Motivation And Needs-Analysis – Nuclei For Success In Learning English In ESL/EFL Context

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ABSTRACT

English is a global language. In India, English language is being learned as a second language. It plays a prominent role in the life of engineering students in their education and carrier. So, teaching English for ESL/EFL engineering students has become a focal point of attention because of the various reasons for which the English language is learned. Learning a foreign language is different from learning the first language. There are so many factors that affect the process of learning a second language. Motivation being one of the most important factors in learning a second language, it is essential to understand the motivation for learning the English language and identify the needs of the learners to facilitate them in acquiring the required linguistic competency and to excel in the real time situations. The main aim of this paper is to emphasize the significance of motivation and needs analysis in the process learning English as a second language.

Key words: Motivation and Needs analysis

Introduction

English is the most popular and influential language of the world today. It has reached such an essential position that no other language is probably going to take its position soon. Due to its growing popularity in almost all circles of human interaction it has turned into the *Lingua Franca* of the world. As such, it has progressed into an extensive number of academic establishments throughout the world. English is an international language spoken in many parts of the world both as native and second or foreign language. English is the first language of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom as well as the United States of America; and the second language of the Commonwealth countries like South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It is the official language of communication in most of the world's top-notch organizations.

Globalization has provided a world of opportunities to all eligible people. It has broken the barriers of regions. It has created an urgent need for a common international language which can be used as a medium of communication between people of different nations. According to Smith, an "international language is one which is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another" (1976: 38). Even though there is no accurate account on the current number of users of English language, it is clear that the number of people who use English language is growing year by year due to its widespread popularity as an international language of communication. Another significant observation made by David Crystal is that "a language achieves global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (1997:2). So, considering the factors aforementioned, it can be said that English language can certainly be acclaimed as the global language. Commenting on the increasing popularity which English language enjoys, Timothy J. Scrase remarks that "English is an international language. You feel humiliated if you can't speak English. People think you are dumb" (2004:1). Due to rapid developments in science and technology and the information explosion the English language has become an international language of information and communication. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy stated that "English has become an international commodity like oil and the microchip; without petrol (i.e. gas), computers and English language, the world will come to a halt" (2006:153).

English has undoubtedly become a global language. The number of people who speak English either as a second or as a foreign language is increasing day by day than any other language in the world. In India the situation for English language to flourish is very conducive. This can be clearly noticed as most of the parents aspire to educate their children in English medium schools which reflects the attitude of Indians towards English language.

English Language in India:

English was introduced officially in India by the British Raj to carry out their rule and to expand it further. The role of the Christian missionaries was also vital in the spread of English in India. The government of India passed the Official Language (Amendment) Act in 1967. Through this Act, English language was to continue as the official dialect of the country alongside Hindi. The most significant reason for the spread of English in India is the sociolinguistic reality that language is not only a means of correspondence but also an instrument of empowerment. Timothy J. Scrase explains the significance of English in India in the following words, "Since the days of the British Raj, English remained the language of domination, status and privilege in India" (2004:3). Today, there is a paradigm shift in the way English language is viewed by the Indians. English language is viewed in terms of development. Even though there are some people who still view it as a language of British hegemony, most of the Indians view it as a language of upward social and economic movement.

In India people who speak in English language are respected in the society. Parents want their children to be educated in English medium schools. Managements of many schools and colleges are insisting on the use of English language. Central government and state

governments have taken several initiatives to improve English language communication skills in India. All the factors mentioned above give a clear cut idea about the status of English language in India.

Teaching and Learning English:

English language occupies an important position in Indian education system from school to university level. It has played a prominent role in the spread of Indians globally and to the present position that Indians enjoy all over the world today. It has become a gateway to individual prosperity and professional success. Another essential feature which has been noted in the recent years is that in the Indian education system, quality of education has been inseparably connected with proficiency in English. In the following section the introduction of English in the curriculum of Indian education is presented.

English was introduced in India as a language under the three-language formula by the education commission (1946-66), to be taught in schools. The three language formula included the mother-tongue or the regional language, the official language of the union or the associate official language of union as long as it exists, and modern Indian or foreign language not covered under the first and second language other than that was used as the medium of instruction. Thus, three-language formula opened the doors for teaching English in India. Thereby English became the medium of instruction in the schools up to the university level.

The main objective of teaching English in India is to impart enough practice to the learners in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Shivendra K. Verma, while speaking about the objectives of teaching English as a second language in India, throws light on some very significant recommendations that should be followed in the process of teaching and learning English in Indian context. "Teaching a second language is a process of helping our pupils make appropriate register choices out of their total register range… register-shift, i.e. the ability to shift registers according to shifts in situations, is one of crucial conditions for success in handling a second language effectively" (1969:299). He also asserts that "any individual seeking socio-economic advancement at the national level people will find ability in English as an asset" (1994:98).   The interest for learning English language emerges from numerous factors, as perceived by the Position Paper on the Teaching of English created by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) regarding the National Curriculum Framework 2005. It asserts that "English in India today is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life" (2005:3).

English still continues to be learned as a second language in most of the schools in India. Since independence there is a gradual rise in the number of English medium schools. The privatisation of education system paved way for establishment of more number of English medium schools. Recently the government of India has taken steps to convert some regional medium schools in rural areas into English medium schools. Teachers teaching in those schools are expected to teach the students in English language so that there will be some improvement in English language communication skills. Even though the

government is striving hard to improve English language communication skills of the people there seems to be a lot more to be done in order to get the expected results.

English as a Second Language:

English is not the mother tongue of the Indians. It is learned as a second language in most of the states of India. There is a lot of difference between first language acquisition and learning a second language. Learning a second or foreign language entails many problems because of various cultural and behavioural factors that affect process of learning. Learning a foreign language depends on several factors like cognitive factors, affective factors, meta-cognitive factors and demographic factors.

Affective Factors of Learning a Language:

Affective factors are the most important emotional factors which influence learning. Some important Affective factors are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. If these emotions are positive, automatically people obtain better input and perform well. On the contrary, if they are negative, people obtain little input and fail to perform well. Very often these affective factors have great impact in learning second and foreign language. According to Ellis, "learners' affective factors are obviously of crucial importance in accounting for individual differences in learning outcomes." (1994:483).

Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence is viewed as one of the most important factors, which significantly impacts the learners' language execution. The students who lack confidence are generally observed to be frightful, tentative and hesitant to express their views and even unfit to construct meaningful sentences. According to Brown (2001:23) "the eventual success that learners attain in a task is at least partially a factor of their belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing the task." Of all the conceivable attributes that can influence language learning, self-confidence is vital for the accompanying reasons. The primary reason is that it will urge a man to attempt new learning. One would be prepared to take risks to be successful. Another reason is that a confident person seldom gives up. Successful language learning takes place in an environment where learners approach learning with confidence and use the target language at ease.

Anxiety:

Anxiety is one of the most prominent emotions. As indicated by Arnold (2000: 59), language anxiety "ranks high among factors influencing language learning, regardless of whether the setting is informal or formal". Students with anxiety feel apprehensive and reluctant to coordinate with educators. They cannot focus on the learning. Students with anxiety are found to be less proficient.

Motivation:

Almost all types of human behaviours begin from a certain kind of motivation. Motivation is generally thought to be an inward drive, impulse, feeling or desire that moves one towards a specific activity. It plays an important role in initiating, sustaining the action of the person towards attaining a particular goal. Motivation is the urge, hidden inside us which prompts us to behave in certain ways. This urge might be simply natural, similar to the need for food, or it might emerge from a discerning choice to accomplish a specific end or it might be the result of a mix of both these factors.

Jones defines motivation as "how behaviour gets started, is energized, is sustained, is directed, is stopped, and what kind of subjective reactions are present in the organism while all this is going on" (1955: vii). Freud (1966) has claimed that human behaviour results from forces within individuals and that motivation is a reflection of physical energy. In contrast, Skinner (1968) has argued that motivation can be best viewed in behavioural terms rather than as arising from inner forces. According to Beck, "The word motivation is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means to move. Motivation is then concerned with our movements, or actions, and what determines them" (2004:3). Among all the affective factors of language learning, motivation is considered to be one of the important constructs in the process of learning a second language.

Motivation and Second Language Learning:

Motivation is considered as one of the most important factors that affect learner's input and intake in the process of learning a language. The word motivation has been defined by many people in various ways. Brown defines motivation as "the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit" (2001: 34). Gardner in his Socio-educational model tries to identify the issues that motivate individuals to learn a second language. Gardner defined second language motivation as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (1985: 10). Socio- educational model of Gardner is structured on two orientations and three components. The orientations are called instrumental and integrative. The components are motivational intensity or the effort, desire to learn the language and attitudes towards learning the language. The orientations are precursors of the components and their role is to create motivation. According to Gardner, there are two types of motivations for learning a second language, i.e. integrative motivation and instrumental motivation.

Integrative Motivation: Gardner describes integrative motivation as "a complex of attitudinal, goal-directed and motivational attributes" (2010:91). So, it can be stated that "individuals can be said to be integratively motivated if they are motivated to learn the second language, have a desire or willingness to identify with the other language community, and tend to evaluate the learning situation positively" (2010:91).

Instrumental Motivation: Gardner asserts that the motivation to learn another language is "not for the social implications but rather for some practical gain" (2010:127). It is characterized by a craving to gain social acknowledgment or financial advancement by learning a foreign language.

Apart from understanding the motivation for learning English, it is also important to identify the needs of the learners, so that the learners can be motivated in the right direction. In the recent times, learners seem to have different needs and interests, which would have an important influence on their motivation to learn and, therefore it is essential to know the needs of the learners.

Needs Analysis:

Needs analysis plays a vital role in understanding the needs of the learners and helps them meet their needs in a more efficient manner. English for Specific Purposes (ESP), an approach to language learning has transformed the content of English course books from 'General English' to 'Specific English' for Business communication, Science and Technology, Law, Journalism, etc., catering to particular needs of the fields of activity. Needs analysis is considered to be the logical starting point for the development of a language programme, which is responsive to the learner and learning needs.

Conclusion:

In the present situation where the needs of the learners seem to be constantly changing, it is of great relevance to understand the motivation for learning English along with the needs of the learners, so that the process of teaching and learning in the context of ESL/EFL becomes more meaningful endeavour.

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