

How to Stimulate the Students' Motivation in English Learning?

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Abstract. Motivation is the inner cause and power of stimulating one's action. At the same time, motivation is the psychological state for individual to start and maintain action. The study of motivation plays an important role in foreign language teaching. It guides the learners to make learning direction progress towards goals. Foreign language learning motivation is one of the most important factors to affect the learning result. Therefore, stimulating the students' interests in learning from all aspects, making the students have enthusiasms in learning English and maintaining the motivation are the main problems which the teachers should pay attention to. Especially, through the stimulation of the intrinsic motivation, teachers could make the students have a long desire in learning to receive good learning result. Educators should combine the intrinsic motivation and the formed motivation of the students and maintain them for a long period.

1. Introduction

Foreign language learning has always been a difficult task for Chinese students and teachers, we spend much time and money on it. However, the result is not satisfying. So many people did research and found that there are many factors which affect the learning result. Jakobovits did a research and it showed the main factor influencing foreign language learning is learning motivation. In the process of learning language, the motivation takes up 33% while intelligence only takes up 20%, ability takes up 30%, other factors takes up 14% (Jakobovits, L., 1970:78). We can see the role learning motivation plays in a process of foreign language learning. Weman has ever visited 9 countries and did over 80 researches and the survey shows that 98% teachers consider stimulating students' motivation as the most difficult task. Therefore, studying the motivation theory and working out the ways to stimulate the students' learning motivation are an important work we should do.

2. Theoretical Study

The motivation in foreign language learning has been a hot topic since 1940. Many experts and teachers had studied this topic from various angles both at home and abroad. At the end of 1950s, Gardner and Lambert studied motivation in learning. They emphasized the social characteristics of languages. Gardner and Lambert's ideas about motivation were largely shaped by Morwer's view of L1 acquisition, Morwer attributed a child's quest for identity, initially with members of the child's immediate family and then later with members of the larger speech community. Borrowing the concept of identification from Morwer, Gardner and Lambert proposed a construct they called integrative motivation. A learner is said to be integrative motivation when the learner wishes to identify with another ethnolinguistic group. By contrasting to integrative motivation, Gardner and Lambert introduced the concept of instrumental motivation, in which the learner is motivated to learn an L2 for utilitarian purposes, such as furthering a career, improving social status or meeting an educational requirement.

Harmer gave the definition of motivation: "motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action". Modern Chinese Dictionary gives the definition about motivation like this "the idea to push somebody engage in some action." Spolsky

thinks there are 3 aspects in motivation: “attitude, desire for learning and efforts for learning”. It seems to be the case that if we perceive a goal (that is something we wish to achieve) and if that goal is sufficiently attractive, we will be strongly motivated to do whatever is necessary to reach that goal. Goals may be of many different types; for example, we may work overtime in order to earn money and reach the goal of owning a stereo set.

As one of the key subjective factors, motivation plays an important role in language learning. Just based on the basic meaning of motivation many language learners classify the motivation in different ways. Deci and Ryan divided it into two types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is based on the learners’ interest in the task. The learners may find all kinds of learning tasks they are asked to do intrinsically motivating. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is derived from the factors outside, for instance, in order to get promotion in business or to avoid punishment, etc. Moreover, extrinsic motivation is contained by integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and social group motivation and achieved motivation.

Motivation is a kind of complex phenomenon. These four types of motivation should be considered as complementary rather than as distinct and oppositional. Learners can be both integratively and instrumentally motivated at the same time. Motivation can result from learning as well as cause it. There are many classifications of motivation according to different experts, here Brown is worth mentioning. He identifies three types of motivation: a. global motivation, which consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning a L2; b. situational motivation, which varies according to the situation in which learning takes place; c. task motivation, which is for performing particular learning tasks. This classification corresponds to the theory of Gardner and Lambert. These are the theoretical base as well. These types of motivation exist in every person, even one person does not have only one motivation to learn language. Instrumental and extrinsic motivations can also motivate the students to put their efforts on learning language well. However, the drive from that motivation is short –termed. In 2002 Peng Jinding did a research among 135 college students. The survey shows that 35% learners belong to the intrinsic motivation and 63% belong to extrinsic motivation. At the same time, they find the students who are motivated by their intrinsic motivation are better than the extrinsic ones. Therefore, we should study how to turn the extrinsic motivation to intrinsic one and make the learners have a sense of being members of the community in which the target language is used.

3. Practice: The Stimulation and Cultivation of Learning Motivation

Motivation is the result of the external cause. Deci and Ryan said, when the learners “curiosity is stimulated, it produces inner motivation”. When the learning environment provides challenging, stimulating and free atmosphere, their initiatives are high. If the learners are interested in the culture, customs or the press in the target language community. The surroundings will motivate themselves. Therefore, we can explore the situational teaching method to stimulate the learners’ interest, strengthen the students’ eagerness for knowledge. The teacher sets up comfortable surroundings, makes the learners in a best state of learning. Meanwhile, we can make use of pictures, videos, slides and other audio-visual teaching materials .By these means, we make them get more perceptual knowledge. The goal of learning English is for communication. Then we can learn it in a communicative process. Talking to foreigners is a good opportunity to stimulate the learners and practice oral English. When they talk to foreigners in simple way, they will get the sense of fulfilment and get more pleasure in using the language. That sense of achievement is a push to go on studying.

More and more parents realize the importance to master a second language. At the same time, learning a second language is a long and hard process. A lot of linguists had studied the critical time for language learning. So many educators pay much attention to the primary school students in English learning. According to the characteristics of the pupils, we should give suitable strategies. According to the survey and the information we get the characteristics of pupils as follows, firstly, it is easy for the pupils to wander. Secondly, the pupils are too active and they can not sit down for long time. These show that the pupils are lack of persistence. On the other hand, the pupils have

many merits other people do not have. For instance, the initiative of pupils are high. They like to take part in activities. And they are good at imitating others. According to those characteristics, the strategies we'd better use are: materials, surroundings and teaching methods.

Choosing materials is an important step in language learning process. We should choose some easier materials for pupils. The material with many pictures and less characters, makes students get perceptual knowledge at the first place. But the materials can not be too easy. Proper material makes pupils know some useful words like all kinds of fruit or the things around themselves. It can arouse their interest on one side. On the other side, they think they know some new words. In that case, it can satisfy the pupils' eagerness for knowledge.

Surroundings are very important. It is a main factor to affect learning result. Good surroundings in classroom are relaxing and comfortable, at the same time, controllable. For pupils, they tend to be active and their attention like to wander. So the teacher should do group-work, pair-work or other-team work to create good surroundings in which the pupils are willing to say something in the second language. In teaching practice, teachers in primary school usually play games with their students in class such as imitating or playing games. In order to create good surroundings, the teacher should take some measures as follows:

In the class, there is always an argument, that is teacher-centered or student-centered. Now we take it for granted that the students are the masters of their learning. But teachers play an important role in a learning process. They play a role as a promoter of progress. Their responsibility, authority, sentimental tends directly affect the learners' motivation. In the primary school, the teacher is also a supervisor. So the initiatives of teachers directly affect the students' initiatives. The teacher should make use of many kinds of teaching methods. According to the characteristics of pupils, the teacher should complete two tasks. One is to stimulate, the other is to control. The teacher should realize that the teaching process is a communicative process. They tend to communicate with learners and arouse their interest and the whole process should be under their control. The pupils tend to be active in class but they are lack of persistence. So the teacher should use the method of praising. When they do well, praise them properly and timely. The teacher should pay attention to the students' feedback and reaction on time. The learners receive the approval from the teacher, they will have strong motivation, there is an example. The class began, a student was late for class. The teacher did not criticize him as other teachers. After class, the teacher said to him "why did you come late? Did you get up late?" The student nodded. The teacher gave him an egg and said to him, "Eat it first, having no breakfast is harmful for your health. Get up earlier next time and do not be late again." We can suppose that the student will not be late again. The teacher lessen his criticism but receive effective result. That is love. The love is toward students. The students feel the love his teacher gives to him. That stimulates his learning motivation. Naturally, the learning result will be satisfied.

4. Conclusion

In this thesis, we argued about the learning motivation. We draw that motivation is the push power in one's learning. It is the internal force of action. It is the most important factor in the process of foreign language learning. In the English teaching process, teachers should dedicate to stimulating the learners' motivation, not only stimulating their learning motivations but also paying attention to maintain the formed motivation. If the teacher solves the problems about motivation, the students could get into the habit of learning by themselves.

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