place for further understanding this subtle and ambiguous area. Teachers will want to look for them to get learner motivation fully activate both in classroom and their individual lives.

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