Promoting Student Motivation in EFL Classroom: A Perspective on the Role of Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language has not been easy either for teachers or for learners. Teachers face problems while teaching it while learners face difficulties while learning it. Many factors contribute to these problems and difficulties and lack of motivation on the part of learners or demotivated learners is one of the most common problems faced by the teachers which affects both teachers and learners in negative way. Motivated learners are a dream of every ESL/EFL teachers but it is hardy realized. However, it is also important to note that teachers enjoy and lay a very significant role in ESL/EFL teaching and learning process. In this respect, what role ESL/EFL teachers can play in motivating their learners inside and outside the ESL/EFL classrooms and what strategies can be used and utilized to motivate and promote motivation among ESL/EFL learners are the topics of discussion of this paper. Briefing the term motivation and its types, attempt has also been done to systematically propose certain practical strategies for ESL/EFL teachers to employ inside and outside the classroom for motivating their students to learn so that the aims and objectives of teaching English are fulfilled easily.

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1. Introduction

Learners across the globe are getting interested in learning English. This is because of the fact that English today is considered to be the language of international commutations. However, the reasons for wanting to learn English differ significantly from learner to learner. Some learn it as a deliberate choice which promises desired outcomes. However, for many others English is the language which they have to study as a policy of the school/university/government in order to get the required qualification. It is important to note here that this purpose of learning English and the status of this language in a specific community/country have tremendous effects on teaching and learning practices. This reason for learning also becomes a part of motivation, a factor which creates a desire to learn. If the choice of learning English is deliberate, then the learners love the subject which they like to explore more. Some chose to learn because it promises them practical outcomes such as better job in international company, opportunity to communicate with people across the globe for variety of practical needs etc. And for some, they have to study it as a compulsory subject though they like it or not. And in situation like this, motivation to learn a foreign language plays a very important role. If the learners are motivated, the desired objectives can be achieved easily. However, if the learners are not motivated, due to various factors and if no deliberate attempts are done by the teachers, learning process gets affected significantly leading to develop negative attitude among the EFL learners towards the target language. Therefore, motivation plays a very crucial role in the processes of foreign language teaching and learning as it determines the success or failure of these processes. And as a teacher enjoys central and important role in these processes, s/he also has many responsibilities concerning this issue.

In light of this background, the present paper discusses the importance of motivation in foreign language learning process and the crucial expected role of EFL teacher in promoting the motivation using various strategies and techniques.

2. Rationale for the Study

The importance of motivation in EFL learning process in the classroom has always been recognized and recommended. Without motivation in classroom, we can not achieve the goal of teaching and learning foreign language like English. According to Ellis (1994), "Tapping into motivation is crucial for language teachers because we know that motivation is one of the key factors driving language learning success". Therefore, the teacher has the central role in this very crucial aspect of foreign language teaching and learning processes. This is because, demotivated students is a big problem faced and reported by many EFL teachers which puts them in a very difficult situation. If sincere attempts are not done by the teachers to motivate the learners, the learning process gets affected significantly and often leads to developing negative attitudes among the EFL learners toward the target language which then results in failure. In this respect, what role an EFL teacher can play and what strategies and techniques can be utilized by them to motivate their learners to learn English are discussed in this paper. The choice of the topic is deliberate as being an EFL teacher, the researcher herself had to face various problems of demotivation among the Libyan EFL learners which led her to devise various strategies to overcome the problem and which she decided to share.

3. Motivation: Meaning, Types & Importance in EFL Learning Process

3.1 Defining Motivation

The concept of 'motivation' is very difficult to define due to complex nature if it. Different scholars have defined it differently focusing on various aspects related to it. According to Ryan & Deci (2000), "to be motivated is to move to do some thing" (P.20). To put it simply, motivation is something which makes us act; it is a desire to work towards a goal or to reach an objective. This implies that if motivation is present, learning can be facilitated; but without it, effective learning becomes difficult. For Petri (1981) motivation is "the concept we use when we describe the forces acting on or within an organism to initiate and direct behaviour" (p3). He adds that "the concept of motivation is also used to explain differences in the intensity of behaviour and more intense behaviours are considered to be the result of higher levels of motivation" (p4). However, for Dornyei (2001), motivation "is abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do. It is obvious that in this sense the term subsumes a whole range of motives-from financial incentive such as a raise in salary to idealistic beliefs such as the desire for freedom-that have very little in common except that they all influence behaviour"(p1). She believes that motivation could be seen as a big cover term for a variety of meanings.

Being more specific, Clement (1994) defines language learning motivation into three levels: the language level, the learner level and the situation level. These three levels get together with the three fundamental elements of any foreign language learning process which include- the target language, the language learner, and the language learning environment, also mirror the three different facets of language: the social dimension, the personal dimension, and the educational subject matter dimension. However, for Williams & Burden (1997) motivation is "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal or goals" (P.120). All these definitions affirm that the motivation is consequence of combination of different influences which lead to different types of it.

3.2 Types of Motivation

Many scholars such as Tudor, (1994), Arnold and Brown (1999), Littlewood (1996) have suggested two very general types of motivation (integrative and instrumental). The integrative motivation refers to the learner's desire to integrate with the speakers of L2, and even become part of the L2 culture. It is very similar to intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, the instrumental motivation, which occurs when the learner need to get, for example, a job or to pass his examination, it is very similar to the extrinsic motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). These types are discussed below.

3.2.1 Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

Gardner (1979, 1985); Gardner & Lambert (1972) proposed that motivation is influenced by two orientations to language learning. An integrative orientation is typical of someone who identifies with principles, the target language and community and who approaches language study with the intention of entering that community. Such an individual is thought to have an integrative, more enduring motivation for language study. It is regarded that integrative motivation is a key constituent in assisting

the learner to develop some level of skill in the language. It is also theorized that "integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native-like pronunciation" (Finegan 1999, p568).

On the other hand, instrumentally motivated learners are more likely to see language learning as enabling them to do other useful things, but as having no special significance in itself. Such learners will be motivated if they see language learning as having beneficial career scenes or something that will enable them to use transactional language with speakers of the foreign language. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired. Gardner & Lambert (1972) recommended that individual with an integrative orientation would show greater motivational orientation and is a very famous motivational field. However, Ely (1986) claims that it is not always easy to differentiate between integrative and instrumental motivation.

But, in the later studies, integrative motivation has continued to be emphasized, although now the importance of instrumental motivation is also stressed. However, it is important to note that instrumental motivation has only been recognized as a considerable factor in some research, while integrative motivation is repeatedly linked to successful second language acquisition. Ellis (1997) found that commonly students choose instrumental reasons more often than integrative reasons for the study of language. Those who do select an integrative approach to learn language are usually more highly motivated and overall more successful in language

learning. Brown (2000) also suggested that an instrumental orientation was more important than an integrative orientation, and also pointed out that in India, where English is a second language, it is rare for second language learners to be successful with instrumental purposes being the underlying reason for study. He also pointed out that both orientation of motivation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Learners not often choose one form of motivation when learning a second language but rather a mixture of both orientations. Learners could use the instrumental orientation as a central goal and involve integrative attitude such as L2 community to learn language.

3.2.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation

Motivation has also been classified into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theories by Gardner, Deci and Ryan (1985). They assert that learners who are interested in learning tasks and outcomes for their owe sake (intrinsic) rather than for rewards (extrinsic) are likely to become more effective learners. According to them, intrinsic motivation refers to motivate to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do. Nakamura (1989) defines intrinsic motivation as "when the experience of doing something generates interest and enjoyment and the reason for performing the activity lies within the activity itself, then the motivation is likely to be intrinsic " (as cited in Williams & Burden, 1999, p123).

On the other hand, extrinsically motivated behaviour are those actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment. According to Nakamura (1989), "when the only reason for performing an act is to gain something outside the activity itself, such as passing exam, or obtaining financial rewards, the

motivation is likely to be extrinsic"(as cited in Williams & Burden, 1999, p123p123). However, it is important to note here that this type of motivation does not necessarily mean a lack of self-determination in the behaviours performed. Dickinson (1987) argues that success increases motivation only in children who are focused on learning goals, that is, who are intrinsically motivated.

Koestner & McClelland (1990) suggest that if external actions improve feeling of capability, as when someone is told s/he has done a task excellent, intrinsic motivation is likely to increase. On other hand, actions which lead to feeling of incompetence are probably to undermine intrinsic motivation. However, Williams & Burden (1999) believe that it is not easy to distinguish between these two types of actions in learning as "many of our action are probably promoted by a mixture of both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons" (p. 123).

3.3 Importance of Motivation

The importance of motivation in EFL learning process has always been recognized due to the fact that it is one of the most important factors which decide the success or failure of the process. Allwright and Bailey (1994) state that "the motivated learners are more receptive than those who are not motivated" (p.182). Ellis (1997: 76) points out that sometimes learners do not have especial attitude but motivation can involve curiosity and interests so that they feel that they are involved in learning activities. It is easy to say that the learner who has strong motivation will gain great success more than one who has not, and s/he will get the best chance to overcome difficulties when trying to communicate in L2. Yule (1996) believes that "Obviously motivation to learn is important. Indeed, we could say that motivation is necessary for learning. L1 learners already have strong

motivation when they learn their mother tongue, but L2 learner's motivation will vary at different stages" (P.195).

4. Demotivation and Learning Language in the Classroom

There is no doubt that there are motivational influences that wield a negative effect on student motivation. Classroom practitioner can easily think of a variety of actions that can have demotivating effects on students, such as public humiliation, frightening test results, or even disagreement with peers. Reality shows that demotivation is appearing in schools and the number of demotivated learners is rising. So, in this section, attempt will be made to see the "dark side of the moon" shedding light on some "potential motivational pitfalls and danger zones" as Dornyei (2001) describes them.

According to Thanasoulas (2003) " 'demotivated' learner is someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her interest for some reason. In the same layer, we can speak of 'demotives', which are the negative counterparts of 'motives'. Whereas a motive can be said to raise an action tendency, a demotive decreases it" (P.2). Dornyei (1998:142) recognized three negative factors:

1. An attractive alternative action that serves as a powerful distraction (e.g. watching TV instead of doing one's homework).
2. The gradual loss of interest in a long-lasting, ongoing activity.
3. The sudden realization that the costs of pursuing a goal are too high (e.g. when someone recognizes how demanding it is to attend an evening course while working during the day).

According to Dornyei (1998: 143), these negative factors differ from what one would

call 'demotivating events' in three significant ways:

1. Powerful distractions are not demotives in the same sense as, say, public humiliation, because they do not carry a negative value: instead of reducing motivation, their distracting effect consists in presenting more attractive options.

2. The gradual loss of interest is also different from a demotivating event because-using a racing metaphor, whereby a runner is doing very well yet does not win the race because there is someone who is doing even better-it reflects the runner's losing speed caused by, for example, ageing, rather than by a particular incident in the particular "race."

3. As regards the sudden recognition of the costs of an activity, this is the result of an internal process of deliberation, without any specific external trigger. Conversely, if something triggered the termination of action (e.g. the persuasion of an influential friend), that would be a case of demotivation.

In light of Dornyei's considerations, 'demotivation' concerns 'specific forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a bahavioural intention or an ongoing action' (1998: 143). Furthermore, Dornyei (1998) makes the difference between 'demotivation 'and 'a motivation' (a term used by Deci and Ryan (1985)). For him, 'amotivation' refers to a lack of motivation brought about by the realization that 'there is no point...' or 'it's further than my knowledge. Thus, 'amotivation' is inextricably related to general outcome expectations that are deemed to be unrealistic, whereas 'demotivation' is connected to specific external causes. Of course, some demotives can lead to amotivation (e.g. a series of horrendous classroom experiences can put paid to the learner's self-efficacy), but with some other

demotives, as soon as the negative external influence ceases to exist, other positive motives may again surface (e.g. if it turns out that someone who dissuaded the individual from doing something was not telling the truth). The collected from all above is that demotivation is a most important phenomenon that should concern every classroom teachers and researches. It goes without saying that it is a compound issue and the present analysis has not done it justice.

4.1 The relation between anxiety and decrease motivation in language classroom

Anxiety also plays important role in learning second/foreign language. Mitchell & Myles (2004) believe that the anxious learners are also less willing to speak and develop in class or to engage target language speakers in formal interaction. The learner can not build a positive relationship with success in learning if there is a language anxiety. In this regard, it is important to make students enthusiastic about learning.

Learners' motivation can differ extremely due to their anxiety and confidence they have toward the language they are learning and the classroom atmosphere they are in. In that sense, not only is the anxiety connected to motivation, but also connected to proficiency and more so to communication proficiency, as argued by Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1994). Learners who are less anxious have better pervious experiences with using the second language, who appraise their own ability more highly and think the learning tasks less difficult. Clement (1994) and his colleagues have provided adequate evidence that decrease anxiety and increase self-confidence is a powerful motivational process in international, multilingual setting, and also it is a main motivational subsystem in second language situations.

Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) concluded that on one hand, good classroom environment promotes students participation and activity while moderating anxiety and supporting self-confidence. On the other hand, students bring into classroom a level of self-confidence and anxiety according to extramural experience with the language, the quality and quantity of which would then influence classroom behaviour, achievement and anxiety. Consequently, student being active in class means believing that one is capable to use English outside the classroom.

5. Motivation and Language Learning

The relationship between motivation and language learning is very strong. Williams & Burden (1999) claim that "the learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on social nature of the learning"(P. 115). The role of teacher is that s/he must know about his/her student and the kind of motivation s/he needs. In fact, the effective learning in the classroom depend on the teacher's ability in knowing that students are different in their characteristics and each student has his own features and treats them accordingly. And because a student comes from different background, it is natural that they are different in their interaction and they need different kinds of motivation that enhance their interaction. Davis (2002) suggests that it is necessary to give frequent, early positive feedback that supports students' beliefs that they can do well and helps them feel that they are valued members of learning. The learners in this stage need positive reinforcement to motivate them to learn.

5.1 Motivational strategies in language classroom

According to Dornyei (2001: 28), motivational strategies are techniques that promote the individual's goal-related behaviour. Motivational strategies refer to those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect. Teaching and using motivational strategies in the language classroom is a complex but one that can easily be done by following some common foreign teaching language principles and by remembering that motivation is one of the key factors in student success. The central question in designing a framework of motivational strategies is to decide how to systematize and organize them into separate theme.

Dornyei laid out thirty-five motivational strategies, divided into preactional, actional, and postactional phases that teachers can employ to generate, sustain, and promote learners` motivation. The preactional phase (promote the initiation of goal-directed actions), the actional phase (bringing your behaviours to a successful ending) and finally the postactional phase (evaluating what was achieved compared to what was desired). These strategies are tabulated below-

5.2 Dornyei's motivational strategies
Table: 1 creating the basic motivational conditions

1-Demonstrate and talk about your enthusiasm for the course material, and how it affects you personally.
2- Take the students' learning very seriously.
3-Develop a personal relationship with your students.
4-Develop a collaborative relationship with students` parents.
5-Create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom.
6- Promote the development of group cohesiveness.
7- Formulate group norms explicitly, and have them discussed and accepted by the learners.
8- Have the group norms consistently observed.

Table: 2 generating initial motivation

9- Promote the learners' language-related values by presenting peer role models.
10-Raise the learners' intrinsic interest in the L2 learning process.
11-Promote 'integrative' values by encouraging a positive and open-minded disposition towards the L2 and its speakers, and towards foreignness in general.
12-Promote the students` awareness of the instrumental values associated with the knowledge of L2.
13-Increase the students` expectancy of success in particular tasks and in learning in general.
14-Increase your students` goal-orientedness by formulating explicit class goals accepted by them.
15- Make the curriculum and teaching materials relevant to the students.
16- Help to create realistic learner believe.

Table: 3 Maintaining and protecting motivation

17- Make learning more stimulating and enjoyable by breaking the monotony of classroom events.
18- Make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the learner by increasing the attractiveness of the tasks.
19- Make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the learners by enlisting them as active tasks participants.
20- Present and administer tasks in motivating way.
21- Use goal-setting methods in your classroom.
22- Use contracting methods with your students to formalise their goal commitment.
23-Provide learners with regular experiences of success.
24- Build your learners` confidence by providing regular encouragement.
25- Help diminish language anxiety by removing or reducing the anxiety-provoking elements in the learning environment.
26- Build your learners` confidence in their learning abilities by teaching them various learner strategies.
27- Allow learners to maintain a positive social image while engaged in learning tasks.
28- Increase student motivation by promoting cooperation among the learners.
29- Increase students motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy.
30- Increase the students` self-motivating capacity.

Table: 4 Encouraging positive self-evaluation

31-Promote effort attribution in your students.
32- Provide students with positive information feedback.
33-Increase learner satisfaction.
34- Offer rewards in motivational manner.
35- Use grades in motivating manner, reducing as much as possible their demotivating impact.

To explain these in details, teacher should use contracting methods with their students to formalize their goal commitment. Teacher can draw up detailed written agreement with individual students or with groups of students that specify what they will learn and show. The agreement can also list ways in which the teacher will help achieve the system. Dornyei recommended that teacher monitor their students' progress and make sure that the details of the written agreement are observed by both parties.

Teacher should then help diminish language anxiety by removing or reducing the anxiety-provoking elements in the learning environment. Teacher should be careful to avoid social comparisons, even in subtle forms. The teacher is supposed to promote cooperation instead of competition and help the students understand that mistakes are natural. It is also advocated to design tests that are clear and involve the students in negotiating the final grades.

Teachers should also allow learners to maintain a positive social image while engaged in the learning tasks. It is recommended that the teacher select activities that contain positive role for the participants. It is also suggested that teacher avoid face-threatening acts such as humiliation or criticism. Teachers are also to not to put students on the spot. These strategies confirm that motivation is something all our students carry with them in one form to anther. It is not the case that all we need to do as a teacher to recognize it, encourage it, feel it, and watch it grow. The teacher's job is also to teach how to develop and increase motivation by using appropriate motivational strategies framework in the classroom.

5.3 Classification of students' motivation to learn language

According to Dornyei (2005) student's motivation consists of three stages: Preactional, Actional, and Postactional.

1- Preactional stage: first, motivation needs to be generated. According to Dornyei (2005), the generated motivation helps the student choose the goal or task to pursue and launches the student into action. The student's own initial goals, principles and attitudes connected with the learning process, professed likehood of success, and the support the student gets (both mental and physical) can all influence this stage of motivation.

2-Actional stage: At the actional stage, the motivation needs to be maintained and protected by the quality of learning experience, by the nature of classroom environment, by teacher, peer and/or parents, or by the student through self-regulation during the particular action which may be a classroom-based task or the long-term try of learning the foreign language in the classroom. This is especially important for classroom setting where students may be distracted by extenuating factors such as anxiety, competing interests (established by teachers, parents, peers, or the school), or even physical conditions e.g. noise or poor classroom conditions.

3- Post-actional stage: After the action is finished, at the postactional stage, the learner in retrospect evaluates how things went to help resolve the type and quality of activities. S/he will be motivated to follow next. According to Dornyei (2005), some of the main motivational influences on this stage of learning are grades and/or feedback got from teacher and/or others, the student's own sense of what was learned, along with a reflective measure of his or her self-confidence and self-worth in relation to what was learned and how things went in the classroom.

6. The Role of Teacher in Motivating Learners in Language Classroom

Learners are considered as the most important element in the circulation of teaching and learning which forms the core of the whole operation. Therefore, according to Ellis (1997) learners must be considered as a great goal which all teachers must pay closer attention towards, and teachers should help their student to achieve better understanding of foreign language. Researchers in this field believe that a good teacher is the one who succeeds in helping student to become fluent speakers of second/foreign language. This success depends to a large extent on the methods and the techniques that a teacher may use in teaching her/his students. Cook (2001:8) states that successful teaching techniques have to suit the particular student. In the same way, Richards & Rodgers (2001:3) also pointed out that teaching a foreign/second language has always been an important concern from the point of view of teachers and researchers.

The role of teacher in motivating and engaging students in learning language is very difficult and complex, in that it concerns all academic and social aspect of classroom environment. The language teacher also has some of responsibilities in the language learning to keep the language learning process a more motivating. Therefore, an experienced teacher needs to put a great deal of consideration into developing programs which can keep student interested and have obtainable short term goals.

Walsh (2002) and Kumaravadivelu (2003) have pointed out that teachers need to create interesting lessons in which the students' attention is increased. This can sometimes be consummated by the use of teaching strategies which are not often called upon by other teachers in mainstream

subject areas. Encouraging students to become more active participants in a lesson can sometimes help them to see a purpose for improving their communication skills in the target language. Research and studies in this area suggest that L2 achievement strongly affects learner motivation (Strong 1983, cited in Ellis 1997).

Dornyei (2005) has also suggested that teacher can use an interesting text to help increase motivation level of students in the classroom. Even though teachers may see need to become proficient in a second language, the learning of anther language and culture can only add to their awareness and understanding of other cultures. In addition, according to Dornyei (2001) teacher in order to increase student motivation could create a good and appropriate atmosphere in classroom by, for example promoting student confidence, decrease anxiety.

Finally, teacher should know how to apply different techniques depending on the subject to be taught, the level and the number of the learners, the type of teaching aids, which are available. Also the teacher should encourage students to practice, producing the language inside and outside the class, even if they commit a lot of mistakes. This is because the teacher plays the greatest role inside the classroom and s/he is the main source to motivate student.

7. Conclusion

Lack of student motivation in learning second/foreign language is a great concern for teachers. Motivating students inside the classroom needs a big effort from the language teacher to gain better result in learning second/foreign language. This is because s/he plays the key factor in classroom and in some cases outside classroom, to motivate or demotivate the learners. Teacher should look at different

ways and strategies to attempt to motivate learners directly and indirectly in classroom. Teachers must find out which elements of L2 learning motivation are appropriate to students, and design tasks and assessments that support those elements. It is normally believed that learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects. Therefore, language teaching should take into account a variety of factors that are likely to promote, or even militate against, success.

The main concerns of this paper were- 1) what an L2 teacher can do in classroom to promote students motivation to learn language and 2) how can L2 teacher use motivational strategies to encourage her/his students to learn L2. In this regard, substantial discussion was done on what a motivation is and what role a teacher can play in motivating students inside and outside the classroom and what strategies can be used and utilized to achieve this aim. To conclude, if the suggested strategies are implemented by the teachers, it is expected that they can go a long way in helping L2 teachers in motivating their students to learn which is always expected in L2 learning process. It is also important to note here that a practical study is needed to test the effectiveness of these strategies in motivating L2 learners.

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