

## MOTIVATION: AN INTRINSIC FACTOR FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

AASTHA SHARMA<sup>1</sup> & S. STEPHENJEBANESAN<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of English, Madras Christian College, Tamil Nadu, India

### ABSTRACT

There are many factors which affect the learning of a second language. In a classroom the students are from different socio-economic and cultural background. The level of reasoning or intellectual development and ability to acquire a language is different in each student. Thus there are many factors like age, intellectual development, schooling and social status, which affect the second language acquisition. This paper analyses and highlights an important psychological factor i.e. motivation, which affects the second language acquisition in a classroom. Studies on motivation confirm that a motivated student learns the language in an effective manner as he gets the inspiration from within to learn the language.

**KEYWORDS:** Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Second Language Learning (SLL), Motivation

### INTRODUCTION

Second language learning is a process which is affected by various factors. Mostly there are three factors affecting second language learning. They are the teacher, learner and method respectively. According to Collier (1988) the factors that affect second language acquisition and advancement in language learning depend on the learner's cognitive style, socio- economic background, formal schooling in first language and so on. Thus among other aspects, motivational variable has been identified as significant factor in second language acquisition. Gardner and his colleagues have analyzed motivation and its effects on second language acquisition quite comprehensively.

#### Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second-language acquisition is a process by which people learn another language in addition to their native language. Rod Ellis has given us a very vivid explanation regarding SLA. According to him "The field of second language acquisition (SLA) studies is characterized by two different traditions. One tradition is linguistic and focuses on the process by which learners build up their linguistic knowledge of the second language (L2). Here the focus is on learning.... The other tradition is psychological; it focuses on the different ways in which learners cope with the task of learning and using an L2. Here the focus is on learner.

#### What is Motivation?

Motivation is one of the key factors impacting successful second language acquisition. Motivation is an indispensable factor not only of the teaching-learning process, but of all of the actions human beings perform daily and throughout their lives. But, how can motivation be defined? Gardner (2010) explains that motivation is a construct that is difficult to define, but he identifies characteristics that motivated individuals display. According to him, motivated individuals express effort in attaining a goal, show persistence, attend to the tasks that are necessary to achieve the goals,

have a strong desire to attain their goal, enjoy the activities necessary to achieve their goal, are aroused in seeking their goals, have expectancies about their successes and failures. He says that when these individuals are achieving some degree of success, they demonstrate self-efficacy; they are self-confident about their achievements. They have reasons for their behavior, and these reasons are often called motives. Gardner (2010) refers to Keller's (1983:389) definition of motivation: "Motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect." But Gardner (2010) calls this definition an inaccurate one, since it does not identify all the elements that describe motivation. There is a definition of the term 'motivation' in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics. According to the dictionary, motivation is defined as:

The factors that determine a person's desire to do something. In Second Language Learning, learning may be affected differently by different types of motivation. Two types of motivation are sometimes distinguished:

- **Instrumental Motivation:** wanting to learn a language because it will be useful for certain "instrumental" goals, such as getting a job, reading a foreign newspaper, passing an examination.
- **Integrative Motivation:** wanting to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it. (1985:185)

#### The Influence of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

Now the question arises how motivation is responsible for successful second language Acquisition (SLA)? Dorneyi (2000a) gives an answer to this question by claiming motivation to be one of the two primary learner traits that determines learning success. He further states that motivation is not a static condition; it keeps on changing with time. Dorneyi (2007) mentions that, in second language learning, besides, the quality and quantity of L2 input, the nature of the language learning tasks, the teaching methodology applied, and various learner traits and strategies, motivating classroom environment is essential for achieving long term goals.

Many other researchers have also claimed that motivation is the key to learn a second language proficiently. Another significant study, which shows that motivation and SLA are closely related, is the one carried out by Masgoret and Gardner (2003). According to the study, "Hypothesis 1 states that the correlations of the attitude, motivation and orientation variables with achievement will be consistently positive and that motivation will correlate more highly with achievement than will the other variables."

Reece and Walker (1997) also supported this theory and say that motivation is a very significant factor in second language learning process. They assert that a less talented student who is highly motivated can accomplish higher success than the more talented student who is not well motivated. Sometimes students are already motivated when they enter the class then it is the duty of teacher to maintain that motivation and try to maximize it. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) believe that motivation is generally considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning. The motivation for learning a language can be judged through finding interest and enthusiasm of the learner in learning methods and materials used for language learning, and his attention and concentration in the various tasks and activities going on in the classroom throughout his stay in the classroom. Researchers have shown that incorporation of new elements like goal-settings, casual attributions into the existing theoretical models is expected to result in more elaborate models of language learning motivation (Tremblay & Gardner 1995).

### The Role of Teacher in Motivating the Students

A teacher plays a substantial role in increasing the level of motivation in second language acquisition among students. The students need constant motivation to learn the second language. Motivation depends on the social interaction between the teacher and the learner. Many researchers believe that teachers can be influential in motivating students and to create an effective learning environment teacher ought to motivate students. Cooper & McIntyre (1998) in their book, *Effective Teaching and Learning: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives* have given the due importance to teachers in motivating the students in SLA. According to them the success of a teacher in second language acquisition in school affects directly the success of learners. They further say that the more successful the teacher is in focusing and facilitating effective pupil calibration, the more effective the teacher will be in enabling effective pupil learning. Dorneyi (1996) has also supported the role of teachers in increasing the level of motivation in second language acquisition. According to him in a learning situation, the teacher is one of the motivational components which has a vital impact and bearings on students' learning achievement as well as motivational disposition which can be assessed in terms of variables such as grades, attitudes toward learning English, need for achievement, motivational intensity, anxiety in class, self-evaluation of English competence, and satisfaction.

A teacher should come up with many motivational strategies which makes the students enthusiastic about second language learning. But the teacher should keep in mind that all the students are not similar. Every strategy cannot work in all the circumstances. Some strategies can give fantastic results in a set of students and same strategy can dramatically fail in the other set of students. So the teacher should keep the various traits of learners in mind while planning the strategies.

Kristmanson (2000) has proposed some concepts to teachers for attaining effective learning environment. According to him we can achieve learning environment by:

- Creating a friendly atmosphere where students get encouragement to take risks.
- Supporting and Inspiring students when they have lack of confidence in certain areas
- Giving students ample opportunities to talk about themselves, their culture, their areas of interest etc.
- Encouraging students to look out for the opportunities in their daily lives where they can use the target language.
- Avoiding negative criticism by correcting students in a negative, snappy and harsh way, organizing surprise tests or quizzes etc.
- Creating an environment which is full of energy and enthusiasm for students and sometimes when the teacher lacks the energy, arrange for activities that need the students to put forward the majority of the energy.
- Boosting a sense of dedication and constant commitment to the language learning assignment through meaningful, appropriate and accurate language learning activities.

### CONCLUSIONS

There are many factors which affect the Second Language Learning. As discussed above Motivation is one of the most important individual factors which contribute in achieving second language learning efficiently. Many researchers have studied and found that motivated students are more successful in second language learning than those who are not

motivated. So teachers should identify certain motivational strategies that are according to the characteristics of the students.

## REFERENCES

1. Collier, V. P. (1988). The Effect of Age on Acquisition of a Second Language for School. *New Focus*. The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. No: 2, Winter: 1987-1988.
2. Cooper, P. & McIntyre D. (1998). *Effective Teaching and Learning. Teachers' and Students' Perspectives*. Open University Press. Great Britain: Biddles Limited, Guildford and King's Lynn.
3. Crookes, G. & Schmidt, R. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the Research Agenda. *Language Learning* 41: 469-512.
4. Dornyei, Z. (2006) Creating a motivating classroom environment. In J. Cummins and C. Davison (eds) *The Handbook of English Language Teaching*. New York: Springer
5. Dornyei, Z. (2001a) *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Longman
6. Dornyei, Z. (1996). Moving language learning motivation to a larger platform for theory and practice. In R.L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Pathways to the new century* (pp.71-80). Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press.
7. Ellis, Rod. *Second Language Learning and Second Language Learners: Growth and Diversity* <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ404016.pdf>
8. Gardner, C.R. 2010. *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition: The Socio- educational Model*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
9. Keller, J.M (1983). "Motivational Design of Instruction". *Instructional Design Theories and Models: An Overview of their Current Status*. Ed. Reigelruth, C.M. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 384-434
10. Kristmanson, P. (2000). Affect in the Second Language Classroom: How to Create an Emotional Climate. *Reflexions* May//mai 2000 Vol. 19 No. 2
11. Masgoret, A.M. and R.C., Gardner. 2003 "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning: A Meta-Analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and Associates". *Attitudes, Orientations, and Motivations in Language Learning: Advances in Theory, Research and Applications*. Ed. Dornyei, Z. Malden (USA): Blackwell. 167-210
12. Reece, I & Walker, S. (1997). *Teaching, Training and Learning. A Practical Guide*. (Third Ed.). Great Britain: Business Education Publishers Limited.
13. Richards, J., Platt, J. and H, Weber. 1985. *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. Essex: Longman Group Limited.
14. Tremblay P & R Gardner, R. (1995). Expanding the Motivation Construct in Language Learning. *The Modern Language Journal*. 79: 505-520.