EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE TEACHING ON EFL LEARNERS MOTIVATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE ALGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS[*]

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Abstract

Motivation is one of the most important elements required for effective language teaching and learning. Hence, teachers need to provide motivators that take into consideration learners' needs and interests. The present research work focuses on learners' motivation to learn English and the integration of culture as a motivator in the EFL classrooms. The purpose of this study is to examine the students' integrative and instrumental motivation for learning English in the Algerian secondary schools and more precisely the third year of the secondary education (SE3) by getting feedback from EFL learners and interpreting the results obtained form the survey. Finally, the research work concludes with some pedagogical recommendations which might be beneficial for the EFL teaching and learning process in general and the motivation of learners in particular with reference to culture teaching.

Key words: Motivation; Culture; Foreign language; EFL Classroom.

1. Introduction

Learners' Motivation is considered as being some of the crucial factor to the success of the teaching and learning process. We know that the teacher is not the only responsible for his student's motivation; but he plays a big role in encouraging them and provoking interest and involvement in the classroom. Also, he makes his courses full of activity and participation when he supplies them with adequate materials in order to develop the skills and ensure communication in all its forms. Among them, one can mention culture teaching which can be applied in any classroom especially in the foreign language classroom as it is effective in motivating the learners and stimulating their interaction in the course.

Culture teaching and language teaching are inseparable and culture is always embedded, integrated into language learning context. That is, foreign culture teaching should move from passing information of target cultures to teaching the

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language in context, to give meanings to FL learners, and raise learners' cultural awareness in the process of foreign language learning. Foreign language education (EFL) is to provide a chance for learners to reflect their own language and culture, through the experience with foreign language and culture.

Because of its greater use around the world, the English language is situated at the interface of foreign and native cultural values to a greater extent than any other language. Therefore, when teaching English, it is important for teachers to consider how to create interculturality and try to draw students attention to their own culture and history as well as those of the target culture in order to explain and contrast the differences.

The present research turns around the major question that although the English language is taught in the Algerian schools from the middle school level, the majority of students are performing poorly in national examination. It's conceivable that this poor performance may be explained by the fact that learning a foreign language effectively is associated with learners' motives and needs to learn it. It is practically acknowledged that there is a positive correlation between motivation and learning. Thus, comprehending the specific conditions that activate learner's behaviours becomes an inevitable component in teaching.

In this context and to relate this to secondary school student' performance in English language.The study explores the effects of selected background variables especially age, learners' exposure to foreign culture and environment and their perceptions of the factors that motivate them to learn the English language. It aims at investigating the factors that motivate 3ʳᵈ year secondary school learners to learn English.

To answer the major question of the research one can put forward the following sub- questions:

1) Is motivation a vital factor for foreign language learning?

2) Are Algerian secondary school learners instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn English?

3) What are the EFL learners motivations and how can culture teaching motivate them?

2. Literature Review

Though motivation has been the subject of many writings and the concern of many careers, the problem is still arising and teachers still complain about their learner's lack of motivation. The essence of motivation is very hard to be clearly defined. Yet, it is so important that it is considered as one of the widely tackled topics in second/foreign language acquisition.

2.1. Definition of Motivation

In a second language learning context is seen according to Gardner (1985) as referring to the context to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of the desire to do so and satisfaction experienced in this activity.

In all scientific studies, the first step of analyzing a concept or phenomenon is to define it first. This part will present the most prominent views on motivation. So,

it's impossible to state all the definitions but a certain number of these is necessary for the theoretical side of this research.

The simplest definition of the term motivation is the one given by the advanced learners Oxford English Dictionary (2008):

1) Be the reason why somebody does something.

2) Make somebody wants to do something.

Hence, the abstract term "Motivation" on its own is rather difficult to define. Motivation is usually defined as an international state or condition that activates behavior and gives it directions a desire or a want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior or an influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behavior.

2.2. Types of Motivation

Scholars identify many types of motivation in terms of source and purpose. They distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on one hand and integrative and instrumental motivation on the other hand.

2.2.1. Intrinsic Vs Extrinsic Motivation

It can be intrinsic resulting from the learner's interests or extrinsic fostered by his environment.

a. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that's driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure. Intrinsic motivation is based on taking pleasure in an activity rather than working towards an external reward .Intrinsic motivation has been studied since the early 1970's. Students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to engage in the task willingly as well as work to improve their skills, which will increase their capabilities. Students are likely to be intrinsically motivated if they:

- Attribute their educational results to factors under their own control also known as autonomy;

- Believe they have the skill that will allow them to be effective agent in reaching desired goals;

- Are interested in mastering a topic, rather than just rot-learning to achieve good grades.

b. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain an outcome, which then contradicts intrinsic motivation. It's widely believed that motivation performs two functions. The first is often as to energetic activation component of motivation construct. The second is directed at specific behavior and makes reference to the orientation directional component.

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Common extrinsic motivations are reward like money and grades, and threat of punishment. Competition is in general extrinsic because it encourages the performer to win and beat others, not simply to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of the activity. A crowd cheering on the individual and trophies are also extrinsic incentives. The concept of motivation can be instilled in children at a very young age, by promoting and evoking

interest in certain book or a novel. The idea is to have a discussion pertaining the book with young individual, as well as to reward them.

2.2.2. Integrative Vs Instrumental Motivation

Ellis' defines motivation as "the effort which learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn it" (Ellis, 2000, p. 517). As far as motivation to FL learning is concerned, it can be integrative affected by the learner's positive attitude towards FL and the influence of its speakers and culture. It can also be instrumental oriented towards achieving a professional or educational goal.

a) Integrative Motivation

It's when the learner has a positive perception of the foreign language and an enthusiastic attitude towards its speakers and so he wants to be a member of that group. The learner here is interested in learning a foreign language moved by a sincere and personal interest in the people culture represented by the other group. Integrative motivation is also known as "social group identification", though desire see them separate defining the first one as "the desire to participate in the life of the community that speaks the language" and the second as "the desire to acquire proficiency in a language spoken by a social group with which the learner identifies" (Dulai *et al.,* 1982, p. 71).

b) Instrumental Motivation

This type of motivation occurs when the learner learns the language for an educational or occupational purpose and Lambert define it as the motivation which occur when a learner has functional goal (such as to get a job or pass an examination) there are some factors influencing this kind of motivation such as: course prerequisites and employment opportunities.

Here, one should also note that for many theoreticians, integrative motivation is more influential and powerful than instrumental one. Achievement with the first one is much faster and more successful than with the second one.

2.3. The Role of Motivation in the Learning Process

Ellis (2000) admits that the role of motivation in foreign language acquisition has received little consideration as far as research in language learning is concerned. A great number of psychologists agree on the fact that motivation in the backbone of any learning process. It derives this centeredness from the fact that it directs human behavior. It's behind almost everything an individual does.

In showing the importance of motivation, one sees the need to show its place in the learning process. If we equate it to Fishman's question "who learns how much of what language under what condition" motivation lies under the first component: "who". It's among the individual differences that exist between learners and may interfere in their achievement such as, attitude and personality.

Motivation, especially if it's integrative, is important in foreign language learning in particular because one it is present, the learner will make efforts to learn this language. Many theoreticians see motivation as a cause of learning, however; there are other views supporting that motivation can be the result of FL achievement. This constitutes what is referred to as "resultative motivation". Any way this view remains controversial.

2.4. The integration of the Target Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

Contemporary pedagogical trends consider culture as being an elementary topic in FL teaching. Too much importance is given to culture teaching for the following reasons:

a. One of the goals for learners to learn a FL is to communicate with the target language users, either native target language speakers or those who use it as a second (SL) or foreign language (FL). Evidences from researches of both spoken and written discourses demonstrated that linguistics phenomena are related to their society and culture. Foreign culture (FC) learning can contribute to the success in language learning, as Tseng (2002, p. 13) puts it: "success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language."

b. FL learning should go beyond the level of acquiring grammatical rules; FL learners need know how to use the target language in the situated context (Neuner, 1997). It is impossible to teach a language without its culture for "culture is the necessary context for language use" (Stern, 1992, p. 205). Some FL communication situation examples demonstrated that the cultural contents of the target culture(s) needed to be integrated into FL language teaching for cultural contexts to avoid misunderstanding even when people are using correct FL linguistic forms .Foreign culture (FC) learning is to help FL users successfully communicate in socio-cultural contexts.

c. The language-culture link is significant in FL education because culture plays a role in helping FL learners to be proficient in the target language (Nault, 2006), as Alptekin (2002, p. 58) puts it, "learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers". From learning a new language, FL learners experience a new world.

Traditional thoughts of FC teaching tend to limit on transmission of foreign cultural information or teaching foreign literature in the classroom. However, the current trend of FL teaching associated with culture needed to take the relation of language and culture into account (Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002). The interrelationship between language and culture provides a foundation to the idea that learning a FL is learning an aspect of foreign culture.

2.5. Teaching Methodology Used in Motivating EFL Learners

The first key to motivation concerned "where" the teaching and learning process takes place as the second one dealt with "who" is involved in the process, this point concerns the "how". It is a wide circle including many factors. One can drive this point home by saying that there are psychological and instructional strategies to be used to make every moment of learning a joy.

The teaching methodology is an important key to learner motivation. It gives them an idea on what the teaching – learning process is like. If it is a good methodology in terms of results so it will make learners develop a positive attitude towards the learning subject, may be to learning in general: "The method by which

students are taught must have effect on their motivation. If they find it deadly boring they will probably become de-motivated, where as if they are have confidence in the method they will find it motivating" (Harmer, 2001, p. 5).

Teachers have the ability to change students' motivation by influencing students' social expectations, selecting interesting tasks, placing less emphasis on tests, and considering the future impact of present teacher behavior on students. A motivating teaching methodology is likely to be the one satisfying the parameters stated below.

2.6. The Role of EFL Teachers in Motivating Learners

Since teaching is an action designed towards the learner, the teacher has to be aware of the learner's needs. This makes the teacher see with a learner's eye. He can accordingly change his methodology: "This critical element is to encourage students to find their interests are. If they are interested in sports, they are encouraged to read and talk in English about anything to do with sports. If they are interested in arts, let them explore this topic in English" (Lin, 2001, p. 1).

So, knowing the learners' needs and interests leads the teacher to give them opportunities to use the language according to what they need to know and what they like to talk about.

Speaking about English teaching in the Algerian secondary Education opens doors to a discussion of the role of the teacher as an important partner in the process. He is the one who applies the approach and gives life to the educational tools. The importance of the teacher as an agent of change in the teaching learning process is widely agreed by specialists in education. The latter suggest three (3) areas that need to be developed and evaluated in the teacher's personality. These areas are: Having, doing and being. Having means the knowledge the teacher holds either of the subject matter (language in this case) or the treatment of learners and the Psychological handling of situations. Doing is related to putting that knowledge in action and implementing it in real learning situation. Being concerns the traits of the teacher personality, attitude and conscience.

2.7. The Influence of the Competency-based Approach on the Algerian Learners' Motivation

The competency based approach is a teaching approach that started to be applied in the Algerian secondary education since September 2005. A key concept of this approach is the know how to act process which integrates and mobilizes a set of capacities and an account of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem-solving situations or circumstances that have never occurred before .i.e. a competency continues throughout and beyond the school curriculum.

Inspired by the cognitivist and socio-constructivist theories, the competency-based approach tends to make the learning skills related to the outside environment. It aim at making the learner able of sharing knowledge and cooperating with others. The approach assigns the following characteristics to the teacher:
- A less authoritarian attitude;
- Openness to discuss and negotiation;
- Sensitiveness to learner's concerns.

The last quality seems to be related to motivation and interests.

3. Methodology

In an attempt to have a clear picture about the motivation of the Algerian secondary school students to learn English as a foreign language and the factors that can make them motivated to learn it, the scope of this research is limited to samples of EFL learners from a secondary school belonging to the province of Algiers in order to have a relatively reasonable number of results. The research was conducted at the beginning of the academic year 2020-2021 by employing a semi-structured interview with thirty students. The interviewees were chosen equally from literary and scientific streams for the purpose of obtaining data that will explore why the Algerian secondary school students learn English and what affects their English learning motivation.

4. Results. Discussion

As mentioned before, the aim of this study is to explore the Algerian secondary school students' motivation for learning English and its relationship with culture teaching. It tries to investigate whether the Algerian students are instrumentally or integratively motivated and the main demotivating factor affecting the learning of English as a foreign language, in addition to the role of incorporating foreign culture in motivating them that integration of culture and language could function as a positive attitude and further motivation to study a foreign language (Gardner, 1985).

The findings of the survey in this study showed the students' instrumentality and integrativeness. They have a higher degree of instrumental motivation than the integrative one. Regarding instrumental motivation, getting a good job, becoming a knowledgeable person are some of the most common instrumental motives for learning English in the secondary schools. Most participants like to study English for getting good jobs particularly in the private sector though they have no linking for the language and the culture.

However, Instrumental motivation is present in situations where there are benefits; it is goal oriented and "Doesn't seem to involve any identification or feeling of closeness with the other language group" (Gardner, 2001, p. 10). Although the results of the study indicated that the Algerian students are instrumentally motivated toward learning English, the participants in this study showed a considerable amount of integrativeness. Having integrative motivation means to be ready to integrate into the target language culture. It also requires the acquisition of a wide range of registers like native speakers' pronunciation (Finegan, 1999). In the Algerian context, students expressed their desire to interact with other native speakers of English, whereas others like to learn English to be more knowledgeable in order to be able to use modern means of communication and technology.

Concerning the external demotivating factors (Dornyei, 2001) affecting Algerian EFL learners, the survey showed that the major demotivators are related to learning context and aspects like vocabulary load, spelling and grammar difficulties.

It also revealed the effect of textbooks content and their cultural representations, the evaluation process, teaching methods, teacher's personality, parents discouragement and reduced self confidence on the students' motivation.

Hence, the students' instrumentality calls the teachers, syllabus designers and education decision-makers to review the teaching methods and the textbooks content and take the learners' motives and instrumentality into consideration by focusing on the development of language competencies that enable language proficiency and fluent communication. Students' integrativeness can be reached by fostering their positive attitudes toward English speaking countries and their cultures through more exposure to literary forms like poems, songs and short stories and reducing focus on vocabulary and grammar.

Both motivation and culture are essential factors in the success of EFL teaching-learning process. Teachers should take into account this crucial variable while planning and delivering their lessons by using and adopting different techniques in order to stimulate their learners, and to reinforce their desire to learn and to succeed. Also, they should be interested in their learners needs and give more importance to culture teaching.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, this study examined the role of motivation and culture teaching in language learning through reviewing some of the most considerable research in the field. Learners' motivation can go up and down depending on the context of language learning itself. Motivation has a key role in the development of language skills but it is influenced by different variables. Teachers can play a significant role in motivating learners by using different techniques and putting emphasis on the cultural aspects of language learning. Foreign language teacher should adopt the role of a facilitator rather than an authority figure in the classroom to increase students' motivation (Oxford and Shear, 1994). EFL teachers should teach learners to promote motivation and help them to find motivation in the areas where they do not expect it and also to research for their own motivational processes so they can take advantage of it. The integration of culture teaching can have a positive effect on motivation to study a foreign language (Gardner, 1985). This can be done easily by utilizing authentic material and arranging some students' visits to English speaking countries and integrating technology into the curriculum.

No matter what the underling motivation to study a foreign language, what cannot be disputed is the fact that motivation and culture teaching are important variables when examining successful foreign language acquisition. It should be realized that making learners recognize a real need to accomplish learning goals and providing them with the motivation to learn is one of the best steps we can take to facilitate learning success. This is best conveyed by Bruner (1960, p. 31): "The best way to create interest in a subject is to render it worth knowing, which means to make the knowledge gained usable in one's thinking beyond the situation in which learning has occurred". Thus, future researches are needed to shed more light on the

investigated phenomenon from different perspectives and angles as only the tip of the iceberg has been discovered.

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