Teacher Influence on Learner Motivation

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学習者の意欲における教師の影響

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Abstract

This paper explores the issue of teacher influence on L2 learner motivation. In general, teachers are regarded as one of the influential factors affecting learner motivation. Yet, despite its acknowledged importance, this issue has only begun to be addressed in the field of L2 learning. Therefore, in this paper, previous studies which either directly focus on teacher influence on learner motivation or on teacher influence generally on a learner with motivation as a pertinent issue will be reviewed. Finally, a future research agenda in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of this issue will be suggested.

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　この論文は第二言語及び外国語学習者の意欲に与える教師の影響について考察する。学習者の意欲に対して教師は重要な存在であると認識されているが、その重要性に反して、その問題への取り組みはまだ十分に行われていない。この論文では、教師が第二及び外国語学習者に与える影響を扱う先行研究を検討し、その上でこれから必要とされる研究の方向性を探っていく。

Introduction

Within the field of Second Language Education (SLE), motivation is one of the most highly studied issues of cognition, and is widely acknowledged as a principal determinant in learning a second/foreign language. One of the pioneering orientations in motivation studies is the socio-educational model proposed by Gardner (1985) and his colleagues. Until early 1990s, this study exerted a great deal of influence upon most of the subsequent motivation studies. In the early 1990s, however, because of the provocative article by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) calling for education-friendly L2 motivation research, the field became somewhat more expansive. Since then, there have been many studies in this new direction and considerable debate has been generated around the issue. In other words, there has been more of a spotlight on issues related to motivation in SLE. Based on the integration of educational considerations into the study of motivation, some researchers have proposed new constructs of motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997). These constructs have captured a more expansive dimension of motivation and have been developed specifically for use in a language classroom. Learning a second or foreign language (L2) in a classroom context entails more than a socio-educational approach allows for. Among classroom related factors, such as materials, teachers and classroom atmosphere, teacher's influence on learners' motivation is widely recognised although its importance has been typically overlooked (Dörnyei, 2001a).

The purpose of this paper is to survey existing research on teacher influence on learner motivation in an L2 language classroom. I firstly intend to look at the brief development of motivation studies in the field of SLE. Then, I will review the findings of previous studies which either directly focus on teacher influence on learner motivation or on teacher influence generally on a learner with motivation as a pertinent issue. Finally, I will discuss a possible future research agenda in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of this issue.

Toward a More Educationally Oriented Approach in L2 Motivation Studies

Motivation is one of the most highly studied issues within the field of SLE, and is widely acknowledged as one of the key issues and a principal determinant in learning. One of the pioneering and most influential orientations in this tradition of L2 motivation studies is the socio-educational model of language learning proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Gardner (1979, 1985, 1988). This approach has proposed the most famous concepts, integrative and instrumental orientations. The former was defined as "the willingness to be like valued members of the language community" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271), and the latter concerns utilitarian aspects associated with language learning

such as career promotion. Studies carried out by Gardner and his colleagues (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972) showed that integrative orientation contributes more to success in learning the language than instrumental orientation[1]. Moreover, as this distinction has exerted considerable influence, later studies on L2 motivation have been oriented around these two focal points (e.g., Ellis, 1994 for summary), and have tried to measure the association and define better the relationship between various aspects of motivation and L2 learning achievement.

However, some scholars (e.g., Au, 1988; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) argue against the applicability of the socio-educational model across different contexts; this integrative motivation does not play such a significant role in a foreign language learning context where such integration will be less likely to happen. In addition, as shown in the Leaver's (2003) study, highly ethnocentric students with less integrative motivation have achieved very high levels of proficiency of the target language. Thus, as Dörnyei (1994a) rightly points out, there are many reasons for people to learn languages and these reasons do not neatly fit this instrumental and integrative distinction proposed by Gardner and his colleagues.

In the early 1990s, however, because of the influential article published by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) mentioned earlier, the orientation to L2 motivation research turned somewhat more expansive. They argue that the predominance of one particular model will be detrimental for possible development and expansion of the field, and they call for education-friendly motivation research in order to develop a theoretical framework specifically for use in a language classroom by incorporating various factors that could influence a learner's motivation as learning L2 in a classroom context entails more than a socio-educational approach allows for. Since then, there have been many studies in this new vein and considerable debate has been generated around this issue (e.g., Dörnyei 1994a, 1994b; Gardner & Tremblay 1994a, 1994b; Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In other words, there has been more of a spotlight on issues related to motivation in SLE, and indeed it has provided a liberating influence on motivation research, and the field of L2 motivation studies has become rejuvenated in what Gardner and Tremblay (1994a) call the "motivational renaissance" of the 1990s.

A new conception of motivation has emerged, contrary to the traditional way of perceiving it as a phenomenon where "...primary emphasis is placed on attitudes and other social psychological aspects of SL learning" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 469). Accordingly, some new constructs of L2 learning motivation have been proposed (e.g., Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, Dörnyei, 1994a; Williams & Burden, 1997). These constructs have captured a more expansive dimension of motivation by including aspects which were not included in the socio-educational approach. Indeed, they have been developed specifically

for use in a language classroom by incorporating various factors that could influence a learner's motivation.

It is worth noting that many studies on L2 motivation have tried to capture its nature by developing various perspectives such as task motivation, teacher motivation, willingness to communicate (see Dörnyei, 2001b for summary), and looking at the issue from a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretic perspective (e.g., Rueda & Moll, 1994; Ushioda, 2003).

Teacher Influence on Learner Motivation in Language Classroom

Generally speaking, in a foreign language learning context, the language is taught in school just for a few hours a week, and has no status as a daily medium of communication. Therefore, classroom experience will be one of the influential determinants for the quality of learners' learning experience, which in turn will affect their motivation. The teacher is the prime source of the new language, in contrast with the natural setting where exposure is often genuinely situational. Indeed, the teacher is a complex and key figure who influences the motivational quality of learning (Dörnyei, 2001 a, p. 35), and plays a pivotal role in mediating the growth of motivation (Ushioda, 2003, p. 96).

Acknowledging the importance of classroom teacher, in the field of L1 instructional communication, for example, several studies investigating teacher impact on changes in learner motivation have been carried out (e.g., Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Gorham & Christophel, 1992), all of which found significant positive and negative influence on learner motivation. For example, Christophel and Gorham (1995) found that the teacher's use of immediacy behaviour, which means "the perceived physical and/or psychological closeness between people" (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 36), influences students' motivation in the following way: Teacher's appropriate use of immediacy behaviours positively affects learner motivation whereas the lack of learner motivation is attributed to teacher's inappropriate use of them.

In spite of the acknowledged significance of teachers' influence on learning, studies on L2 motivation have not given enough thought to learner motivational change in relation to teacher influence (Dörnyei, 1998, 2001a). However, as we have seen, in the education-friendly orientation, SLE researchers have attempted to incorporate this teacher-specific factor into the research.

Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) investigated teachers' interpretation of their own impact on learner motivation and carried out a nation-wide survey study among 200 Hungarian teachers of English from diverse contexts to learn about their attitudes toward various motivational techniques and the frequency with which they implemented them in their own teaching practice. The results revealed that the participants considered the teacher's

own behaviour to be the most important motivational factor. At the same time, the study also showed that it is one of the most underused motivational resources in their classroom practice. By the same token, Chambers (1999) conducted research employing questionnaires and interviews in a different context. He examined 191 British secondary school learners (age 11−18) of German, and came to the conclusion that of all the possible factors contributing to the students' positive or negative appraisal of L2 learning, teachers were the key. In other words, he arrived at the same conclusion as that of the Dörnyei and Csizer's study. Interestingly, he investigated teachers' perspective and found that teachers have excluded themselves from the negative factors on learner motivation.

Noels, Clément and Pelletier (1999) conducted a study for the purpose of examining the motivational impact of a teacher's communicative style on their students. In particular, they looked at the degree to which teachers supported student autonomy and the amount of useful feedback they gave students about their learning process. They found that the degree to which teachers supported student autonomy and the amount of useful feedback they provided was positively related to student self-determination and enjoyment[2].

On the other hand, teachers can negatively affect learner motivation, and demotivate them. According to Dörnyei (2001a), the phenomenon of demotivation is a concept that involves "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). If such forces exist, it would seem of tantamount importance to explore and comprehend their nature, and to isolate and describe the factors that degrade student motivation. However, this area has not been given much attention, which is troubling considering the fact that demotivation is a salient phenomenon seen in learners of L2. There are a few relevant studies in L2 motivation research field, which are discussed below.

Oxford (1998) asked 250 students to write about their learning experiences over five years using various prompts and carried out a content analysis of essays. She found that teachers are influential in causing learner demotivation in terms of their personal communication with their students, their attitudes toward the course or the material, and conflicts between teaching styles and learning styles. Ushioda (1998) also reports the case of 20 Irish learners of French in Dublin, Ireland, who were asked to identify motivational factors in their L2-related learning experience. She found that teachers' assessment methods, in which grades were bestowed in a hypercritical manner, was negatively related to learner's motivation. Also, Dörnyei (1998) conducted research with 50 secondary school student participants identified as being demotivated by their teachers or peers, in various schools in Budapest, Hungary, studying German or English as an L2. He found that factors involving the teacher were most influential, especially when it came to teacher's personality, commitment to the work, attention paid to the students, competence, teaching

method, style, and rapport with students. In addition, Dörnyei (1998) mentions, although indirectly, that teacher dominance within a classroom could influence students' declining motivation. Most recently, Lantolf and Genung (2002) conducted a case study of a graduate student learning Chinese as a foreign language in a summer intensive course. By analysing the learner's diary and her retrospective written commentary, they found that the learner became demotivated because of the teacher's authoritative use of power. Although the student completed the course and yielded to the teacher's power by shifting her goals for learning the language in order to finish the course, the teacher did make a negative impact on her motivation.

From the findings discovered in a rather limited number of studies in the second language education research, we have begun to see that teachers have an influential motivational impact on learner motivation from two opposite perspectives. However, we still do not understand the exact dimensions of this influence, nor how they may or may not relate with other aspects described in other studies of motivation. More research is surely needed. In the next section, therefore, some implications for future research will also be discussed.

Future Research Agenda

All the findings reviewed in the previous section show that teachers have considerable influence on learner motivation, and that several general implications exist pertinent to classroom practice. Those findings are pioneering and significant to the field. Yet, we do not know the exact dimensions of the influence, nor how they may or may not relate to other aspects described in other studies of motivation. Indeed, we have just embarked on a new stage to understand the impact of teachers on learner motivation. Therefore, more research dealing with this issue is very much needed in order to deepen our understanding about this issue.

As for the future research issues, Dörnyei (1994a, 2001) suggests teacher-related motivational factors in L2 classrooms be worth being explored: Affiliative motives (to please the teacher), teacher's authority type (controlling vs. autonomy-supporting), and direct and systematic socialization of student motivation[3]. In fact, there are very few studies directly dealing with one of these teacher-related factors in L2 learner motivation (e.g., Noels, Clément and Pelletier, 1999). More studies are surely needed in order to better understand multidimensional features of motivation in a classroom context, particularly by incorporating both teachers' viewpoints on motivation (Sakui, n.d.) and learners' perspective (Ushioda, 1993). The importance of listening to the voices from both sides is evident when we take into account the dynamic nature of classroom life: Each participant holds different beliefs and has a different character, facts which will surely affect their

interpretation of the same classroom events (van Lier, 1988). In this regard, a particular teacher's behaviour will not necessarily be interpreted in the same manner by all the students. Conversely, it is possible that what students experience in a class may not correspond to what the teacher assumes they experience (e.g., Block, 1996). Therefore, voices of teachers and learners are important in any consideration of motivation. By doing so, we will be able to incorporate the findings into curriculum development and teacher education.

Regarding research methodology, almost all of the studies on motivation used quantitative methods not withstanding the educational shift in the field in 1990's (Dörnyei, 1998, 2001a, 2001b). For instance, almost all the studies related to teacher influence on learner motivation reviewed in this paper were conducted in late 1990's, and it is evident that all the studies except that of Ushioda (1998) and Lantolf and Genung (2002), which are qualitative and/or longitudinal, use cross-sectional and quantitative research. I propose that this orientation be reconsidered in order to take the complex nature of learning motivation into consideration. A motivation research model should not focus only on cross -sectional and quantitative data. Qualitative and longitudinal methods are needed to complement the existing research in this field (Dörnyei, 2001b) because motivation is a dynamic process and changes over time. In addition, as Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) justifiably claim, these two perspectives should be viewed as complementary rather than competing concepts.

Thus, in order to examine more about the issue of teachers' motivational impact on learners, more classroom-based empirical studies are needed. At the same time, the orientation of the research also needs to be reconsidered. More qualitative and longitudinal research looking at particular classroom events (for example, teacher behavior both from teachers' and learners' perspectives), is strongly warranted for future studies.

Conclusion and Implications

The new research orientation in L2 motivation research takes a broader perspective including both socio-cultural and educational factors, and it sheds light upon some neglected or ignored aspects in the traditional perspective, one of which is the focus of this paper, teacher influence on learner motivation. What we have learned from the findings of the limited number of studies on this issue, is the fact that teachers do influence learner motivation, and that this influence constitutes a major part of the overall picture of learner. At the same time, due to the small amount of research available on this subject, it is difficult for us to comprehend teacher influence on learner motivation in depth and in detail. Hence, more research incorporating both teachers' and learners' perspectives is needed. In terms of possible research methods, for the purpose of exploring this issue

more deeply and fully capturing the complicated and dynamic nature of motivation, more use of qualitative and longitudinal research methods would be beneficial to research on this topic since they could complement the traditional quantitative and cross-sectional research methods. In conclusion, I argue that more classroom-based research should be conducted. The findings will be of use in bridging theory and classroom practice so that learners of a foreign language will have more meaningful and fruitful experiences.

Notes

（1） Although this distinction is still widely used, it should be noted that Gardner himself does not regard integrative motivation as essential in language learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991a).

（2） Considering the relationship between motivation and autonomy, it is claimed they are positively related (e.g., Assor, Kaplan & Roth, 2002; Benson, 2000; Ushioda, 1996, 1998, 2001).

（3） This involves modelling, task presentation and two types of feedback: information feedback, which comments on competence, and controlling feedback, which judges performance against external standards.

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