

# The Efficacy of a Process-Oriented Approach as a Motivational Strategy

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## The Outline of This Paper

The outline of this paper is as follows: It begins with a description of what is motivation, the different types of motivation and what is a process-oriented approach, and then describes the application of this approach as a motivational strategy to improve the speaking skill of a class of engineering students and concludes recommending the efficacy of the approach.

## Motivation

Motivation is an invisible mental, abstract quality that a teacher associates with successful learning. Motives are inner psychological drives that impel people to action. Gardner R and W. Lambert (1972) placed motivation on their agenda of foreign language learning. Gardner in his seminal book (1985:10) suggests that motivation “refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus the favourable attitudes towards learning the language. That is motivation to learn a second language is seen as referring to the extent to which

## Individual Effort

The individual works or strives to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity”. The literature available on educational psychology also affirms this idea by describing motivation as one of the key affective factors that is crucial to foreign language learning. Hence there is definite correlation between motivation and achievement. The ability to motivate students to learn is a skill indispensable to every teacher. In more recent learner-centered approaches however, the teacher is seen as a facilitator who provides the necessary materials and conditions for learning while the learner takes responsibility for his learning because students must ultimately learn by themselves because as the saying goes we can only take the horse to water but cannot make it drink. It must drink on its own volition.

## Two Basic Types of Motivation

Gardner and Lambert argue that there are two basic types of motivation, **instrumental and integrative** motivation. Instrumental motivation impels the learner to acquire another language for an external cause – money, power, career, reward or punishment, etc. Integrative motivation pushes learner to learn a language for its own sake. This can be put in other words as

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extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. A number of researchers have presented data to show that intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic motivation.

### **Process-Oriented Approach**

What is process-oriented approach? The assumptions underlying this approach consist of three phases called 1) Pre-actional stage, 2) Actional stage and 3) Post-actional stage (Zoltan Dorneyi: 2001). In the first stage motivation is generated by selecting a particular goal and launching necessary action by highlighting the outcomes or consequences that arise out of it. This is also called **choice motivation**.

In the second stage, i.e., actional stage, a line of action is envisaged like selecting a particular task for achieving the goal and dividing the task into various subtasks. This is called **Executive Motivation**. Here a sense of learner autonomy is generated by making learners choose a task of their choice which develops healthy competition and cooperative learning. The final stage is Post-actional stage where the learner in retrospection evaluates how things went and takes stock of activities that will motivate him in future.

### **Methodology**

Thirty engineering students from Information Technology branch were taken for this study. They belonged to the pre-final year of the course. These students, when they go to the final year, will have to face campus selection drives for appointment to job.

The selection procedure consists of two stages: a written aptitude test which is a logical thinking test and the short listed candidates must take a GD test for which good communication skills are essential. About 50% of them had a good aggregate and were eligible to appear for campus placement.

**Preactional Stage:** The task of motivating was done thus. A brief orientation regarding the objective of the study, the plan of action, students' role in it, the outcome of their participation and its impact on their mindset were clearly spelt out. It was clear that the students were convinced of the worth of cooperating with the faculty since all of them desired to be selected for the jobs. They realized the advantages it brought with it- they were saved from the trouble of job hunting themselves. There was no chance of competing with experienced candidates in the open market. Also there were chances of having their classmates in the same corporation too. Besides these extrinsic factors, it was also pointed out that as software professionals, proficiency in English language was essential to shine in their profession. There were chances of accepting overseas assignments and in such situations their communicative skills will help them get accepted by the native community.

**Actional Stage:** The second stage of executive motivation was executed thus. The line of action for improving the speaking skill was chalked out. The specific tasks for achieving this

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were identified as Presentation and Group Discussion. Proficiency in a language can be attained by practice. The classroom is an ideal place for practice because it can provide competitive and cooperative learning. The students were informed that they had to participate in two tasks namely, Presentation and Group Discussion. The dynamics of Presentation and Group Discussion were presented as theoretical inputs. In the language laboratory (Globarena software) the students saw video clippings of a group of adults participating in these tasks. This was followed by an analysis of body language movements of the participants with feedback regarding what body language is right and what is wrong and therefore what needs to be avoided. Thus they were exposed to correct articulation, paralinguistic features like eye contact, body posture, etc.

### **Topics for Presentation**

Back in the classroom, a list of topics was drawn up for making presentation and participating in Group Discussion in consultation with the students. This gave learners a sense of autonomy. A capsule of time was allotted as preparation time. Arrangements were made for the use of projector by students. The topics for presentation included "Tips for success", "Stress Management", "Bermuda Triangle" "Nanotechnology" and so on. The presentation was followed by students and faculty giving feedback. They were asked to present their comments, positive comments first and then the negative comments. This made the whole class listen attentively, improving their listening skill. It boosted their morale. The ongoing appraisal by fellow students helped enhance their self-confidence.

### **Conduct of General Discussion**

For Group Discussion (GD), first, the class was asked to break into groups so that they were comfortable and compatible with each other. The theory of how to participate in a GD, etc., was explained to the students. They were advised to avoid negative behavior like Aggressiveness, Domination, Interruption, etc. The topics for GD were selected by the students themselves. They were "Love Marriage vs Arranged marriage", "Is Boom in IT Industry Overshadowing the Growth of Other Industries?", "Which is an eye opener - Success or Failure?", etc., were drawn up. The seating arrangement was changed in a manner suitable for the event. The participants took centre stage on the dais. The whole class participated in both the tasks i.e. Presentation and GD. Thus the motivation generated in the first stage was maintained and sustained in this stage.

**Post-Actional Stage:** The third and final stage of this Process- Oriented Approach termed Motivational Retrospection comprised the learners' retrospective evaluation of how things went. The learners were asked to recall and review their experiences in Speaking Skill in these two tasks namely, Presentation and Group Discussion. This was done by eliciting their responses to a questionnaire.

### Questionnaire.

1. How would you rate these classes?

Challenging      Interesting      Not Interesting

2. Are these tasks useful or not?

Yes                      No

3. Has your Speaking performance improved?

Yes                      No

4. If Yes, how as your speaking improved?

(Give your answer in a few sentences.)

5. Which task has largely contributed to your speaking skill development?

6. If it is Presentation, what according to you are the factors responsible?

7. If it is a GD, what according to you are the factors responsible?

8. Can a similar attempt be made to improve the other skills?

9. How would you rate the faculty's role in this attempt?

10. Give suggestions for further improvement?

### Conclusion

The responses from all the students were collected and analysed. All the thirty students believed that these classes were useful as these enabled them to improve their Speaking Skill. Twenty out of thirty students found the classes interesting. The reason was that all of them were from Chennai-based English medium schools. They had no difficulty in communicating in the classroom because they were used to talking in English, while the remaining ten students who had come from rural background found the classes challenging because of their poor language abilities. Regarding questions 5, 6, and 7 the responses were mixed. Those whose communication skill was good had no difficulty in making the Presentation. However those who had no exposure to talking or interacting in classroom found the GD easier as they did not have to speak at length. They could express their opinions in rounds. All of them acknowledged the teacher's role as a facilitator for enhancing their speaking skill. They also acknowledged the impact of feedback as being instrumental in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. They

wanted more of such classes as it would enable them to perform better in placement drives. Thus a process- oriented approach has proved to be efficacious in improving the speaking skill of engineering students.

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