

ENHANCING MOTIVATION OF THE EFL LEARNERS BY INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Motivation plays an important role in EFL learning. For the twenty-first century technology-savvy learners, teachers can resort to advanced technology to enhance and sustain their motivation. The present study explores the motivational orientations of the undergraduate EFL learners of Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh and the teacher's awareness to equip their learners with appropriate technological knowledge to ignite their motivation for learning English effectively. There were two research questions in this study. The first question was whether the learners were integratively or instrumentally motivated. The second question dealt with the contribution of technology-enhanced language pedagogy to assist the learners' motivational orientations in the blended classrooms. To find out the first research question, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The findings revealed that students' integrative motivation was noticeably higher than instrumental motivation. A semi-structured interview of the language teacher was taken to answer the second question. The findings revealed that the learners were integratively motivated and the language teacher arranged technologically equipped classroom in order that the students would feel an inner urge to learn the language enthusiastically.

Keywords: *blended classroom; EFL learners; instrumental motivation; integrative motivation; technology*

1. Introduction

Motivation, a significant social psychological factor, impacts foreign language learners' learning. It is "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (Gardner, 1985: 10). Upholding motivation to learn English language is a continuous process. If a student loses his interest at any phase of the learning procedure, his teacher can invigorate him by continually adopting effective teaching strategies. Technology can be an appropriate device to assist teachers in this case. Even the demotivated learners also feel interested in learning a foreign language as teachers ensure them unprecedented freedom (Wang and Guthrie, 2004). Accordingly, for these twenty-first century technology-savvy learners, teachers can resort to advanced technology to enhance and sustain their motivation.

English language teaching research shows great interest in integrative and instrumental motivation; however, no research has been carried out on these two orientations and teachers' use of technology to motivate the learners of Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh by taking individual learners' motivational orientation into account. Therefore, the present study explores the motivational orientations of the learners and the teacher's awareness to equip the learners with appropriate technological knowledge to ignite their motivation.

The study investigated two research questions: 1. What is the major type of motivational orientation of the undergraduate English language learners of Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh? 2. What can technology-enhanced language pedagogy contribute to assist the learners' motivational orientations in the blended classrooms?

2. Literature Review

Some learners learn a language for practical reasons. This is "instrumental motivation which means learning the language for an ulterior motive unrelated to its use by native speakers – to pass an examination, to get a certain kind of job, and so on" (Cook, 1991:97). The other students may have an extraordinary attraction for a foreign language culture, heritage and people. "The integrative motivation reflects whether the student identifies with the target culture and people in some sense, or rejects them" (Cook, 1991:97).

Learners nurture an innate aspiration to learn; therefore, the teacher's support makes an advancement in their acquisition. The findings of Kalanzadeh, Soleimani, and Bakhtiarvand (2014) showed that the EFL learners used technology with a positive attitude in Iran. Batubara (2021) stated in his article "Integrating Technology in EFL Classroom for Indonesian Adolescent Learners" that the learners used technology in their classroom easily with the help of their teacher and it made them creative and interested in language learning. If teachers give positive feedback, students perform better (Zhang et al., 2012). Majeed and Muslim (2016) found that the teachers do not have sufficient knowledge to use technology in their teaching context in Iraq; therefore, they emphasized on teachers' expertise. They also suggested to include technology in the curriculum. On the other hand, Khany and Ghoreyshi (2013) found that although EFL teachers are highly familiar with the internet tools and have highly positive attitudes towards using internet tools in their classrooms, they were concerned about the application of the tools. Both technology and teachers' motivation have positive effects on students' motivation. Technology can play a significant role on students' motivation and engagement if trained teachers and technological support are available (Ahmed and Ismail, 2021). In another study, Fitri and Rifa'at (2021) suggested teacher's empowerment through ICT and emphasized on teachers' workplace training, seminar etc. Another study found Moodle-based instruction and in-person learning very convenient (Suriaman, A., Tadeko, N., Manurung, K., Usman, S., & Yuliyani, A., 2022). The research of Yazici and Ucar (2017) revealed that pre-service English language teachers at Ondokuz Mayıs University had positive attitudes towards Computer Assisted Language Learning. Harahap and Rusli (2021) found that learners most frequently used WhatsApp and Google Classroom as their teacher did not use any other online platform.

3. Research Method

A mixed method was employed in the research. The data was obtained from questionnaire and interview. Thirty-eight undergraduate students of the Department of English, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh participated in this study.

Knowledge about the students' motivation assists the teachers to proceed further. By using the questionnaire of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMBT)(2004), the types of motivation have been measured. A questionnaire with thirty-eight questions and a five-point Likert-scale was administered among the learners. The subjects were asked to respond to the 5 choices: 1. "totally disagree", 2. "partly disagree", 3. "neither agree nor disagree", 4. "partly agree" and 5. "totally agree". After the completion of their task, they submitted the questionnaires. Then a Paired Samples *t* test, a parametric test, was run to get the data. "The Paired Samples *t* Test compares the means of two measurements taken from the same individual, object, or related units. The purpose of the test is to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the mean difference between paired observation is significantly different from zero" (SPSS Tutorials: Paired Samples *t* Test, n.d.).

The language teacher of these students participated in a semi-structured and informal in-depth interview on teaching techniques, teaching materials, and motivational strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The aim of this research was to identify the dominant motivational orientation of the learners' foreign language acquisition. The study also examined the use of technology by the language teacher to enhance their learners' success by gaining knowledge about their motivational orientations.

The data of the questionnaire were analyzed by means of Statistical Package for Social Science version 21.0. The means and the standard deviation of the items of the subjects' instrumental and integrative motivations were calculated.

	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Integrative Motivation	3.7	38	0.942
Instrumental Motivation	4.17	38	0.34

Table 1. Statistics of paired samples

Table 1 showed the means and standard deviation values of instrumental and integrative motivations of the learners. The mean of the instrumental motivation was 3.7 and the standard deviation was 0.942. Again, the mean of the integrative motivation was 4.17 and the standard deviation was 0.34. The mean scores revealed that integrative motivation was higher than the instrumental motivation. The quantitative procedure revealed that a majority of the learners opted for similar types of values from 1. "totally disagree", 2. "partly disagree", 3. "neither agree nor disagree", 4. "partly agree" and 5. "totally agree" options.

		Paired Differences	Paired Differences	Paired Differences	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence	95% Confidence			

				Interval of the Difference	Interval of the Difference			
				Lower	Upper			
Pair I	Integrative Motivation and Instrumental Motivation	0.47	0.02	0.15	0.79	2.89	37	0.005

Table 2. Paired samples test

Table 2: The paired samples t-test findings showed that the difference between the two types of motivations was significant. Table 2 also revealed mean differences, standard deviation differences, confidence interval of the differences, t-value, and p-value. The paired difference (mean score) between these two types of motivations was 0.47. Moreover, the standard deviation difference was 0.02. The t-value was 2.89 and the p-value was 0.005. The difference between instrumental motivation and integrative motivational orientation was statistically significant because the p-value is lesser than 0.05.

4.2 Discussion

There were two research questions in this study. The first question was whether the undergraduate Jagannath University learners were integratively or instrumentally motivated. The second question dealt with the contribution of technology-enhanced language pedagogy to assist the learners' motivational orientations in the blended classrooms. To find out the first research question, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The mean score of the learners' instrumental motivation was 3.7 and standard deviation was 0.942. The mean score of their integrative motivation was 4.17 and the standard deviation was 0.34. The findings revealed that students' integrative motivation was noticeably higher than instrumental motivation. The finding of this study is in line with Gardner and Lambert (cited in Ellis, 1986: 117) who asserted that "integrative orientation to L2 learning...occurs when the learner wishes to identify with the culture of the L2 group". Norris-Holt (2001) asserted that integrative motivation ensures long-term success in second language learning.

The learners of this study were interested to learn English language to know about the culture of the native speakers. One reason behind the overwhelming interest of Bangladeshi students in English language and Western culture may be globalization. People of the whole world have become citizens of one global village. Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp video calls, and other online platforms have built bridge of intimacy between the East and the West. Being accustomed with the Western culture, Bangladeshi learners felt an urge to make a close connection with them through technology and for that reason they strove to learn English language. Another reason might be the discipline of the learners. As students of English language and literature, the participants had an affinity towards the culture of the literary characters of English novels, plays etc. The description of English landscapes, nature, rituals, and culture also attracted their attention. They might also feel an intense desire to feel oneness with the characters of the literary texts.

The second objective of the research was to find out how does the course teacher employed technology to accommodate the learners' motivational orientation. On the basis

of this knowledge of the learners' motivational orientation, the teacher formulated strategies to enhance the spirit of the learners to strive at the optimum level by integrating technology.

The teacher was interviewed to complement the quantitative data. She reported that as a language teacher she always interacted with her students in such a friendly way that they communicated with her spontaneously. She called the students by their names and tried to relate the language tasks to their lives. As it was very difficult to get and keep the attention of the learners in the online Zoom meetings, she was very conscious about her lively presentation. She also let them chat for a few minutes for ice breaking. She patiently listened to their utterances which made the students confident. In this way, she created awareness and facilitated learner autonomy. She also made the classes attractive by using references from recent popular movies, plays, songs etc. She gave compliments upon the successful completion of tasks and in case of wrong answers, she dealt with compassion.

The teacher interviewee asserted that she used videos to make the lessons easier and more comprehensible to the learners. Sometimes she stopped the videos at certain points and gave clarifications. Students asked questions on that part of the video and she answered. Visuals are very helpful to internalize and remember the language components. For that reason, she shared e-books, task related videos and animations, and other related materials with students and that process helped them to study easily.

In the Zoom meetings, the teacher asked them to give answers to short questions, explain excerpts and give opinions in English. Sometimes, the students answered in the chat-box. These procedures helped learners to remain attentive and motivated. The teacher always tried to maintain learners' attention in the classroom. Sometimes she made humorous comments. At other times, she shared anecdotes. She asked questions to avoid learners' mental distraction and made them conscious about the digital classroom. To nurture their motivation, the teacher requested the learners to share their experiences which were relevant to the topic. She also gave them assignments to submit online.

Each and every student was given opportunities to say something in online classes by rotation. That inclusive attitude of the teacher fostered motivation. She also encouraged the students to participate in virtual language learning related webinars and conferences arranged by various universities and educational institutes. The teacher prepared them for giving online presentations on a selected topic. Accordingly, she formed groups and asked the group members to communicate with their peers after the online class. The teacher sent them e-books to read, write reviews on it, and send her through e-mail. She also sent them enjoyable audiobooks to listen and comprehend the topic. The teacher gave them the opportunity to share their educational and personal problems through e-mail to which she tried to respond. She asked them to write down short answers in Padlet which was another new digital platform. Sometimes the teacher asked them to use online dictionary which was very helpful to learn correct pronunciation.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the undergraduate EFL students of Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh were integratively motivated and the language teacher arranged technologically equipped classroom in order that the students would feel an inner urge to learn the language enthusiastically. This finding will be beneficial

for the learners, teachers, administrators, and researchers to use the data. The future researchers can conduct their researches with various variables and large samples.

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