

Influence of Class Room Environment on Students' Motivation in Learning English at Public Sector College at Tando Allahyar, Sindh Pakistan: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

It can be said that motivation is rather universal though it may vary in degree. Motivation has very extensive and wide scope though much is researched still much is left to be researched. In fact research is ongoing process, it is moving on its ways in every corner of the world. The objective of this research is to explore the classroom factors involved to influence learners' motivation in learning English at intermediate level. This research focuses on the reasons of activeness and passiveness in the classroom and its influence on students' motivation in learning English. Additionally, to know through the students' responses regarding classroom environment, whether it influences negatively or positively? This research followed qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. For the sake of collection of data, semi-structured interviews were conducted from ten intermediate students. The data was thematically analyzed. This research found that reasons of students' activeness and passiveness in relation to classroom such as class time, teachers' attitude etc. Besides, morning classes influence positively on students' motivation. Furthermore, there are many other interesting findings of this research. This research study can be helpful for English teachers who teaches in such context. The researcher acknowledges that this study is limited to a few participants, but the same study can be conducted from other participants to get more interesting results.

Key Words: Classroom environment, students' motivation, Intermediate students.

Introduction

Classroom is a place where the actual teaching and learning process is taken place. Classroom dynamics plays a vital role in the achievement of teaching learning ends. Last 30 years remained for the noticeable progress in the field of learning environment diversification and internationalization (Fraser, 1998a). In classroom environment it includes broader areas from educational point of view. Firstly, material setting such as furniture, seating arrangement, and class size etc. Secondly, psychological environment such as social dynamics, cultural identities, linguistic identities in classrooms where there are multilingual and multicultural issues. Thirdly, instructional communication such as teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, teachers' attitude and behavior, offer a kind of help for hidden curriculum. Fourthly, group dynamics, such as in-group identities, etc. Lastly, instructional material such as books, notes etc.

“The study classroom environment has been widespread across nearly all sub specializations of educational psychology. Researchers are interested in relationships between environment constructs and multiple outcomes, including learning, engagement, motivation, social relationships, and group dynamics. Early researchers recognized that behavior is a function of people's personal characteristics and their environment.” (Alba Simo, 2015)

Significance of the Study

This study can be helpful for those who teach English language. As, this study this study will enable to understand classroom dynamics and influences on students' motivation in learning a language.

Motivation behind this Research

The researcher has been teaching for last five years in research context. It has been observed that students take interest in earlier classes of the day. The research site under study is a morning college where students remained active in earlier classes while passive in last and second last classes of the day. Therefore, this attracted the researcher to understand these dynamics.

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Objectives of the Study

- To know the reasons of the students' activeness or passiveness in the language classroom.
- To explore the influence of classroom environment on students' motivation in learning English at intermediate level at state-run college in Tando Allhayar, Sindh, Pakistan.

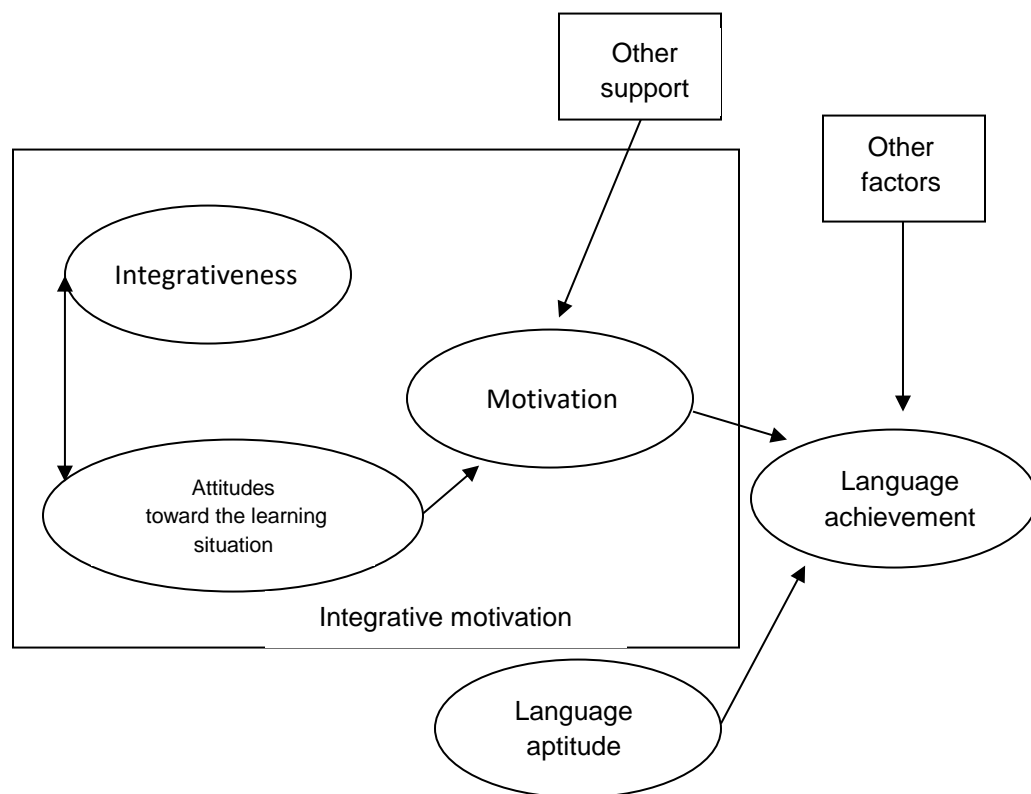
Research Questions

- What are the reasons of the students' activeness or passiveness in the language classroom?
- How far does classroom environment affect students' motivation in learning English at intermediate level at state-run college in Tando Allhayar, Sindh, Pakistan?

Literature Review

This study focuses on class room factors of motivation and their influence on students' motivation in learning English. Dörnyei (2001a) starts the Introduction of his book with this quote 'Motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue facing teachers today' (Scheidecker and Freeman, 1999:116). Motivation is an empirical term (Ushioda, 1996a). Success or failure of learner in learning a language is dependent on aptitude and motivation as says Dörnyei (2000b, 2001a), for an efforts exerted by a person in learning a language its influenced by intensity focused on it. According to Dörnyei (2001a) motivation is an abstract term, assumed term explaining causes behind human intention and action.

There are many researches available in the field of motivation in addition to Dörnyei. Among them Gardner and his Canadian associates Gardner's, 2001 'Basic model of the role of attitude and motivation in second language learning'.



Gardner's (2001) Basic model of The Role of Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning

They agree with Dörnyei on the importance of the concepts of choice, persistence and effort in relation to motivation research. Gardner (1985:10) defines second/foreign language learning motivation as "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". Tremblay and Gardner (1995) note that this definition mentions three components: (a) effort taken to learn, (b) a desire to learn, and (c) satisfaction achieved in learning which are assessed with Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn the Language, and Attitudes toward Learning the Language scales of **Language in India** www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 16:8 August 2016 Danish Latif Nizamani, MS (Linguistics) Scholar, Bandah Ali Talpur, MS (Linguistics) Scholar and Zahid Jamali, MS (Linguistics) Scholar Influence of Class Room Environment on Students' Motivation in Learning English at Public Sector College at Tando Allahyar, Sindh Pakistan: A Qualitative Study

the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985). Gardner (1985) and Tremblay and Gardner (1995). According to Dornyei (1998) “Educational context-related dimension (learning/ classroom/school environment) Clement et al. (1994), Dornyei (1994a), Julkunen (1989), Laine (1995), Williams & Burden (1997.”

In the area of study this research is taken in classroom context, which helps us to understand it. There can be various ways and contexts to deal such phenomenon from research point of view, however this research context is specific to the intermediate student at public sector college at Tando Allahyar, Sindh, Pakistan.

Methodology

This research study followed qualitative approach. The study is conducted at Public Sector College in District Tando Allahyar, Sindh, Pakistan. The population of this study is 10 intermediate students. Out of ten participants five participants were from intermediate part I, and five were from intermediate part II. Sample was selected through convenient sampling, so that participant may not hesitate in responding to the researcher. For the use of qualitative methods in learning situation has progressed sufficiently however quantitative methods have also been added to make mix method study for class environment. (Fraser & Tobin, 1991; Tobin & Fraser, 1998). it is desirable for learning environment research in Asia to make greater use of qualitative methods (Fraser, 2002). On behalf of this the researcher of this article has used qualitative approach for this research.

Research Instrument

For the sake of data collection semi-structured interviews were conducted from the intermediate students. The interviews were recorded in audio and transcribed subsequently. The transcribed data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

In findings followings themes were generated from data. Two categories were formed following the research questions.

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a) Reasons of the students' activeness or passiveness in the language classroom.

I) Time of class

Time can be interpreted as a resource and, as such, the amount of time devoted to the education of children is often examined as a separate and central resource in the educational process (Baker, Fabrega, Galindo, & Mishook, 2004).

P1 *"I love to be in English class provided that the class may be in morning, I like very much if the English class is first period or second in timetable, hmm! For third period its ok but I don't like fourth, fifth or sixth for English language."*

P2 *"As you know, in our there is very huge issue of power shortage and climate is too hot I prefer English for first or second as morning classes are cool."*

P3 *"I remained enthusiastic and understand well in first period."*

P4 *"In last period I sit on last benches as I could hardly have energy to participate."*

P5 *"Due to last class teachers don't teach us well as both teachers and students become tired."*

P6 *"My mind remains active and energetic when it is given conducive atmosphere and normal temperature."*

P7 *"I prefer English classes must be held early in the morning as to increase the learning opportunities."*

P8 *"I would like attained my classes enthusiastically when I am fresh and when I am fresh at the first or second period."*

P9 *"I remained active in class when I understand things being taught, but I personally have experienced that I understand more in my first and second period. I mostly remain passive in last class".*

P10 *"I like to attend my English class irrespective of class time but for sure excess of anything is dangerous, obviously I cannot like all classes should be of English as, I am human so I don't want monotony in my life."*

From the above response it can easily be deduced that time of the class matters a lot in the activeness and passiveness of students in the class. However, the idea of time is studied from

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the point of view of school calendar and school day in educational setting and it is from this perspective is studied (Joyner S, 2012)

II) Teachers Attitude

When student centered approach is discussed it usually focuses on the influence of teachers' attitude on students' behavior and academic success with loose progress in life process. (Mucella Ulug, 2011). Teacher with his attitude using his/her pedagogical skills motivates students to work in the class. (ibid. 2011).

The emphasis of student centered educational topics is usually on the effect of teachers' attitudes on students' academic success with a lack of lifespan developmental perspective. A teacher with his teaching methods and furthermore with his attitudes and behavior provides his students to gain a mentally healthy personality and to have a new clear world view by leaving unforgettable traces on them. (Mucella Ulug, 2011)

P1 *"Our teachers' behavior is very good with us; we learn many things from our teachers, even those who do not teach in our class."*

P2 *"Whenever there is good teacher in our class we enjoy learning."*

P3 *"We love those teachers who always talk in the class politely, never rebuke us but I must say best teachers not only teach but trained us through his polite attitude."*

P4 *"I do not like those teachers who always make merely students responsible for not learning in the class. Those teachers who insult in the class I just attend the class but I hardly take interest because of way of interaction with students."*

P5 *"I love that teacher who always encourage me, which helps me to learn those topics in the class which I even don't like such as prose."*

P6 *"I have observed most of students don't respect those teachers who disrespect students, even they teach well. On the other hand, there are teachers who don't teach us well but their well-mannered ways of communication after the classes help us to be in that teacher's class."*

P7 *“I take interest in class if teacher is encouraging, if there is a discouraging teacher it reduces my enthusiasm in the class.”*

P8 *“I do not take interest in those teachers’ class who call me disrespectfully for example a teacher who always call students (تو ٲ), Roman Sindhi (toon), (ٲ تو) Roman Urdu (tum) mean ‘You’.”*

Usually used when it is informal or decrease the status of someone.

P9 *“I don’t like those teachers who gives insulting remarks on the basis of students’ family profession, caste, religion, or even religious sect.”*

P10 *“I love learning from those teachers who are polite, if teacher is impolite I don’t like to be in the class.”*

Teachers’ attitude plays a key role in increasing activeness and passiveness or vice versa of learners. In research target situation students responded that their activeness and passiveness depended on teachers’ way of behavior in classroom, teachers, positive attitude helps students to behave positively, or negative as teachers behave negatively.

According to Mucella Ulug, “teachers’ positive attitudes have positive effects on students’ performance and personality developments, negative attitudes have a negative effect on both the performance levels and personality development of students.” (2011)

III) Class Size

Students according to the data preferred small classes than large classes (Laura B. Koenig, 2015). The reasons cited by the students were teachers care, learning setting and levels of distraction (ibid. 2015). This was consistent with previous findings that students feel a sense of community in smaller classes and are more comfortable overall (Harfitt, 2012) as cited in (Laura B. Koenig, 2015)

P1 *“we usually have many students in class, therefore it’s difficult for us to hear the voice of teacher properly.”*

P2 *“I enjoy learning in class when there is less attendance in the class.”*

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P3 *“In our class we usually have approximately 150 to 200 students in class, it became too difficult for teacher to focus on every student of our class. Sometimes what happens teacher ignore back benchers.”*

P4 *“I become active in class where there is short attendance in the class I feel comfortable in the class. But when we have overcrowded class I usually become bored as I don't get things properly.”*

P5 *“When Students in class are less in number, we get a chance of participation and can ask questions from teachers easily, but excessive number of students in class make us less energetic as we became unable to get chance of competition.”*

P6 *“I hardly get a chance to ask questions from teachers, due to large number of students in class, this situation makes us passive in class.”*

P7 *“I would like to participate in class presentation and activities, but due to many students I could not get chance, therefore I become lazy.”*

P8 *“Our teacher hardly asks about our homework because we are almost 150 students in class so teacher usually asks only a few students sitting on first two lines.”*

P9 *“Our teachers become less interested when class is overcrowded, so is response of the students.”*

P10 *“I don't like attend classes when there is huge number in the class, as I don't understand properly, it becomes too difficult for teachers to address everyone. Additionally, at the back benches students murmur and it becomes commotion, so I become less interested in learning.”*

From the above it has been deduced that classroom size matters a lot in students' active participation in the class. It means students become passive due to the lack of access in taking part in classroom participation. For instance, class presentation, individual assignments etc.

b) Influences of Classroom Environment on Students' Motivation in Learning English

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Classroom environment can be various but these influences are only deduced on the basis of the above mentioned reasons found on the basis of available data collected through semi-structured interviews from the students of intermediate classes.

In relation to the class time students were of the view that it affects positively if the class time is in morning, on the contrary to these students opined that if our English class time is in late hours of school time it makes them lethargic.

In respect to teachers' attitude they were of the view that it remained a key factors in students' activeness and passiveness in the class if teacher himself is motivated, students are motivated too. If teacher is demotivated, students are also negatively motivated in learning English.

Lastly, the classroom size remained a factor which make students passive or active in the class. In a sense, if classroom is overcrowded students remained passive, if number of students are less in class, student become active to get a chance of participation in classroom.

Conclusion

This research concludes that there can be many factors involved in students' activeness or passiveness in classroom depending on context in which class is present. As, the classroom in target situation of this research found the reasons of students' activeness or passiveness such as; time of the class, teachers' attitude, classroom size. Besides, students opined that early classes of English keep learners highly active and motivated in learning English. It is self-explanatory that early or morning classes influences positively on students' motivation. On the contrary, last and second last classes make students demotivated to learn due to hot weather. Teachers' attitude remained another factor of classroom environment which keeps student active or passive in the class. If teacher himself is active students also get involved and take interests or otherwise dormant. Large class is also the factor in which students become less active due to which they are demotivated to learn English. These above mentioned factors are a few but the same study can be conducted through other methods to get same or variety of other results.

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Recommendations

Such research is helpful for the English Language teachers, administrator to arrange the time table accordingly and reduce the hindrances for learners to get the actual objectives teaching learning process. For future directions, this research recommends that same research can be conducted in other context and level of students to get more interesting result. Additionally, human behavior varies from time to time so same research can be conducted from same participants to get different results.

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