TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND USE OF AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ORAL TASKS: A CASE STUDY OF TEN TEACHERS OF ORAL EXPRESSION MODULE

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Introduction

We agree that people with the same opportunity and exposure may show variation in the extent to which they learn a second / foreign language. Some people learn the language quickly and thoroughly, while others fail to do so .The explanation of why a language is learned successfully or unsuccessfully may lie in the individuals' motivation to learn it. Therefore, motivation is important in second / foreign language learning, particularly the oral expression module because it involves learning the four skills what makes it the most difficult module because it is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all , how much energy he / she devotes to it and how long he/ she perseveres. Most teachers and writers in the field of the psychology of learning agree that motivation is a prerequisite for success in language learning. Many teachers when using the word motivation they speak about the phenomenon as a whole or about broad theories of psychology. In this article, we would remind teachers about the factors that affect motivation as well as the importance of dividing it into its main components to facilitate the task of motivating for them. Instead of saying "I want to motivate my students" they will learn other specific strategies such as "group norms, success expectation, enthusiasm …" Also, before thinking to generate motivation, they have to create the basic motivational conditions, then when reaching a level of motivation, they have to focus on how to protect it.

Factors that affect motivation:

Several factors affect students' motivation to learn a second language but the main ones are those mentioned via this quotation by Brophy (1987):

"Motivation to learn is a competence acquired through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others (especially parents and teachers)." (Brophy, J in Abisamra, N, 2006)

To complete that quote, we may say that the most effective factor and the important one among significant others is the teacher. To confirm that Stipek (1988) says: *"To a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn"* (Stipek, D in Abisamra, N, 2006). Factors can be divided through many ways. William, M and Burden, R (1997) divide them into internal and external factors.

a. Internal factors:

• Age: this is evident in works of Piaget, Maslow, Alderfer, Erikson and Vygotsky.

• Gender: girls are known to acquire languages faster than boys. Hence, their motivation would be higher.

• Religion: religion may have two different influences on learners of other

languages. On one hand it may be a motive for many people who are interested in learning other cultures and religions in which they may never do that without language. On the other hand it may be for a kind of people just a waste of time and that there is no need to learn it since they have their own languages.

• Goal: why the learner is studying the language.

• Need: how much the learner needs to study this language.

• Interest (and curiosity): how interested the learner is in learning this language

• Attitude: how the learner views this language and its speakers.

• Expectancy: how much the learner expects to succeed.

• Self-efficacy/Competence: judging own ability and competence. How capable of success they think they are.

• Native language proficiency: the more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn a second language, and then the more motivated s/he will be. In addition to that; the mother tongue has great effects on the learner. Few people can be motivated to learn another language because they know the passivity of their language especially in the age of technology.

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• **First foreign language: many people see learning another language easy just**

because the system of that language is similar to their first foreign language (like the case of English and French in Algeria). Otherwise they can be motivated because they had a high achievement in the first foreign language either as a school subject or in the daily use of language in the environment.

b. External factors:

• **Teachers: this can affect learners through; encouragement, expectations,**

feedback, scaffolding, task presentation, teaching strategies and techniques and rewards

• **Course content and Classroom atmosphere: relevance attractiveness,**

challenge relaxed and positive atmosphere (low affective filter).

• **Social identity (peer groups): teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by**

their peer groups. In second language learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers. Peer pressure often reduces the desire of the student to work toward native pronunciation, because the sounds of the target language may be regarded as strange. For learners of English as a second language, speaking like a native speaker may unconsciously be regarded as a sign of no longer belonging to their native-language peer group. In working with secondary school students, it is important to keep these peer influences in mind and to foster a positive image for proficiency in a second language.

• **Role models: students need to have positive and realistic role models who**

demonstrate the value of being proficient in more than one language.

• **Home support: support from home is very important for students' motivation**

to learn a second language. If parents value both the native language and English, communicate with their children in whichever language is most comfortable, and show support for and interest in their children's progress, the children will definitely be more motivated to learn the second language.

• **Learning environment: in order for the students to be motivated, the learning**

environment needs to be free from anxiety; the student should not feel threatened or intimidated. In order for him/her to speak, s/he needs to feel s/he will be heard and that what s/he is saying is worth hearing.

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Thus, as teachers we should make our teaching according to these factors to fit our students' backgrounds and

The subjects of the study:

A. students

It was necessary to select a sample because of time, feasibility and quality. We tried to select a representative sample in an objective way. The method used is Random Sampling in which there is no scope for subjectivity or bias. The respondents were three groups of first year students from the English department of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. From a population of (214) students, the three groups (without the absent ones) represented (90) students what equates (42%) of the target population.

B. teachers:

The participants of this questionnaire are (10) teachers of the oral expression module at the department of English.

Students' questionnaire:

A. The aim of the questionnaire:

We have devised a questionnaire in order to find out what our first year students need to improve their level of ability in the speaking skill. It also aims at evaluating their needs at the level of motivation to see how our teachers can adopt conditions to the level of their students' needs.

B. The description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire was handed to three groups of first year students at the English department of Mohamed Khider university of Biskra (2006). It was handed to (90) student which represent (42%) of the population of six groups (214 student). All the papers were returned because they were given to students in classrooms during their classes. We spent one hour and a half with each group. We explained all terms in the questionnaire and the aim underlying each question. We spent half an hour discussing all items with students then gave them an opportunity of one hour to think and fill the questionnaire.

The design of this questionnaire was based on the latest model of motivation of Zoltan Dornyei (1994) and its alternative in (1998) and his framework of motivational strategies (2001). It is divided into two main sections: background information and motivation and speaking abilities which is divided as follows: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level. The questionnaire consists of closed and open questions. Closed questions are those which allow the student to select a number of possibilities offered to him/her or answer by "yes" or "no". Open questions are those which require a personal answer. The main sections are:

Section one: consists of questions from 1 to 6. They are questions that seek personal information about the learner (age, sex, type of baccalaureate and the reason of the choice of English).

Section two: consists of three broad directions:

1. The language level: consists of questions from 7 to 17. All those questions devised to find answers concerning learners desire to learn English and their instrumental and integrative motivations to learn the English language.

2. The learner level: contains questions from 18 to 23. those questions were centred around students' attitudes, feeling and satisfaction about teachers of oral expression and the methods, techniques and materials that are used in that modules.

3. The learning situation level: collects questions from 24 to 41. Those questions

also were divided into three directions: course – specific, teacher – specific and group – specific. All those questions seek information about the course of oral expression with all its components; methods, skills, materials, techniques and activities. The second group was given to know students' views on their teachers, i.e. the way they behave, how they try to establish a relaxed atmosphere and the way they manage their classrooms to promote good relationships as well as effective learning.

Why Donyei's framework for this study:

Many models of motivation appeared in the field of education. The most useful ones in the area of foreign language learning are: Gardner's, Keller's, Crooks & Schmidt's, Wen's and later on the works of Dornyei. We have chosen Dornyei's framework because of many reasons. First of all, unlike the other models, this model seems to be more practical in which it gives details about many internal and external factors that control motivation and covers aspects from different theories. In chapter I, we have seen that each of the mentioned models follows one particular theory and fixed to one or two orientations (for example Gardner's and Schumann's are based on an integrative orientation rather than other factors such as instrumentality). Dörnyei was also concerned with expanding the model of motivation beyond two orientations, specifically in a FL setting. He stated that *"the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where"* (1994: 275). Contrary to Gardner's focus on integrativeness, Dörnyei (1994) asserted that in a FL setting instrumental orientation would have a greater influence on language learners.

He created a model of FL learning motivation that could account for and include some of the expanding views of motivation. Three different levels of factors were included, which not only allowed for the inclusion of

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orientations but also for specific situations that involved the learner and the surrounding context. The first level in Dörnyei's model is the language level, which encompasses both integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems focusing on reactions and attitudes toward the target language.

The second level is the learner level, which focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation. At this level different cognitive theories of motivation are included. Cognitive theories of motivation view motivation as a function of someone's thoughts, not as an instinct, need, drive, or state. The source of action, then, is when information is encoded and transformed into a belief (Dörnyei, 1994: 276). Different factors of cognitive theories, such as learned helplessness, a resigned, pessimistic state which develops when someone feels success is impossible, could be added to this model.

The third level is the learning situation level, which takes into account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts. This level consists of extrinsic and intrinsic motives in different areas. Extrinsic motivation consists of doing "something because of an external reward that may be obtained, while intrinsic motivation is demonstrated w

hen we do something because we get rewards enough from the activity itself" (Schmidt et al., 1996: 14). These two motives are not necessarily mutually antagonistic. However, extrinsic motivation can undermine intrinsic motivation. Traditional school settings often cultivate extrinsic motivation, but under certain circumstances classroom rewards can be combined with or lead to intrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (1996) specified that each of these different levels, language, learner and learning situation, seem to have an effect independent of the others. He stated that *"...each of the three levels of motivation exert their influence independently of the others and have enough power to nullify the effects of the motives associated with the other two levels"* (1996: 78).

Nevertheless, one can not forget to say that this framework still lacks many aspects of practice and is still vague to realize in classrooms. About that, Dornyei adds *"many of its components have been verified by very little or no empirical research in the L2 field"* (1994: 283). What is special and evident about this framework is its latest version with the publication of his book Motivational Strategies in the language classroom (2001) where the author extends the study and gives real practical suggestion to motivate FL learners in classrooms.

The components of the model are as follows:

The teachers' questionnaire:

A. The aim of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire aims at identifying the teachers in charge of the

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oral expression module, their qualifications, their methods, techniques, materials they use and what problems they encounter. In addition to that, they seek to answer questions about teachers' awareness of motivation, motivational models and strategies and what is happening in the field of psychology and didactics.

B. The description of the questionnaire:

The teachers' questionnaire was distributed to ten teachers of the oral expression module at the English department. Only seven papers were handed back where as the three others refused to return them. It was answered anonymously. It was a mixture of closed and open questions. It consists of three main sections.

Section one: this section contains questions from 1 to 6. Those questions seek general information about teachers, i.e. their qualifications, their experience in teaching at university and in teaching oral expression courses.

Section two: it consists of questions from 7 to 35. Those items were entitled teachers' concern with motivation and speaking skill. The first questions (from 7 to 14) seek information about teachers' view of motivation, learning approaches and their knowledge in the field of psycho – pedagogy. Then, the remaining tries to find out information about the oral expression methodology and how teachers try to solve the problem encountered in the oral expression courses.

Section three: in this section, teachers are offered with a chance to give their personal opinions on the way teachers have to motivate their learners and how they may improve the teaching of the speaking skill.

The results:

The analysis of these questionnaires allows us to make a summary of our students and teachers' needs and difficulties. Following the division of the questionnaire, the results obtained are at three levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level.

As far as the language level is concerned, the most surprising but known reality is that our teachers lack motivation. The questioned teachers seem to be demotivated because of vast internal and external factors. One of the main factors that make students and teachers demotivated is the lack of training. All teachers of the module of O.E. had no opportunity of training. In the part of the learners, through the first questions of the students' questionnaire, we infer that the majority of students lack integrative motivation, in which the majority claimed that they have chosen English to get a job (for future career) and no one was interested in the English speaking people culture or attitudes. That is why our learners need to learn something beyond the linguistic items of language (paralinguistic features) that will contribute to the development of both speaking and

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listening abilities of learners.

The second category of needs is needs at the level of the learner. Through our daily life at university, through our teaching and through the students' questionnaire, we see that the students of the first year are not self – confident enough to deal with the difficulties of the learning process. Another important reality is that students of first year do not feel satisfaction. When asked about their level of ability, about methods and techniques, the majority answered negatively.

Concerning the learning situation level, we have reached three main categories of needs. The first is course – specific. The questionnaire revealed the following: the lack of methodology, the lack of administrative support, the lack of materials and no variation of techniques and activities.

Starting by the methodology -with all its aspects: objectives, methods, syllabus and materials, the results may be summarized as the following points:

• there is no agreement on the syllabus

• there is no agreement on objectives

• there is no agreement on methods and techniques

• there is no variation of speaking activities or communication strategies

• there is a great lack of materials of different kinds

• there is no use of the language laboratory

The second is teacher – specific. The main problems at that level are centred on the teacher. The greatest dilemma is that most of the teachers seemed to be not aware of motivation, motivational strategies and the new foundings in the field of psycho – pedagogy and education. Moreover, through the analysis of the questionnaire we reached the conclusion that the majority are following old methods and traditional techniques in teaching O.E courses. In addition to that teachers also do not pay attention to the listening skill where as first year students may never speak the language before they learn how to be familiar with the foreign language and how to decode a variety of messages in whole conversations. Beside that, most teachers neglect the importance of integrating skills. As we know, language is a whole system and each skill contributes to the development of the other. Another evident reality in the department of English and in the Algerian universities in general is the absence of collaboration between teachers of different modules in the curriculum. As far as our respondents are concerned, when asked about collaboration, all teachers declared that they have no contact with each other in terms of courses. The cooperative work with teachers of psychology, grammar and phonetics is very important for teachers of oral expression because the syllabus is not fixed, so they need

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other views to make courses fit the needs of the learners. Of course that could be according to the learners' backgrounds and their levels of ability. Another problem is that the majority of teachers of oral expression do not pay attention to the necessity of the phonological items beside grammatical items where the phonetic transcription may do so many in the process of learning the language as well as speaking it.

The broad line at the learning situation level is group – specific. When asked, both teachers and students showed that they suffer from large classes and the great number that reaches in most of times 40 to 45. That status with other factors made teachers being passive with the situation. Teachers lost hope to find solutions to that status. Unfortunately, our teachers do not make any effort to reach group cohesiveness or to make a classroom goal structure, i.e. to manage classrooms in an intended manner so as to fit the objectives of each course in that module.

From above, we have seen that demotivating factors are of different sorts in both sides for teachers and students. Both teachers and students suffer from the lack of motivation, materials and administrative support but still teachers may bring their methods, techniques and materials to fit the conditions of our university and the status of our department.The needs of the first year students vary in general, but the great majority of the informants, and through answers to the first part of students' questionnaire, it seems that our students are motivated instrumentally but not integratively. In addition to that, through the teachers questionnaire, we have noticed that our teachers are not aware and need access to different sorts of knowledge. This questionnaire revealed that there is a strong need to train our teachers and set the habit of working in collaboration with teachers of other modules so as to meet real needs of the students after they sum up the main difficulties that may face learners.

Pedagogical implications

From the discussion and anlyses of models of motivation, based on the framework of zoltan dornyei, the main strategies maybe summarised as follows :

1. Creating the basic motivational conditions:

A - Appropriate teacher behaviour:

Strategy 1:

Teachers should demonstrate and talk about their own enthusiasm for the course, material and how it affects them personally.

Strategy 2:

Teachers should take students' learning very seriously in which they show the students that they care about their progress. So they always should have high expectations for what their students can achieve.

Strategy 3:

Teachers should develop a personal relationship with their students. That can be achieved when they show them that they accept and care about them, pay attention, listen to each and indicate that they are mentally and physically available if someone needs them.

Strategy 4:

Teachers have to seek knowledge of all types of the language science, i.e. from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and most importantly applied linguistics.

B - Pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere:

Strategy 5:

Create a supportive atmosphere in the classroom. More specifically, establish a norm of tolerance, enhance risk – taking and acceptance of mistakes, and encourage learners to personalize the classroom environment according to their taste.

C - Cohesiveness and appropriate group norms:

Strategy 6

Promote the development of group cohesiveness. More specifically,

• try and promote interaction, cooperation and the sharing of personal information among the students;

• use small group tasks;

• encourage extra curricular activities if possible to give them opportunity to meet, and

• try to prevent emergence of rigid seating patterns.

Strategy 7:

Teachers should formulate group norms explicitly, and have them discussed and accepted by students. Moreover, they should observe consistently the group norms in which they reinforce the respect of these rules. They should never let any violations go unnoticed and remind the whole group of the risks of doing that

2. Generating initial motivation:

A - Enhancing the learners' language related values and attitudes:

Strategy 8:

First, teachers should promote the learners' language – related values by presenting teacher or peer role models (e.g. invite senior students to talk to their classes about their positive experiences. Then, they should raise the students' intrinsic interest in the L2 learning process. They can achieve that by highlighting aspects of L2 learning that their students are likely to enjoy and make the first encounters with the L2 a positive experience.

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Strategy 9:

Teachers should promote integrative values by encouraging a positive and open – minded disposition towards the L2 and its speakers, and towards foreignness in general. To realize that, teachers may include a sociocultural component in the language curriculum. They can quote positive views about language learning by influential public figures, or simply encourage students to explore the L2 community by their owns (a vivid example is through the internet).

Strategy 10:

Teachers should promote the students' awareness of the instrumental values associated with the knowledge of L2. This aim can simply gained by reminding the students of the importance of mastering the L2 and the place of the English language in the world for both individuals and communities.

B - Increasing the learners' expectancy of success:

Strategy 11:

Teachers should increase the students' expectancy of success in particular tasks and in learning in general. They have to be sure that their students receive sufficient preparation and assistance, they know what success in the task involves and be sure that there are no serious obstacles to success.

C - Increasing the learners' goal – orientedness:

Strategy 12:

Teachers should increase their students' goal – orientedness by formulating explicit class goals accepted by them. Teachers can:

• have the students negotiate their individual goals; outline a common purpose and display the final outcome in public;

• draw attention from time to time to the class goals and how particular activities help to attain them; and

• renegotiate the class goals if necessary to keep them achievable

D - Making teaching materials relevant for the learners

Strategy 13:

Teachers should make the curriculum and the materials relevant to the students. To do so, they may:

• use needs analysis techniques to find out the needs, goals and interests of the students and involve these into the curriculum;

• relate the subject matter to the everyday experiences and background of the students; and

• enlist the students in designing and running the course.

E – Creating realistic learner beliefs:

Strategy 14:

Teachers should help to create realistic learner beliefs. More specifically,

• try to confront positively the possible erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that students may have; and

• raise the students' general awareness about the different ways languages are learnt and the number of factors that can contribute to success.

3. Maintaining and protecting motivation:

A – Making learning stimulating and enjoyable:

<u>Strategy 15:</u>

Teachers should make learning more stimulating and enjoyable by breaking the monotony of classroom events. More specifically, teachers can:

• vary the learning tasks and other aspects of teaching as much as they can;

• of teaching as much as they can;

• focus on the motivational flow and not just the information flow in their classes;

• vary the learning tasks and other aspects of teaching as much as they can;

• focus on the motivational flow and not just the information flow in their classes; and

• occasionally do the unexpected.

<u>Strategy 16:</u>

Teachers should make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the learner by increasing the attractiveness of tasks and activities. Teachers should:

• make tasks challenging;

• choose attractive topics by adapting it to the students' natural interests or by including novel, intriguing, exotic, humorous, competitive or fantasy elements;

• personalize learning tasks; and

• select tasks that yield tangible, finished products.

<u>Strategy 17:</u>

Teachers should make learning stimulating and enjoyable for the learners by enlisting them as active task participants. Teachers may select tasks which require mental and/or physical involvement from each participant and create specific roles for everybody.

B – Presenting tasks and activities in a motivating way:

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Strategy 18:

Teachers should present and administer tasks and activities in a motivating way. To realize that, teachers can:

- explain the purpose and utility of the task;
- whet the students appetite about the content of the task; and
- provide appropriate strategies to carry out the task.

C – Protecting the learners' self – esteem and increasing their self – confidence:

Strategy 19:

Teachers should provide learners with regular experiences of success. Teachers may:

- provide multiple opportunities for success in the class;
- adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students abilities and counterbalance demanding tasks with manageable ones; and
- design tests that focus on what learners can rather than cannot do.

Strategy 20:

Teachers should build their learners confidence by providing regular encouragement. Teachers encourage students when:

- they draw the students' attention to their strength and abilities; and
- indicate to the students that they believe in their efforts to learn and their capability to complete tasks and activities.

Strategy 21:

Teachers should help diminish anxiety by reducing the anxiety – provoking elements in the learning environment. As far as these sources of anxiety are concerned, teachers should try to:

- avoid social comparison even if in its subtle forms;
- promote cooperation instead of competition;
- help learners to accept the fact that they will make mistakes as part of the learning process; and
- make tests and assessments completely transparent and involve students in the negotiation of the final mark.

Strategy 22:

Teachers should build the students' confidence in their learning abilities by teaching them various learners' strategies. Teachers should:

- teach students learning strategies to facilitate the intake of new materials; and
- teach students communication strategies to help them overcome communication difficulties.

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D – Allowing students to maintain a positive self – image:

Strategy 23:

Teachers should allow learners to maintain a positive social image while engaged in the learning tasks. For instance, teachers should select activities that contain good roles for the participants and avoid face – threatening acts such as humiliating criticism or putting students unexpectedly in the spotlight

E – Promoting cooperation among learners:

Strategy 24:

Teachers should increase students' motivation by promoting cooperation among the learners. Teachers may do the following:

• set up tasks in which teams of learners are asked to work together towards the same goal;

• take into account team products not only individual ones in assessment; and provide the students with some social training to learn how best to work

F – Creating learner autonomy

Strategy 25:

Teachers should increase students' motivation by promoting learner autonomy. Teachers should allow learners choices, and hand over as much as they can of the various leadership or teaching roles and functions to the learners in which the teacher will play the role of a facilitator.

Conclusion

In this changing world of technology, as we proceed from one theory to another, from one research to another, the task of the teacher will be more difficult. Teachers have to hold to main roles, i.e. as motivators and as communicators. This is not an easy task especially in large classes like ours. Teachers need to explore beliefs of all aspects of language and psychology and need to know hundreds of strategies to know first the needs and difficulties of their learner; then, start practicing motivational strategies. The best solution to achieve that is to start the year by diagnostic tests and questionnaire to begin fitting the syllabus to the needs of their learners.

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