

THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION IN A LANGUAGE CLASS

Benahmed Nihal
Abu Bakr Belkaid University
Tlemcen , ALGERIA

ABSTRACT

In this contribution, we plan to consider the causes of student motivation / demotivation in a language class. It is a crucial problem for the teacher who is placed in front of a captive public. He must think about how to arouse the interest of the student, encourage him when it is necessary and maintain his desire to learn this language. The learner may be affected by external factors that the teacher must be able to stimulate in order to increase or restore the interest in learning foreign languages.

Keywords: Motivation, motivational dynamics, learner, teacher, foreign language.

INTRODUCTION

"Communication" would be the main goal and objective of language didactic today. With the arrival of the communicative approach towards the seventies, the world of language teaching / learning has known an upheaval in the foundations and objectives level to be achieved. The learner is now placed at the heart of his learning. He became the main actor in this operation. In his learning of the foreign language, his primary objective is the acquisition of certain skills, both orally and in writing, allowing him a proven autonomy in the situations of communication that he will have to manage in his daily life.

The first question that comes up in the mind of a teacher is: what is the best method of teaching? In reality, there is not an adequate answer to this question. Many researches have been done about the way of teaching. However, we think that the right method is the one that corresponds to both teachers and learner.

Indeed, the fundamental preoccupation of teachers is to know how to intensify the desire to learn in learners; in other words; how to motivate them. Two distinct reasons come to mind: (1) To arouse the curiosity of learners and answer their expectations. This dimension must be taken into account, it is necessary for academic success. (2) To carry the school trouble. It's about taking the essential steps for a possible remediation.

Motivation is the center of multiple researches in psychology and education science. In a foreign language, learning involves the mobilization of knowledge and skills, the motivation must not be denied, because it consists of an act of commitment, which makes us say that teaching needs a research to arouse and prolong motivation among learners, because it produces one of the major factors guiding the success of learning processes, it is the subject of two types of approaches: (1) A socio-psychological approach: she is interested in so-called instrumental motivation. (2) A cognitive approach: it considers motivation as a dynamic process that varies with multiple factors.

The field that interests us here is the motivation in the school environment and more specifically in the language classes; students are not motivated, nothing interests them, how to motivate them? How to give back the desire to learn for student?

Teachers seem completely destitute in front of students. According to Prensky: “Nothing stops a motivated learner” But how to show interest in this language? Does the student's motivation influence his activity?

School motivation in class

There are many factors that come into play when it is about learning a foreign language, motivation is one of the most important factors to succeed as it is shown by Spolsky's model.

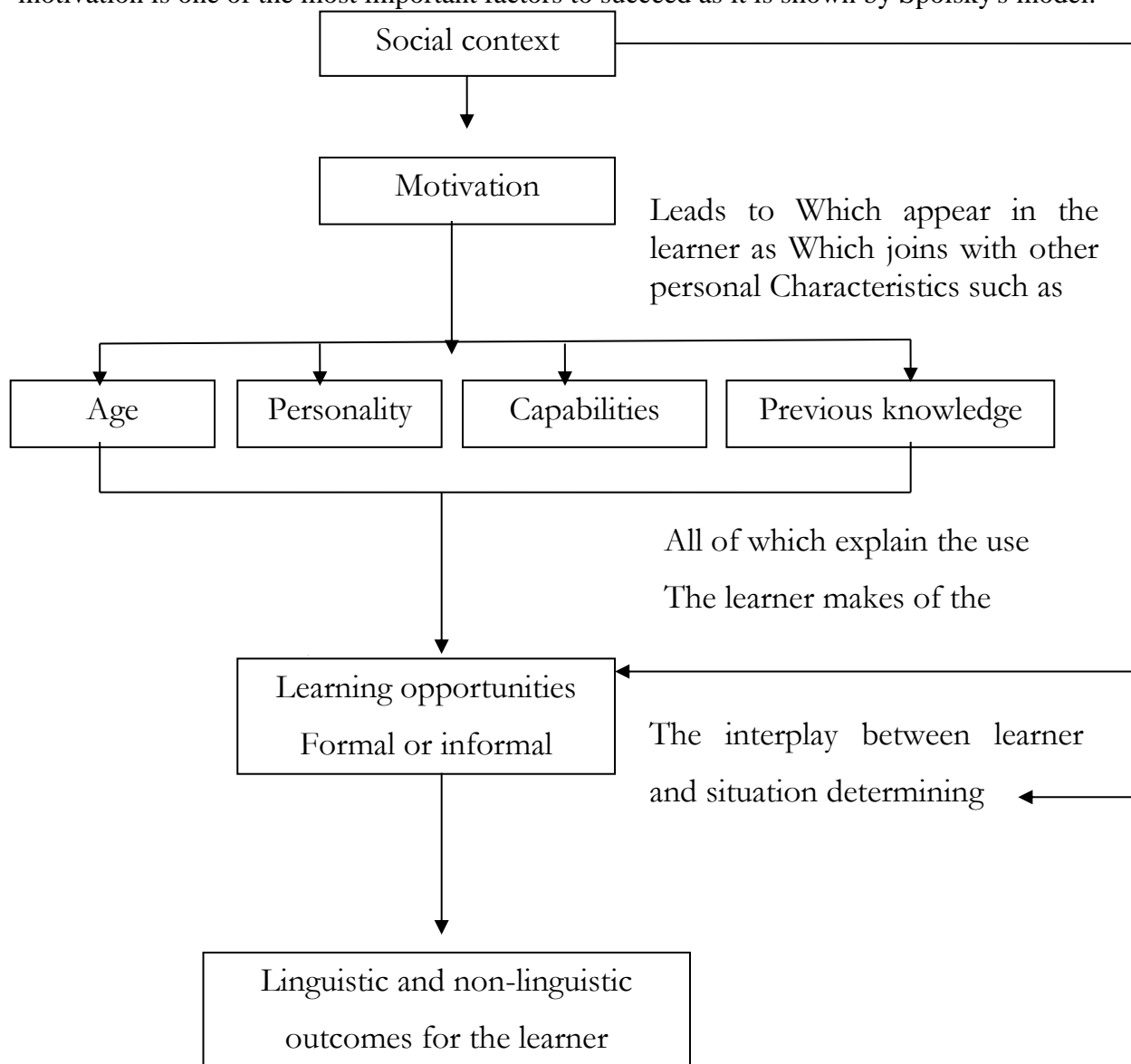


Table 1. Spolsky, 1989, By Mitchell and Myles, 2004, P8

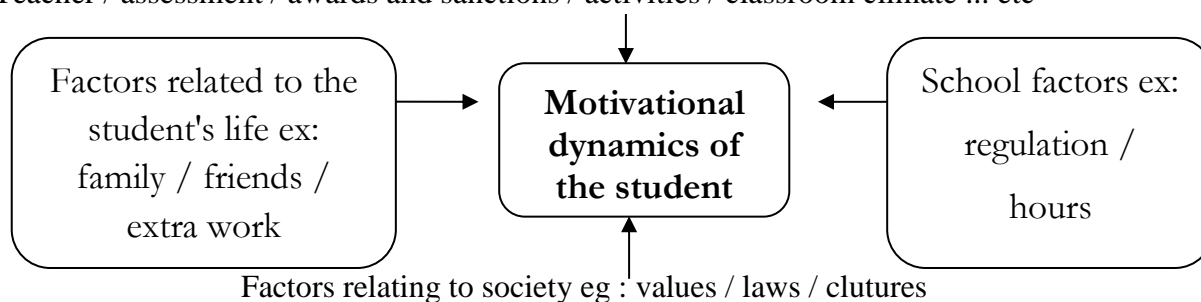
Motivation has a central role in this process; it is related to the learner's attitudes but also to his age, personality, capability and previous knowledge. It helps explain the release, persistence and intensity of behavior or action (Lievry Alain (2010).

According to "Viau" (1994); Academic motivation is the set of determinants that motivate students to actively engage in the learning process, to adapt behaviors that will lead them to achieve their learning objectives and to persevere in the face of difficulties.

There are four categories of factors that influence a student's motivational dynamics: factors related to student life, society, school and finally; the factors relating to the class.

Class factors

Teacher / assessment / awards and sanctions / activities / classroom climate ... etc



Factors Influencing the Motivational Dynamics of the Student

Viau places his picture of the motivational dynamics of the student at the center of external and internal factors of influence.

The family environment, the school influence positively or negatively the student's motivation, even the society in which we live has a significant role in the commitment and perseverance of students.

Indeed the factors relating to the class; such as instructional activities, teacher, evaluative practices, classroom climate and rewards are considered to be critical to students' internal motivation.

All these factors will be reflected in the learner's performance that Viau considers as the observable result of learning and as a consequence of the motivation.

Motivation for foreign languages

1.The motivation of the teacher and the teaching profession:

The teacher plays a essential role in motivating students in a language class, according to a research conducted by Yves Bertrand in 1974 quoted by Lanchec 1976, the question asked to students in this research was: "What do students expect from their teachers? ".

The most frequent answers were:

- 1/ He makes us work:
- 2/He takes care of his physique.
- 3/He knows how to make his courses interesting and alive.
- 4/He is skilled.

5/He loves the matter that he teaches.
6/He makes us love his matter.

Answers 1, 3, 5 are directly related to the motivation of the teacher and the student. The question is how can the foreign language teacher motivate his students and make his courses interesting?

A 2009 research conducted by "Nancy Combes, Starkey Perret" looked for the place of training and the teaching profession with student motivation. This research has shown that student motivation influences teacher motivation.

In this research, teachers described the general characteristics of students as follows:

Positive student evaluation	Negative student evaluation
Interested: 18	Unmotivated, lazy, passive: 80 %
Curious: 18	Consumers: 30
Kind: 13	Inattentive, distracted: 40
Dynamic: 12	Lack of culture / knowledge: 22 %
Motivated: 10	Discouraged: 13
Lovable: 10	Demanding: 11

Nancy-Combes, TP., Nancy-Combes, M.F et Starkey-Perret, R.

Faced to such result teachers may be unmotivated. The student is motivated if he knows what founds his personal project, for what purpose and with what methods" (Prot, 1997.94). Students may not be required to be motivated if we do not give them the logical tools of motivation and without giving meaning to their learning of a foreign language.

According to Prot (1997:141)“ Student and teacher motivation are linked”. According to Prot, teachers need tools to:

- 1/ Understand how students' motivation works.
- 2/ Emerge individual and collective motivations in class
- 3/ well communicate with students, with the class in general and each student in particular.
- 4/ Emerge the meaning of their practice and their profession
- 5/ Develop or restart their professional motivation

So the release of motivation in the student brings him to autonomy, he knows why he is in the class, and how he works.

2.The freedom of choice:

Vianin proposes to give students more freedom to choose themselves activities and other criteria in the classroom, this method encourages motivation: “Therefore; the teacher can sometimes leave the initiative to the student in the choice of the goal, the procedure or the means used in class, or even in the choice of the modalities of the evaluation. When the teacher gives a part of the initiative to the child ..., he promotes his feeling of competence and the process of self-determination. A person in an environment where he can self-determine is more motivated than another in an environment that does not allow the self-determination (Vianin, 2006: 30).

3. The cause and controllability:

In dealing with the attributional dimensions of Weiner's theory, Viau (2007) explains the place's role, stability and control of the student's cause to explain his failure or success.

The place of the cause: "the place of the cause allows the distinguishing between the internal causes to the student (intellectual attitudes, talent, effort, fatigue ... etc, and external causes (difficulty of a job, luck, quality of teaching ... and) »Viau, 2007: 66).

For a student who learns a language in school, there are many causes of failure such as: (1) A language that is not useful for its future. (2) A language difficult to pronounce. All internal and external causes convened by Weiner and especially the lack of desire to learn a language through textbooks that does not really represent that language.

The stability of the cause makes it possible to distinguish two types of causes, the stable causes: which have a permanent character in the student's eyes, such as intelligence, and unstable causes, such as effort. According to Viau "a student who attributes his success in written language to his talent as a writer invokes a stable cause, but a student who attributes his success to chance invokes a modifiable cause.

The control of cause: "a cause is said to be controllable when the student perceives that he could have avoided it if he had wanted, on the other hand, it is said to be uncontrollable when he perceives that he had no power over her »Viau, 2007: 66).

According to Vianin (2006; 39) "the modification of a pupil is greatly influenced by the way he perceives the causes of his successes or difficulties."

4. Teacher's Strategies

The impact of the teacher in the motivation of the students is not negligible. To promote student learning, it would be advisable to put in place strategies to motivate students.

To establish a positive atmosphere in the classroom:

A student who has a positive self-image will be more successful than a student who does not believe in his abilities. This refers to the theory of Bondura (1986) on the feeling of self-efficacy. To allow for learners to have a better self-esteem, it is essential for the trainer to create a space where learners feel safe.

McCombs & Pope (1994), speak of a "positive climate of social and psychological support" where learners must be valued and respected. To establish this positive atmosphere, Houst (2014) suggests some ways to make a smooth start by making the beginning of learning easy and by ensuring a permanent balance between training difficulties and the abilities of the students because if the course is too easy, the student will be bored and if it is so difficult, he will be discouraged. The teacher must maintain a good relationship with his students because he has the power to motivate or not motivate them (Delammoy, 2005).

To Guide learners in their learning process:

It is important that learners identify the interest of the course. The role of the teacher is to give a sense to their learning, to explain what it can bring them on the professionally and personally level, and that academic success is up to them. It is their efforts that will make them progress, the teacher acts as: "a resource for students to access to knowledge, and as a guide to help students mastering appropriate data management tools » (MC. Combes and Pope, 2000 P97).

CONCLUSION

Motivation seems to be a key to improving student performance in learning a foreign language, the student is influenced by the specific perceptions of himself: perception of the value of a matter or activity, perception of his own competence and perception of the degree of control that he thinks he has about the progress and outcome of a proposed activity and it is up to the teacher to lead the learning sessions by motivating the learners as much as possible and it is up to the learner to take advantage of them.

REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1986.
- Delanoy, c. (2005) *Motivation: Desire to know, decision to learn*, Paris, Hachette Éducation.
- Mc. Combes, B and Pope, T (2000) *Motivate their student, give the taste to lean*, Paris: De Boeck.
- McCombs, B. L., & Pope, J. E. (1994). *Motivating hard to reach students*. American Psychological Association.
- Mitchell, R and Myles, F (2004), *Second language learning Theories*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Nancy-Combes, TP Nancy combes, M-F and Starkey-Perret, R (2009). *Teachers talk about training and their job: how does it relate to student motivation? result of a preliminary inquiry*. *Lidil* (40,139, 157).
- Prot. B (1971) *Motivational profession: wake up the desire to learn in college and high school*. Paris. Ed. Noësis.
- Vianin, P (2006). *Scholar motivation: How to arouse the desire?* Bruxelles: De Boeck.
- Viau, R (2007), *Motivation in school context*. 4 ed. Bruxelles: De Boeck.