Motivational Strategies in Teaching English as Foreign Language--------Applying Motivation plan in TEFL

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"Motivating young people is a fundamental part of what it is to be a teacher."
------------Smith, 2001

Abstract

What motivational strategies can we find using to create the learning conditions to build and maintain the motivation in foreign language learning? This paper's purpose is discussing motivational strategies in teaching English as foreign language (TEFL) and incorporating motivational strategies into motivation plan. In introduction, we'll talk about how motivation is important in foreign language and why we need a motivation plan. Then, we do an overview about motivation in foreign language; specify the motivational strategies as well. In the overview, we also define the main types of motivational strategies in TEFL. Based on these theories and Wlodkowski's learner's motivation circle, which separate the learning sequence into beginning phase, during phase and ending phase, in each phase, we set objectives in details and design different strategies to motivate students to learn English. I'll apply the motivation plan when I do practice and because the words in paper are limited, I couldn't describe all the motivational strategies that I incorporated. Anyhow, I introduce the main motivational strategies in foreign language; specify the learning activities and teachers behaviours as well. Finally, I hope this paper that can be a guild to improving my instruction and increasing learners' achievement.

Key words: motivational strategies, TEFL, action plan

1. Introduction

Why are some students successful at language learning while others are not? If we knew the answer to hat question the job of teaching and learning a language would be easy. We don't, of course, but we can point to a number of factors that seem to have a strong effect on a student's success or failure. Harmer (1991) said that people involved in language teaching say that students who really want to learn will succeed whatever the circumstance in which they study. All teachers can think of situation in which certain " motivated " students do significantly better than their peers; students frequently succeed in what appear to be unfavourable conditions; they succeed despite using methods which experts consider unsatisfactory (Harmer, 1991). In the face of such phenomena it seems reasonable to suggest that the motivation that students bring to class is the biggest single factor affecting their success (Harmer, 1991).

Unfortunately, there are some problems about motivation. I couldn't specify all of them, but I'll give two typical examples. As an English teacher in China, I recognize there is a common phenomenon in universities of China: firstly, few students enjoy learning English. Most of them learn English just for preparing for the varieties examinations (such as final examination, TOFEL, ILSTS, GRE, etc.). Secondly, many students have lacked of the spirit of learning English. Because passing the Entrance Examination to Universities, they often feel satisfactory and don't want to get progress in universities. There are some common characteristics in the " demotivated " or "disaffected" students in foreign language learning. Chambers. G (2000) defined them as following points:

- Non-completion of assignment;
- Lack of persistence and expectation of failure when attempting new tasks;
- High level of dependency on sympathetic teachers (needing constant attention, direction, supervision and reassurance);

- Non-attendance and poor attendance;
- Frequent expression of view that school is boring and irrelevant
- Apathetic non-participation in the classroom

Furthermore, when we as teachers ask questions such as "What can I do to help my learners get started?" or " What can I do to help them put more effort into their learning?" or " What can I do to help them want to learn what I have to offer?" Facing such phenomenon, facing such questions, we have to say a motivation plan is quite necessary. As learning increase, we would like to see motivation increase along with it. Without a motivation plan, it is difficult to build or strengthen their motivation. There is no structure for consistent application. Probably one of the most helpful aspects of any plan is that it reminds us of what to do and when to do it. Without a plan, motivation too often becomes a trial-and-error lacking cohesion and continuity during instruction (Wlodkowski, 1985).

2. Overview

2.1 Motivation in foreign language learning

Motive: a factor or circumstance that induces a person press to act in a particular way (Oxford dictionary, 2000). Motivate: supply a motive to: be the motive of: cause (a person) to act in a particular way: stimulate the interest (of a person in an activity).

Motivation: The impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts (Ames, 1989). Furthermore, most psychologists concerned with learning and education use the word *motivation* to describe those processes that can (a) arouses and instigate behaviour, (b) give direction or purpose to behaviour, (c) continue to allow behaviour to persist, and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behaviour (Wlodkowski, 1985).
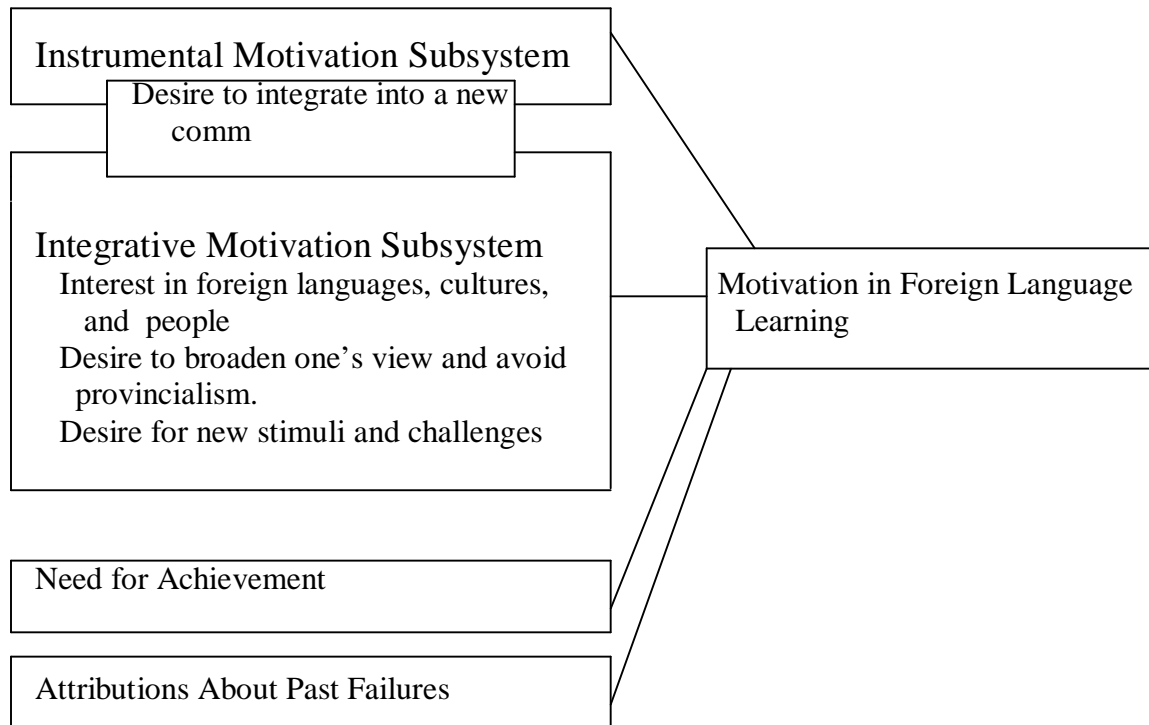
Early theories

Far and away the most important work done in this area (motivation and foreign language learning) has been by Robert Gardner (earlier with Wallace Lambert, and later with research associates at the University of Western Ontario). Carder and Lambert (1972) suggested that those people who identify positively in this way would like to resemble the foreign peoples concerned, to understand their culture, and to be able to participate in it. This pattern of motivation they label an *integrative orientation*. It is a particularly important source of motivation because it is firmly based in over an extended period and to sustain learning effort over the time that is necessary to attain language learning success.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) also described an *instrumental orientation* to language learning. This type of motivation is based on the advantages that can accrue if a language is known, e.g. professional advancement; capacity to do one's job well; ability to read useful material in the target language; potential to exploit members of the foreign culture, etc. Gardner and Lambert hypothesized in the personality of the learner, and therefore, more dependent on fallible external pressures. As a result, the learner is less likely to expend effort to achieve cumulative progress.

There also are other researches about this area. The general conclusion from this early research is that there is some evidence in support of the Gardner---Lambert (1972) position, but other data, which are not so favourable. In any case, we can conclude that these early studies contained considerable promise; that they may important progress in the development of measurement techniques and that they were worth pursuing (Skehan, 1989).

Contemporary research

In recent years, Dornyei,Z has great contribution to this field. His construction of motivation in foreign language (see figure 1) stated that instrumental and integrative motives significantly contribute to motivation in foreign language learning Furthermore, He indicated that **need for achievement** and **attributions about past failures** also are the components of the motivational construct. And he stated the **instrumental motivational subsystem** and **need for achievement** especially, play a significant role, whereas the desire to go beyond this level is associated with integrative motives.

Figure 1: Motivation in Foreign Language Learning (Dornyei, 1995)

Instrumental Motivation Subsystem

Desire to integrate into a new comm

Integrative Motivation Subsystem
Interest in foreign languages, cultures, and people
Desire to broaden one's view and avoid provincialism.
Desire for new stimuli and challenges

Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

Need for Achievement

Attributions About Past Failures

2.2 Specific the motivational strategies

We have already seen the relationship between motivation and foreign language, now we turn next to specific the motivational strategies.

Main types of motivational strategies

According to *Dörnyei* (1999)' work, he incorporated the motivational strategies that used in teaching English as foreign language into the following main types:

Generating initial motivation

Creating the basic motivational conditions

- Adopting appropriate teacher behaviour and establishing rapport with the students
- Creating a pleasant and safe classroom atmosphere
- Creating a cohesive learner group

Enhancing the learners language-related values and attitudes

- Focus on 'integrativeness'
- Focus on the anticipated intrinsic pleasure of learning
- Focus on instrumental incentives

> *Making the curriculum relevant for the learners*
> *Increasing the learners' expectancy of success*

Maintaining and protecting motivation

> *Helping learners to set appropriate (proximal and specific)*
> *sub goals for themselves*
> *Increasing the quality of the learning experience*
> *Increasing the learners' self-confidence*

- Providing regular experiences of success
- Reducing classroom anxiety

- Promoting favourable self-conceptions of foreign language learning competence
    Creating learner autonomy
    Adopting an active socialising role (by the teacher)
    Raising the learners' awareness of motivation maintenance strategies
- Emotion control
- Motivation control
- Environmental control

Rounding off the learning experience: Encouraging positive self –evaluation

> *Promoting attributions to effort rather than to ability*
> *Increasing learner satisfaction*

These strategies can then be translated by the instructor into learning activities or instructor behaviours that are integrated into the learning sequence. Based on these theories, I'll translate some of the strategies in my motivation plan.

I. Action plan------Motivational plan

We have already done an overview in motivation in TEFL. The question now is " How do we arrange and use these motivational strategies for instructional plan?" This is seems like an appropriate time to say a few words about motivation plan in general. Lesson plan and instructional design have existed, but not with continuous attention to and detail for motivated learning throughout the instructional sequence (Wlodkowski, 1985). One can plan an effective learning sequence, but that does not mean the learners will be motivated while learning. I contend motivational plan is necessary. Otherwise, "A person may, at best, learn but also dislike what has been learned or the learning process itself (Wlodkowski, 1985)."

Every learning sequence, whether it lasts twenty minutes or twenty hours, can be divided according to a time continuum. There is always a beginning, middle, and an end. There are effective things that can be done during each of these phases to enhance learner motivation. Each phase also relates to the other in forming a dynamic whole that, when proper motivational strategies are applied according to their particular phase, enhances the overall learning experience and catalyses the learner's positive return to the learning situation. The various learning activities that make up the sequence can be analysed in terms of when they occur and which motivational strategies they can incorporate in order to maximize their motivational influence throughout the sequence.

I formulate my motivational plan and divided it into the beginning phase, middle phase and ending phase. It is integrated with my instructional plan. The strategies in *Generating initial motivation* should put into the beginning phase, the strategies in *Maintaining and protecting motivation* should put into the middle phase, and the strategies in *Maintaining and protecting motivation* should put into the ending phase. Certainly sometimes they will be mingled to use. And furthermore, this motivation plan will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writhing in teaching English as foreign language.

Aim: help students build and maintain motivation in foreign language learning sequence

Beginning learning process: Generating initial motivation

Objectives: helping students develop positive attitudes toward learning; recognizing and responding to needs of students.

Strategy 1: **Make the first experience with the subject as positive as possible**

This strategy is base on the idea that " first impressions are important." The students' first impression, once formed, will strongly influence how they accept and receive future experiences with the subject. Anything we can do as teachers to make that first lesson or initial contact as safe, successful, and interesting as possible will increase students motivation for future involvement with foreign language learning.

Learning Activity or teachers behaviour:

- We might on the first day of class have each person fluently learn some of the most essential expressions for visiting and travelling in the related culture.
- We can concretely indicate our cooperative intentions to help students learn.
- Let them introduce themselves in English and we should give the introduction firstly.

Strategy 2: **Use needs assessment techniques to discover and emphasize the felt needs of learners in the learning process** (Wlodkowski, 1985).

Why do people want to learn foreign languages? Why do people want to study English? Is it for pleasure? Is it because they want to understand Shakespeare? Maybe they want to get a better job. Different people have different needs. The students' motivation to learn will be enhanced when they find an instructor who respect these needs and creates a learning process by which these needs can be met (Wlodkowski, 1985).

Learning Activity or teachers behaviour:

The simplest and direct method is to ask the students, through *interviews, group discussion*, or *questionnaires*, some semblance of the question " What do you most want to get out of this learning experience?"

Other strategies in the beginning phase:

- Creating realistic learner beliefs
- Presenting tasks in a motivationally conducive manner

During learning process: *Maintaining and protecting motivation*

Objectives: Making learning Stimulating; integrating Emotions with learning.

Strategy 3: **Helping learners to set appropriate goals for themselves**

Because every one has their own needs, every one should have their own proximal and specific goals to achieve their needs. For example, I, who has the long goal to be a good English teacher, and my sub goal in this period, am to finish the paper. Without goals, we hard to motivate ourselves to do something. " Motivation requires setting goals either by yourself or with others (Smith I, 2000)

Strategy 4: **Increasing the quality of the learning experience**

- Increasing the attractiveness of the course content
- Arousing and sustaining the students' curiosity and attention
- Increasing the students' interest and involvement in the tasks

Learning activity and teachers behaviour:

We cannot directly motivate learners. We can make things stimulating and attractive. We can provide opportunity and incentives. We can offer and organize learning activities which focus on listening, speaking reading and writhing. Such as games, role-playing, English evening, English corner, make pen friends and so forth. There are really many activities can be used, I couldn't describe them as details here, but I'll act and choose some of them in my instruction process.

Action points: Since the "during phase " of learning it the longest and contains the highest number of instructional activities, our approach to stimulation is aided by motivational strategies that flexible, creative, and constantly applied. There are also some other strategies in this phase.

Strategy 5**: Increasing the learners' self-confidence**

- Allowing students real choices
- Sharing responsibility with the students for organising their learning process and giving them positions of genuine authority
- Encouraging student contributions, peer teaching and project work

Strategy 6: **Adopting an active socialising role (by the teacher)**

- Projecting enthusiasm and demonstrating motivated behaviour
- Modelling student interest in foreign language learning

Ending learning process: Rounding off the learning experience: Encouraging positive self –evaluation

Objective: Building learners competence and maximizing reinforcement
Strategy 7: **Increasing learner satisfaction**

Learning activity and teachers behaviour:

- Creating finished products
- Taking regular stock of progress
- Celebrating success
- Using motivationally appropriate feedback, praise and rewards

Action points: Learners want to be competent and often seek learning as a means to this end. But competence is not just the resulting benefit of a learning achievement (Wlodkowski, 1985). It is, quite importantly for motivation, the personal feeling and beliefs that the process of learning can enhance in the learners themselves while they are learning.

II. Conclusion

Applying motivation plan in teaching English, as foreign language is new approach to explore the motivation in TEFL. During this attempt, I design and incorporate some motivational strategies throughout the learning sequence, from beginning phase to ending phase. I'll carry it out in the future.

In this model, the most difficulty question is: how can I know if and when the learners are motivated? In fact, based on the present state of knowledge in the field of motivation, it is currently impossible to accurately respond to this question. Although we cannot precisely evaluate the motivation of learners, there are several approaches we can use to estimate and increase our awareness of the presence and quality of motivation among them ad they are learning, such as personal observation, reflective diary instruments.

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