

'Application of Motivation Strategy to English Reading Education for Non-English Language Majors'

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show how one kind of motivation strategy works in a class of non-English language majors. I had a clue to manage the class more effectively in terms of motivation after sending out a questionnaire in a class of eighty students. The data of it showed some interesting and unexpected features. I took some majors which were introduced in the field of TESOL by some leading researchers such as Gardner R. and Lambert W. for a year. The findings in this one-year project include both positive and negative aspects.

I. Introduction

I teach at Human Sciences Department in which students study psychology and social welfare. Many of them don't like English as a school subject; therefore, only about one in three chose English to take in their entrance examination. 'How can I teach them English when they don't want to?' This is the question that came to mind when I first met them in the classroom. The words 'EAP' (English for Academic Purposes) and 'ESP' (English for Specific Purposes) crossed my mind, however, in our department students major in two different fields; psychology and social welfare. It's impossible to choose only one of them in the mixed class. The first thing I did in the class was to ask them one particular question and let them answer it to find out what they need and what they want.

II. Students' interest.

The question is 'What brought you to take this class?' I categorized their reasons into the following groups of motivation;

1. English is essential for further study in Graduate course.	Instrumental	Intrinsic
2. I want to obtain higher TOEIC scores.	Instrumental	Extrinsic
3. For our seminar class, we need to read an English thesis	Instrumental	Intrinsic
4. I need the credits for graduation.	Instrumental	Extrinsic
5. I would like to learn how to speak English.	Instrumental	Intrinsic
6. English proficiency would lead me to a better job.	Instrumental	Extrinsic
7. I would like to join some NGO-type organization.	?	Intrinsic

III. Group of Motivation

When sorting the above chart, I needed to know various motivational groups which have been already studied. The leading researchers in this field are Gardner R. and Lambert W. and their categories are Integrative & Instrumental motivation. Later Deci E.(1972) introduced Intrinsic & Extrinsic motivation and others such as International motivation (this should be suited for '?' in the above chart) by Nakata T.(1995) appeared. The following chart was designed by Baily F.(1986) to show the correlation between 'Integrative & Instrumental' and 'Intrinsic & Extrinsic'.

	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Integrative	L2(Second language) learner wished to integrate with the L2 culture	Someone else wished the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons
Instrumental	L2 learner wished to achieve goals utilizing L2	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2

IV. Students' Belief

To determine their needs in detail, I made a questionnaire and let them answer it. (They scored them from 4 to 1; strongly agree-4, agree-3, disagree-2, strongly disagree-1)

(N:80)

18. I should have studied English harder in junior and senior high school.	3.62
3. English fluency would help me in some way in the future.	3.60
5. English qualification such as STEP will help me to find a job.	3.27
20. I would like to study English if I have a chance.	3.25
23. I would like to learn how to speak in English.	3.20
11. I would like to get a certificate in something to do with English.	3.09
24. I would like to go to an English conversation school.	3.06
9. To live in an English speaking country, it is essential to master English.	2.89
19. I would like to keep studying English.	2.87
13. I would have been happier to be able to take English classes in elementary school.	2.85
4. Grammar study is a MUST.	2.70
14. I regret not to having studied English more seriously.	2.68
12. To be taught by English native speakers is far better than by Japanese.	2.66
2. I like studying English.	2.63
15. English fluency would lead me to a better job and higher salary.	2.60
1. English was my favorite subject in my junior and senior high school days.	2.51
6. I would have something to do with English in the future.	2.50
16. I sometimes feel uncomfortable due to my poor English ability.	2.41
10. I would like to study abroad.	2.38
22. In the near future every Japanese will be a fluent English speaker.	2.30
21. 'School English' is enough to be a fluent English speaker.	2.27
17. English should be our mother tongue in Japan as well as Japanese.	2.25
25. I would like to keep a diary in English.	2.05
7. English is not necessary for entrance examinations for senior high and college.	1.96
8. I would be in a different department if English were not a subject on an examination.	1.95

This result shows that they want to study English but don't know how. What I should do in the class is to tell them how to enjoy studying English and motivate them.

Now I had a clue how to manage the class effectively based on the result above.

V. How to choose materials.

Howatt T.(1974) explained that there are four important elements for choosing proper materials in class; the purpose of their study, the class size, the age of the students and their levels. How about my class? The purpose of their study: to improve speaking ability, to read English theses. The class size: eighty students. The age of the students: they are juniors. (twenty-twenty two of age) Their levels: only two out of eighty passed the second grade of STEP, six passed the pre-second grade and five passed the third grade. This means that I should not choose a difficult text but rather easy ones to motivate them. Then I let them write what they wanted to study in the class. The following is the result. (They scored each subject written on the answer sheet from 5 to 0)

Taking majors for TOEIC	49	Introduce Japanese culture in English	15
Taking majors for the second grade of Eiken	44	Listening to English News programs	15
Tourism English	40	Writing exercise	13
How to write E-mail in English	38	Reading novels in English	11
Reading of English Newspaper	36	Business English	9
English grammar	32	Taking majors for the pre-first grade	7
Enjoy watching movies in English	18	Training for being an interpreter	1

VI. Class procedure

(1) Classified Ads in the Japan Times

The students are juniors so they have a great interest in their future upon graduation. I let them read authentic classified ads in English first to motivate them to read. According to the Dulay-Burt-Krashen model(1982), there's the Affective Filter which may become an interruption for L2 learners to achieve their linguistic goals. What the teachers should do is to let the L2 learners through this filter smoothly and move on to the next stage of studying. From this point of view, I believe that choosing classified ads is appropriate for the learners.

(2) Learning the rules when reading headlines in Newspapers

To prevent them being bored, I chose headlines to read in class after they finished reading the classified ads. Then they needed to learn some specific rules for reading them beforehand.

The following rules are the examples I showed in a class;¹⁾

- a. EU Warns China on U.K Trade. - Present tense often indicates things happened in the past.
- b. China To Build More Nuclear Plants Near Hong Kong. - To +V often indicates things for the future.
- c. U.S. Reshaping Asia-Pacific Military Role. - Be-Verb are often omitted
- d. Beijing To Expand Trade Tied For EU - The Capital city often indicates its government.

(3) Finally try reading articles

For the time being, we deal with domestic articles only to let them get used to the styles so

that they can use the 'top-down approach' by using their knowledge obtained from Japanese newspapers or TV programs. The number of words in an article should be limited to less than 300. 'The Genius Dictionary' published by Taisyukan, categorize English words into 5 ranks as follows;

- A: The basics for junior high school level- Approx. 1100 words
- B: The basics for senior high school level- Approx. 4800 words
- C: Essential words for college students and adults - Approx. 7300 words
- D: Words frequently used followed by the C level - Approx. 17300 words
- E: Others - Approx. 45600 words

I first read articles and sort every word according to the above rankings and put the words ranked in C, D and E level into the words list and let the students learn them before reading.

Example of the article

College to Allow e-mail applications²⁾

Matsuyama, Ehime Pref. (Kyodo)

Starting July 1, Matsuyama Shinonome College, a private women's college here, will accept applications for admission by e-mail.

- Some lines omitted -

The Shikoku college will set aside an unspecified number of openings for students using the new 'interactive admissions' system out of the 260 spots available in the freshman class for the academic year that starts in April 2000, college officials said.

VII. The Carroll model(1965)of school learning: an interactional model

According to Carroll B. the two major classes of variable can be considered as follows;

(a)

Instructional factors	Individual differences
time	general intelligence
instructional excellence	aptitude
	motivation

A factor 'motivation' is in the category of 'Individual differences', however, in my opinion, instructional effectiveness can be varied from teacher to teacher. That means if a teacher choose the most appropriate strategy in terms of motivation in a class, students might follow his / her direction and also might be likely to reach their own linguistic settings.

(b)

(1) the learner's aptitude	Foreign Language Aptitude:	33%
(2) general intelligence	Intelligence:	20%
(3) perseverance	Perseverance or Motivation	33%
(4) the quality of instruction	Others:	14%
(5) the opportunity of learning	Total:	100%

This model shows that 'Perseverance or Motivation' is very important factor as well as instructional excellence, therefore, as I mentioned earlier in this paper, a proper motivation strategy should be

chosen by teachers in a class.

VIII. Conclusion

I used the above method for a year then both positive and negative aspects arose.

- After a year I sent out the same questionnaire again about what they wanted to learn in my class. The result turned out to be different from the former one as follows;

Reading of English Newspaper	59	Introduce Japanese culture in English	16
Taking majors for TOEIC	48	Listening to English News programs	15
Taking majors for the second grad of Eiken	42	Reading novels in English	13
English grammar	40	Writing exercise	11
How to write E-mail in English	39	Business English	10
Tourism English	30	Taking majors for the pre-first grade	9
Enjoy watching movies in English	18	Training for being an interpreter	1

The item 'Reading of English Newspaper' was up from the fifth to the top, 'English grammar' was from the sixth to the fourth. This means that the students who didn't have much interest in English reading have been motivated in studying.

- We didn't do any placement test so that the students' level differ from student to student. It is not easy at all to choose what I should emphasize on in class.
- We didn't use any particular text but gave them handouts in each class so that some of the students could feel a little achievement.
- I focus on 'motivation', however, if I failed to motivate them even after a year, there would be nothing left for them to learn. Therefore I should have chosen another language teaching strategy mixed with motivation strategy.

Next year, I'm thinking about using a text book. Then I'll observe what's going on in the class for another year again in terms of motivation. In a non-English speaking country, we have a little opportunity to use English in our daily life. Therefore, the most important factor in English education in Japan is 'motivation'. What the English teachers in Japan are expected to do is to use the most appropriate teaching strategy in a class and motivate students to become autonomous learners.

Notes:

- 1) International News '97/'98 pp.9-10
- 2) The Japan Times October '99

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