STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

แรงจูงใจในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา

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Abstract

This article aims to clarify the students' motivation in learning English and suggest how the teachers of English can motivate their students to learn it. Moreover, it is argued that to motivate the students, the teachers need to know not only the theory of motivation but also the theories about language learning. Consequently, the theories discussed in this paper are those that indicate the author's methods of teaching English to various groups of students in several universities in Thailand. Though the motivation and English learning theories are useful for students, the author has found that these theories did not work all the time, in all settings, or with all students, nor did they yield positive results when used all of them at the same time. Hence, the use of theories depends on a specific situation, and the decision to select which one to use depends on an individual teacher's discretion at the same time. Therefore, in this paper, the author suggested how the author has applied these theories in her classroom setting and provided some teaching tips for a task-based learning class to stimulate the students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: Motivation, English Language Learning Theory, Application of Theories to Language Classroom, Task-Based Learning

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อชี้แจงเรื่องแรงจูงใจในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาและเป็น การแนะนำอาจารย์สอนภาษาอังกฤษว่าจะสามารถจูงใจให้นักศึกษาของตนเรียนภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างไร นอกจากนั้น ยังเป็นการถกเถียงกันในเรื่องแรงจูงใจของนักศึกษา ซึ่งอาจารย์ผู้สอนจำเป็นต้องมีข้อมูลไม่เพียง แต่ทฤษฎีแรงจูงใจแต่ยังต้องให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับทฤษฎีการเรียนภาษาอีกด้วย ดังนั้นทฤษฎีที่วิภาคกันในบทความนี้ จึงเป็นข้อมูลวิธีการสอนภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เขียนจากการสอนนักศึกษาที่หลากหลายจากหลายมหาวิทยาลัย

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ในประเทศไทย แม้ว่าแรงจูงใจและทฤษฎีการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อนักศึกษา แต่ผู้เขียนได้ค้นพบ ว่า ทฤษฎีเหล่านี้ไม่ได้นำมาใช้งานได้ทุกเวลาหรือทุกสถานการณ์หรือแม้แต่กับนักศึกษาทุกคน และก็มิได้เป็นผล เชิงบวกในการใช้ทฤษฎีเหล่านั้นในเวลาที่พร้อมกัน ดังนั้นการใช้ทฤษฎีเหล่านี้จะขึ้นอยู่กับสถานการณ์เฉพาะและ การตัดสินใจในการเลือกใช้ ทั้งนี้ขึ้นอยู่กับดุลยพินิจของความเป็นปัจเจกของอาจารย์ผู้สอนด้วย ดังนั้นบทความนี้ ผู้เขียนจึงแนะนำแนวทางที่ผู้เขียนได้ประยุกต์ทฤษฎีเหล่านี้จากสถานการณ์ในห้องเรียนและนำเสนอแนวทางการ สอนด้วยการเรียนรู้จากงานที่ได้มอบหมายเพื่อกระตุ้นแรงจูงใจภายในและภายนอกของนักศึกษา

คำสำคัญ: แรงจูงใจ ทฤษฎีการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ การประยุกต์ทฤษฎีต่อการสอนในห้องเรียน การเรียนรู้ จากงานที่มอบหมาย

Introduction

Based on the author's experience of teaching English to students at various universities, the author has noted that many Thai students lack motivation in learning a foreign/second language, especially English language. However, by the time these students graduated from high school, they have spent at least eight years for studying English, but their English proficiency is disappointingly low. It is not uncommon to find that many students can barely understand easy and simple English sentences—not to mention about engaging in a connected speech, or in a meaningful sustained conversation. This phenomenon definitely attests to the failure to English instruction in Thailand. Consequently, several factors have been said to contribute to poor English language performance. These include such things as inappropriate teaching methodology and materials, lack of exposure and opportunity for language learning and practice outside the classroom, lack of parental and peer support. Moreover, teachers of English lack ability to motivate and encourage language learning, and students lack motivation as well as they are poor attitude toward language learning. However, when attempting to find why the students perform so poorly, attitude and motivation often come to the fore when discussing about the low language performance of the students. Many teachers and theorists have argued that poor performance arises because the students dislike or even hate learning English. For the reason, it is not their Mother tongue. Thus, the students might think that they do not need to pay attention and they are not in the environment of the use of second language or English so, they have never seen that English is needed in their lives. In fact, English is essential such as in education, business, etc. To these benefits, it can be good sign to stimulate students' motivation as well.

Before, the students will have good competence and performance of English, they should feel that English is needed in their real lives. First of all, the students should have motivation to learn the language, so motivation of learning English is needed

to stimulate such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which they will be explained as follows.

Motivation

William & Burden (1997: 120) defined motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal". According to Gardner & Lambert (1972) added that motivation can be divided into global situation, and task motivation which explains follow. Global motivation is one that consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning second language. Situation motivation varies according to the situation in which learning takes place. Task motivation refers to the motivation for performing particular learning tasks. Furthermore, Inthapat (2016) said that first, what is it that originally causes a person to initiate some action? Second, what causes a person to move toward a particular goal? And third, what causes a person to persist in attempts to reach that goal. To this view, motivation is a condition that motivates the students' behaviors and they have to sustain the motivation in order to reach their goal of learning language. Brown (2006) claimed that motivation plays an important role in language learning. It is one of the factor that leads to the success and failure in language learning. Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. On the other hand, if people are motivated by

environmental factors such as rewards, social pressure, punishment, and so on, they are said to be extrinsically motivated. If they are motivated by such factors as their own needs, interests, curiosity and enjoyment, they are said to be intrinsically motivated. Inthapat (2016) asserted that motivation is the will and skill to learn and it is defined as an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior. To this motivation is an important factor in second language (L2) and /or English language learning, and the more the students are motivated, the better their English learning is (Brown 2006).

Furthermore, people with high motivation are more likely to achieve a higher level of language performance than people with low motivation. People with high motivation see the need and benefits of language learning, so they input more effort in achieving their goals, which leads them to their success with ease. In contrast, people with low motivation tend to struggle more because they lack the necessary energy to drive them to their success.

With reference to a model of motivation, internal and external motivation influences the people individually, which is presented below.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

As mentioned earlier, intrinsic motivation stems from within, while extrinsic motivation arises from outside. When people are intrinsically motivated, they engage in an activity solely because they enjoy it and derive personal satisfaction from it. On the contrary, when they

are extrinsically motivated, they do something in order to gain an external reward that is, doing something in order to get something in return, such as job promotion, higher salary, winning a trip overseas, avoiding losing a job, and so forth.

1. Intrinsic motivation

In language learning, intrinsic motivation comes into play when the students motivate themselves to learn. Their motivation is often shown through their curiosity and enthusiasm to learn, goal setting, attentiveness to their lessons, feelings of excitement and pleasure in learning (Ojanen et al., 2010). Intrinsic motivation stimulates the students to put effort into doing what they are really interested in, such as tirelessly and repeatedly memorizing new words, toying with the newly-acquired language items and or them in different contexts, to cite only a few. These activities certainly reinforce their language learning, helping them to comprehend and remember what they have learned better and facilitating the recall of those items once they have been stored as concepts and gist in the long-term memory (Inthapat 2016).

2. Extrinsic motivation

The students are extrinsically motivated when they need rewards from the outside. For example, they may work hard in order to have good grade in their English examination, not because they enjoy doing it, but because they want to be accepted by their peers and classmates. The need for acceptance from their peers is an external factor that stimulates or pushes them to work toward their immediate goal. Extrinsic motivation may drive them to work hard to achieve the immediate desired learning outcome. However, once that outcome has been achieved, the students may have shifted their interest to something else. As a result, what they have learned or retained in their short-term memory can be easily erased or forgotten. For the reason, the students are persuaded by external factors so, they try to do it (Ojanen et al., 2010).

During her teaching career/experience, the author has encountered students with little or no interest in learning English. These students would exhibit such behaviors as boredom, lack of involvement or unwillingness to participate in classroom activities, absent-mindedness and/or purposelessness. If the teachers use the same style of teaching in every class, the students will be bored. The teachers should, therefore, have a variety of teaching techniques to arouse the students to pay attention to the lesson in order to arouse them to attention in learning.

Arousal

Motivation works when it stimulates a person to act to achieve a goal. The act that triggers a person to act is called "arousal" Williams & Burden (1997), supported that arousal is part of motivation, and the major component of arousal is curiosity, which is the first act that drives humans to learn new things and to actively engage in such a task. Williams & Burden (1997) further asserted that curiosity can be provoked by making tasks surprising, incongruous or discrepant from existing

ideas or beliefs. This is, when the students are highly motivated or totally involved, they 1) engage both their minds and bodies in the task, 2) stay deeply focused on the task, 3) are aware or conscious of what they want to do, or what are doing and of how well they are doing, 4) show no worries about failing or failures, 5) are not conscious of the passage of time, and 6) lose the ordinary sense of self-conscious and worrying that characterizes much of daily life (Ojanen et al., 2010). As mentioned above, extrinsic motivation drives, and intrinsic motivation pushes, a person to act toward a goal. Hence, it is seen that both types of motivation are indispensable factors for learning so, it is important to raise the students' motivation.

In order to motivate students' learning English, the teachers should first make them realize the importance of English as an international language in which English is now used in worldwide such as business, transactions, education, marketing, trading and negotiations. Thus, it is important to lead the students see that English is used in various contexts in their future works. For example, teacher may tell them that if they want to be successful in working, they should use English professionally. In instilling the importance of English to students, the teachers should take into account the learning theories and their applications to language teaching (Manzoor, Ahmed & Gill, 2015). These theories are discussed as follows.

There are learning and teaching theories which are useful depends on teaching situation as the following.

Learning and Teaching Theories
Behaviorisms

Brown (2006) claimed that a behaviorist theory explains learning in terms of "operant conditioning" in which it is individual respond to a stimulus. In addition, the behavioral responses can be either increased or decreased, depending on the reinforcement or punishment they received. Rewarding stimuli or reinforcers, (positive or negative), increases the likelihood of a behavioral response whereas unrewarding stimuli or punishers (positive or negative) decrease the likelihood of a behavior. "Increasing", the learners will tend to persist with the behavior when the environment is rewarding. However, if the environment is unrewarding, the learners will pursue a different course of action as "Decreasing".

Williams & Burden (1997), said that since the central tenet of behaviorism is that learning is a result of training through conditioning via an interaction with the environmental stimuli, language learning can be achieved by using similar reinforcement principles. To this, an audiolingual approach was proposed. Moreover, the language teaching approach is aimed at promoting leads to fluency; accuracy (or correct response); and spoken language precedes written language. This approach focuses on memorization of dialogues, pattern drills, chorus and group repetition or substitution mechanical habit-formation or learning through repetition of basic correct sentence patterns. It is thought that mastery of structure drills. To this view,

the theory aims to enable the learners to form the habit of using a language mechanically from a pattern.

Cognitive Theory

Williams & Burden (1997) said that cognitive psychology is the science of mental life which includes and expects how people build memories and the way that they are involved in the information processing, intelligence & intelligence testing and constructivism. Unlike behaviorism, which focuses on observed behavior and cognitivism focuses on the internal processes involved in learning or in the way individuals make sense of the world how they acquire, perceive, process and store and retrieve information. Information processing provides a valuable insights into the inner workings of the human minds that is, how the learners take in the information to process and to act with learning (Robison & Elic, 2008). To this view, the learners' input of the information come from environment, perception and store in memory. Additionally, their attention is a factor that can be used in the area of information processing. It means that attention is a cognitive resource to stimulate learners' concentration of learning because their attention leads them to focus on their interests such as the selected tasks. Therefore, it is useful for individual learners to select what they demand in learning tasks.

In addition, cognition is a crucial component of sensory memory. That is, it allows the learners to record information for a brief amount of time before passing into a short-term memory because the working memory is used when the learners pay attention to the information at a particular time. Then, if the information is rehearsed to them many times, the information is passed into a long-term memory. This theory can be applied in language teaching and learning when the learners have problem to remember vocabulary. To this problem, the teachers can help them to rehearsal for constructing vocabulary.

Constructivism

Inthapat (2011) argued that, in contrast to the traditional view of learning, constructivism focuses on the constructive nature of the learning process. That is, the learners/students actively construct their own knowledge and personal understanding of the world from their experiences and from what surround them. Williams & Burden (1997) supported that learning is action-based and interactive. That is, the learners build new knowledge based on prior knowledge or learning. and this previous learning experience influences what new knowledge an individual will construct from new learning experiences.

In line with this theory, language teaching should not focus on teaching the rules of language, but it should focus on providing experiences in the target language that are related to the aspects of the learners' own world by keeping a balance between what we already know and what is being experienced. Williams & Burden (1997) continued that man is a scientist, and people develop personal

knowledge or constructs about how the world works from their own personal experiences or experiments and then use these constructs to make sense of their observations and experiences of the world. That is, they use previous knowledge to help create new knowledge. New information or knowledge is modified to fit and added into what we already (schemas) and store it there. This process is called assimilation. To make room for the new information, the previous knowledge (what we already know) will have to be modified or restructured so that new information can fit in. This process is called accommodation.

Though the world we live in is the same for all of us, the way we experience it is different for each individual. The way in which individuals construct their own knowledge or construct out of their own experience of the world is referred to as "the personal construct theory". In language teaching and learning, students are not taught to learn language rules but the learners will make sense and create their understanding of the world of language from their own environment or surroundings.

Humanistic Approach

Humanistic Approach emphasizes the importance of the learners' inner world such as the human values, and individual's thoughts, feeling and emotion of human development. William & Burden (1997) asserted that human development depends on the way in which individual learners were determined and challenged by society in an early stage at a particular time of their lives. At an early stage, if the parents or the caregivers care of the children and help the children to learn to trust as well as to establish a basic attitude toward what they can do, this basic sense will be internalized.

William & Burden (1997) define that the humanistic theory of teaching and learning is an educational theory that believes in teaching the whole child. A humanist approach will have a strong focus on students' emotional wellbeing and eternally view children as innately good at the core. The theory proposed a hierarchy of human needs based on a basic concept of human resources and organizational behavior, which comprise a five-tier model depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. From the bottom upwards, these needs are physiological, safety, love, and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Needs at a lower level in the hierarchy must be satisfied before needs higher up in the hierarchy can be met or attended to.

These needs are often divided into deficiency needs (also known as D-needs) and growth needs (also known as being needs or B-needs). The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs (D-needs), and the top level is known as growth or being needs (B-needs).

Deficiency needs arise from deprivation and are said to motivate people when those needs are unmet. It is said that the longer the duration such needs are denied, the stronger the motivation to fulfill them. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the more hungry they will become.

Growth needs do not stem from

deprivation or a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person that is to achieve his or her individual potential and creative activities. They are cognitive and aesthetic needs, and self-actualization.

To apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs to teaching and learning process, teachers should help learners grow to their full potential and achieve their self-actualization.

Teachers should also keep in mind that not all learners have their basic needs satisfied at home or at school. Therefore, they should be encouraged first to build up their self-respect through activities and tasks that are challenging and creative and innovative before having them move toward reaching needs a higher levels. Williams & Burden (1997) supported that human beings have a natural potential for learning and learning takes place when the subject matters are personally relevant to them.

Social Interaction

Williams & Burden (1997), stressed the critical role of social interaction in the development of cognition. That is, the children's cognitive development is progressed through social interaction with other people. In language teaching, the materials have to be presented, not only as isolated linguistic items, but meaningful communication acts, in which two or more people are engaged in the interaction. The students can interact with their teachers or their peers. Furthermore, the learning tasks that provide an opportunity for the students to respond and interact with one another. The

interaction in this social constructive model of learning is composed of four key factors: teachers, learners, tasks, and contexts. Williams & Burden (1997) similarly asserted that children or learners were born in a social world and they learn language for interaction with other people in their everyday lives. The idea that people learn a language for communication corresponds to the principles underlying the communicative approach, which stresses the idea that language learning is learning to use the target language for communication, and that the language used for communication. In teaching, the following must be taken into account: the language appropriate to the situation, the roles of the speakers in a particular situation or the setting in which the utterance takes place, and the register (choice of language use and style) appropriate for the situation. The learners can become effective learners by developing their cognitive capacities throughout their lives and the crucial factor for the cognitive development (including language learning) is the social interaction (Williams & Burden 1997). They continued that the teachers select the tasks that reflect their beliefs in teaching and learning. Then, the learners interpret the tasks that are meaningful and personal to them individually. The task is therefore an interface between the teachers and learners that enables them to interact with each other.

To Each learning theory and approach discussed above has its own distinctive tenets regarding language learning, and they can be

applied to classroom teaching. Appropriate learning activities can be used to stimulate and enhance student learning in accordance with the underlying principles of each theory. In the following section, some guidelines for motivating English language learning are suggested.

Applying Motivation and Learning Theory for English Language Learning and Teaching

1. **Provide opportunity for students to expose themselves to English in a variety of situations.**

This stage, students realize how important English is in their daily lives. Teachers may explain the students to importance of English which they have to use in the present and the future. In order to do this activity, teachers lead students to tell their providing service and working experience in which they have met various foreigners and the foreigners communicate English differently. After the students tell their experiences in real lives, the teachers gain benefit from this point to motivate students to practice English as well.

2. **Use Pattern drills and practice memorization so that the students form a good habit of using correct English.**

In order to lead students to learn English, teacher provides easy exercises such as pattern drill or easy dialogue. According to their learning, the theory of behaviorism is automatically used in teaching. The students have plenty of opportunity to practice pattern drills and engage in dialogues with their friends and teachers. Doing this activity will enables

students to be familiar with friends and teacher, and it provides students to express what they want to say in English by adding the other sentences, words, phrases into dialogue.

3. **Reinforce students' learning with praise statements to boost their self-confidence and avoid reprimanding the students**

It enables the students to feel safe when practicing English, etc. Moreover, teachers should create a non-threatening environment so that the students feel relaxed and it enables them to not be afraid to learn. To this way, teachers usually give learners reward as positive feedback in order to reinforce them to learn that change their attitude in learning. This way may help the students to have motivation in learning English by saying "good", "good work", etc., so that the students feel warm in learning. The activity helps them to have self confidence in learning English.

4. **Provide a learning task**

Teachers should challenge the students to create English conversation. The teachers motivate students to learn English by showing the example of dialogue on the board and teach them to make the other dialogues in the various situations. To this way, teachers should ask students who have English proficiency to speak in front of the class in order to show as good example for the other students. In addition, teachers advise the students when they have learning problems. Furthermore, the teachers are facilitator to support their students to achieve their study. Moreover, exercises should be suitable for students' level although

sometimes the learners are bored when they only do exercise in textbooks. Hence, teachers should change activity by leading their learners to make sentences about the words with friends. To this activity, they have a chance to create a dialogue and communicate together. Then, teachers advise learners when they make mistakes. After they do exercises, teachers should reinforce the students by giving positive feedback when they have done well so that the students have positive attitude and motivation to learn the language.

5. Integrate a variety of learning tasks in a lesson

In order to cater to the different needs of individual students, teachers motivate students to learn English, they may metaphorically compare the students as sellers and customers. Therefore, students think that, if they buy product or service, they must be satisfied with it. To this view, the teachers should pay attention to what the students need in learning English language in the classroom. Consequently, the teachers should apply by relating to those who are going to graduate and find the jobs, so teachers thought and predicted that the students want to learn writing application letter for applying a job. This case, the students were assigned the task to write letter to apply for jobs. In addition, teachers should help/explain students to understand the tasks, if they need suggestion.

6. Create a threat-free environment to promote learning

Teachers may act that the students are their friends and they can share ideas with teachers. Williams & Burden (1997), mentioned that humanism has a number of messages for the language teachers such as to create a sense of belonging, encourage creativity, allow for choice, minimize criticism, encourage self-initiation and evaluation. By creating an activity, the teachers can give the choices of activities and let the students select the activities that they feel interested. For example, the project for students to act as a Master of TV program, youtubers, teachers allow the students to vote their acting and program by providing the choices of role play, namely, guide, news reporter, staff of the hotel, resort or restaurant. Then, they do the project by following the instruction and choose their act by themselves in plenary and recorded into CD. This project motivates the students to do as English speakers and learn how to do as much as possible.

7. Encourage self-learning and self-inquiry

In order to ask the students to do a task for independent learning, the teachers can guide students how to learn but not what to learn. The teachers set a challenging task for students to find the information individually in learning which is relevant with their learning topic in order to give a chance for students to learn by themselves. For example, teachers assign students to find information about how to interview in job application and how to write resume and application letter. This activity enables them to construct/explore

knowledge in learning and increase motivation by themselves. In addition, teacher may ask the students to help each other so that they will be close friends and they can share their ideas (Kafipour, Mahmoudi & Khojasteh 2018). With reference to previous suggestion, the author offers various ways depending on situation or each student. There are different students in the same class but the teachers may not divide them for training or teaching English. To this, the teacher can assign students activity concerned with the lesson after and outside class such a Task Based Learning.

Applying English activity with Task Based Learning (TBL)

Kiatkachatharn & Chopngam (2018) said that Task-Based Learning (TBL) is an approach in which learning revolves around the completion of meaningful tasks. In the TBL approach, the main focus is on the authentic use of language for genuine communication. In line with this approach, the author introduced video clips about movie reviews to the students and asked them to watch and listen to the clips, as well as to expose them how English is used in real life situations. This is one way to motivate their interest in English and make them realize how it is necessary to learn English in order to understand other people and to expand their horizon or view of the world. Then, the author asked the students to review a movie or a cartoon. Oxford (2006) claims that task-based learning motivates the students to improve their

listening skill (receptive skill) as well as speaking skill (productive skill). He continues "this task provides the main motivation; students generally want to achieve the task outcomes which involve them in working towards a goal". Since the students have watched the movies, they might need to speak as same as the reviewers. To this action, the students can be aroused by learning which is concerned with extrinsic motivation (the reviewers' speaking English) and intrinsic motivation (the students encourage themselves to act as similar as the speakers). Moreover, before the writer asked the students to do this task, she told them to know how the students were evaluated their task. Then, the students presented in the class, the writer gave them feedback in order to motivate them to improve on next time. To Task Based Learning (TBL), the writer sees that the task (movie review leads students to learn English from authentic material and they have chance to interact by the use of English in real situation.

Conclusion

There are various techniques to motivate students to become interested in learning English. For example, for a traditional language classroom, a teacher can use deductive learning. However, to encourage students to learn can be traditional motivating their curiosity and desire to learn by themselves can be more advantageous than forcing them to learn against their will. Since the students are different in their skills background

knowledge, attitudes, and individual beliefs, attitudes, and needs, these individual differences must be taken into account. Importantly, to motivate students' intrinsic motivation can be the teachers' strategies used and grading the students' tasks should not be forgotten because assessment or grading enables students' extrinsic motivation as well. Thus, the theory of motivation can be applied to English Language Teaching (ELT) so far. However, the teachers of English should be well-informed about the learning theories and approaches discussed above, because they help the teachers to understand which theory is most appropriate at a particular moment and on a particular topic.

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