

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY IN LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This essay describes the interaction between anxiety and motivation in second language acquisition. The topic is mostly about English as a second language, and it holds that learning a language is not merely a matter of rules of grammar, vocabulary, and speech, but also of learners' affective experience in class. Based on the article, students are more confident and active if they are highly motivated, but anxiety prevents them from speaking out or participating in class.

Keywords

Motivation, Anxiety, Foreign Language Learning, Second Language Acquisition, University Students, Emotional Factors, Education.

Introduction.

Learning a second language is a complex process that involves not only psychological but also emotional factors. According to many studies, motivation plays a major role in the language learning process today and greatly contributes to learners' success. Motivation is such a powerful force that it helps increase students' interest in learning a language, encourages them to start learning, and strengthens their desire to continue. The difference between knowledge gained under stress and knowledge gained with strong interest is quite significant. Therefore, understanding the interaction between these two concepts is essential for creating more effective learning environments and language teaching strategies.

Many studies on motivation were proposed by Gardner (1985). According to his research, integrative motivation refers to the desire to become closer to the language community, while instrumental motivation refers to the desire to gain practical benefits. In contrast to this theory, Horwitz and other scientist (1986) developed the concept of anxiety in foreign language classrooms, identifying it as a factor that causes students to perform poorly in exams.

Despite their extensive research, there is still a lack of studies that highlight the difference between a learning environment rich in motivation and one filled with

stress. In particular, such research remains limited among university students in non-English-speaking countries. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between motivation and stress among university students learning English as a second language. Specifically, it aims to determine whether a decrease in stress leads to an increase in motivation and how these factors influence students' participation and language proficiency.

Research methods.

Learning a foreign language is not only about grammar and grammatical rules. In the process of learning a new language, emotional and psychological factors of learners also play an important role. Among the various aspects that influence this process, motivation and anxiety are considered the most powerful factors. Many researchers have tried to understand how these two factors shape the language learning experience, how they interact with each other, and how they affect learners' success.

When discussing motivation, which has led to much debate among researchers, it is clear that this factor greatly contributes to students' success today. Therefore, motivation is increasingly regarded as one of the most powerful elements in pedagogy. One of the researchers, Dörnyei (2005), proposed the theory of the "L2 Motivational Self System". This approach emphasizes how learners' interests, desires, and willingness to continue learning voluntarily determine the level of their success in acquiring a language. According to Dörnyei, learners are not only influenced by external factors or cultural integration, but also by their inner desires, personal interests, and especially their ability to envision themselves as skilled and confident users of the target language in the future. These internal factors are considered a strong source of motivation that drives learners to achieve long-term success in language learning.

Another important study was conducted by Tremblay and Gardner (1995). These two researchers made a significant contribution to the deeper understanding of motivation and together introduced the concept of motivational intensity. This concept refers to the actual effort, persistence, and energy that learners invest in the process of learning a foreign language. Motivational intensity is not merely about learners' interest or positive attitudes; rather, it reflects the visible expression of motivation through their practical actions. In other words, it can be observed through how strongly learners show enthusiasm for learning new material and how actively they participate during lessons both of which indicate the level of their motivation.

Motivation plays an active role in the learning process, however, an equally important factor is anxiety. While motivation encourages learners to move forward

in pursuit of their goals, anxiety functions quite differently – it prevents them from showing their full potential. Usually, students who are learning a foreign language experience nervousness and fear when speaking, writing, or expressing their thoughts in the target language. As a result, this condition may lead to a change in their attitude toward learning and a decrease in their enthusiasm. Horwitz and Cope (1986) explained the effect of anxiety and how it negatively influences students. According to their research “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety,” language learning anxiety refers to the feelings of nervousness, worry, and fear that arise during the process of learning a foreign language. These emotions may manifest as a fear of making mistakes, being evaluated by others, or feeling unable to express oneself accurately. Anxiety about being evaluated by others, or a sense of inability to express one’s ideas accurately.

Research has established that high anxiety reduces the ability of students to concentrate, remember words, and participate actively in class. Students who exist under constant fear of making mistakes or adverse judgments will avoid speaking opportunities or be afraid to test new solutions. However, moderate anxiety, on occasion, can serve to encourage students to study harder and do better. However, excessive anxiety typically inhibits learning, decreases one's confidence, and reduces class participation.

Interestingly, motivation and anxiety are hand in hand with each other. High motivation learners generally conquer anxiety through positive thinking and resilience, while low motivation, on the other hand, leads to fear and lack of interest. Therefore, in order to fully understand language learning success, one needs to study motivation and anxiety separately since both together influence learners' emotions as well as academic performance.

Conclusion. Overall, foreign language learning is as much an intellectual process as it is a product of psychological and emotional processes such as motivation and anxiety. Motivation is what moves the students to learn, strive harder, and reach their goals, while anxiety can cut both ways. It can make the students do more, but excessive anxiety decreases the level of confidence and discourages participation in class.

Besides, anxiety and motivation come hand in hand. Students who are more motivated overcome anxiety and fear, whereas low motivation enhances anxiety and decreases interest in learning. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the importance of both if they wish to obtain more language learning outcomes. A positive classroom environment facilitates learners' motivation, reduces anxiety, and ultimately leads to more foreign language learning achievement.

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