

Students' Motivation Raised by an Enlightening and Skill Based Textbook

Hiroshi TANABE

Students' preferences for English courses as motivational factors in a university are identified as 1) students want to understand the learning contents provided in the class, 2) students want enough practices to understand the learning contents provided in the class, 3) students want to learn things authentic, innovative, and fun. The general impression for a course is determined in different to these analytical elements, however, and this might explain an abstract word "motivation." The results were induced by providing the courses with an original text to enlighten them for their self-actualization and study skills and a final questionnaire.

Introduction :

Never a person could learn a thing without his or her emotional involvement in the act of learning. Emotional involvement in the field of the methodology of English language teaching might be defined as a personal factor of motivation for learning (C.f.Ellis, 1985). The term motivation seems to have been discussed in a microscopic view in the field of applied linguistics. "Integrative vs. instrumental motivation" distinction (Gardner et.al., 1972) or "global motivation, situational motivation, or task motivation" (Brown, 1981) are examples of this. The aspects of motivation of learners of a L2 in a university, however, do not seem to work in such a way. The discussion on whether they always have specific goals which motivate them for their learning a L2, and to what extent that kind of motivation will affect the learning will be necessary. As far as L2 learning is concerned, more educational, not too analytical, and holistic a view about motivation will explain their effects on L2 acquisition. Acquisition of a L2 in this sense should be placed in the process of self-actualization in parallel with the one of mental development. From a teacher's perspective, "language teaching is an educational endeavor which should seek to empower learners by enabling them to assume an informed and self-directive role in the pursuance of their language-related goals (Tudor, 1986). In this project, students were given readings for enlightenment, which is an abstract term, and their general feeling of enthusiasm for learning a L2 was estimated.

Assuming students are appropriately motivated, without the knowledge of learning a L2, they will not be able to learn one effectively. By activating an awareness for a discourse structure of English language and providing tasks which were intended to make learners learn the structure, they might be able to learn reading and writing more effectively. In this project, a textbook specially designed to motivate students by providing readings for enlightening and to show them the way to learning a L2 through the study of the discourse structure of English was used in one writing and two reading courses, and its effects were discussed according to the students reply to a questionnaire given at the end of the courses.

About the courses

Philosophy of learning of the course

The courses were designed under the following assumptions:

a) Teaching should be humanistic.

Students should experience the enjoyment of finding their own theme for reading and writing. Thus linguistic items to be learned are decided individually according to the needs of the specific learner. An instructor helps only when needed.

b) Skills for learning a L2 should be provided.

This is because by the time learners are successfully motivated, they must have been provided enough knowledge to execute their self-directed learning of a L2.

c) Students should be provided the opportunities for experiencing cognitive and naturalistic ways of learning. For the purpose of realizing the belief under (a) above, learners are required to think themselves and use a L2 to gather information they need to finish the tasks.

Syllabus

The courses followed the syllabus of a textbook "Humanistic Approach to English Teaching and Learning" (Tanabe, 1998) that was originally written for the reading and the writing courses. The book consists of two parts, readings for enlightenment, and tasks for providing discourse knowledge of a L2 for an effective reading and writing. Twenty-two readings were prepared for a whole year courses, one for each class. Examples of this part were "Respect yourself" in Chapter 1, "You have a great capacity of learning" in Chapter 2, "How to learn English effectively" in Chapter 13, and "How to learn in a university" in Chapter 18. These readings introduced the findings in the field of human behavior, applied linguistics, and study skills in education and tried to explain the importance of and the way to self-realization in and by way of learning. The contents of the other parts were, 1) "What is the process based approach", 2) "The basic rules for an effective English learning", 3) "Discourse patterns of English", 4) "The roles of paragraphs", 5) "How to write a paper in English with tasks for writing a paper in steps". 6) "How to be logical", and 7) "Making a presentation".

Procedure :

Subjects

Total 138 science major students of Tokyo Institute of Polytechnics, 33 optical engineering major students in Class 1 in the writing course and 55 electrical engineering major students and 60 optical engineering major students in Class 2 in the reading courses were the subjects of the study. All the subjects were the first year students.

Method

A questionnaire (written in Japanese) with twenty-five items was given at the end of the 12 times of the classes in each course. There were six main sections and some sub questions for the reasons of the choice. The main parts of the questions were evaluated in a five level scale, from highly negative (1), medium (3) to highly affirmative (5). For the reasons for the choice of the

positive answers, seven choices including one free writing space for comments were prepared. These were “because it is : a. easy to understand, b. authentic, c. in common with your philosophy of learning, d. an innovative idea, e. fun to learn, and f. a necessary skill for reading, g. (for comments)”. For the negative reasons, there were also six choices. These were: a. lack of practice, b. difficulty in contents, c. different from your philosophy of learning, d. difficulty in understanding the importance, e. no enthusiasm for learning the item, f. (for comments). The questionnaire items were I-1) Did you understand the goal of the course?, I-2) Did you understand the goal for the day, I-3) Did you understand how to read in a L2 effectively, 4) Did you understand the basic patterns of the discourse? 5) Did you understand the numbering system for note taking? 6A) Did you understand how to write a draft? (6A for Class 1 of optical engineer major students), 6B) Did you understand how to be logical? (For the other students), II-1) How many pages did you read the reading part for the enlightenment of the textbook? (Answered by 10 pages as one unit.), II-2) Did it help you to understand how to study in a university?, II-3) Did it help you to learn English, II-4) Was it helpful for you, to know about the lives in a university?, III-1) Was the course useful for your studying in a university? III-2), Did you improve your English? III-3) Will you use the learning method learned in the course outside the classroom, too? III-4) Were you motivated to learn?

Results and Discussion :

Results of the questionnaire are summarized in Table 1.

- 1) Correlation between the pages the students read (item II-1) and their overall satisfaction about the class and motivation (items III)

Total 19 students read all of the readings for enlightenment, and evaluated most highly among the subjects (See Table 2). 32 students read more than half (50) pages of the reading part which were almost only 1/3 of the subjects. Almost 2/3 of the students stopped reading before 40 pages and more than 1/3 students read no page. To heighten the validity of this study, some measure to encourage reading will be necessary. Table. 2, however, shows that the evaluation about their positive motivational change was higher among the students who read more than 50 pages than the rest of the students. The causal relationship, however, is not known from this, because the assumption that the students who read more pages could have been self-motivated before the course might be possible.

- 2) The students' satisfaction about the method and the reasons. Of what points of teaching will students feel favorable?

Examining the reasons for the positive answers in Table. 4, the students gave positive answers when the class was or provided: b. authentic, a. easy to understand, d. an innovative idea e. fun to learn, f. necessary skills for reading c. in common with your philosophy of learning. This tendency is about the same as those of each item (See Table 3).

Turning the discussion to the issue of in what points students feel dissatisfaction about teaching will clarify the tendency of the preferences of the characteristics of a good course.

Total a. 121(55.5), b. 27(12.4), c. 6(2.8), d. 50(23.0), e. 1(0.5), f. 13(6.0) also showed the same

tendency with the other items for the reasons given for the negative answers. According to these results, the students did not feel positively about the course when the class: a. lacked enough practices, d. dealt with contents too difficult to understand, b. took up the issues uneasy to understand their importance, c. used the methods different from their philosophy of learning, and e. made them feel no enthusiasm for learning the item.

Summarizing these results, we can draw some conclusions about the students' preferences for L2 classes or courses:

- a) Students want to understand the learning contents provided in the class.
- b) Students want enough practices to understand the learning contents provided in the class.
- c) Students want to learn things authentic, innovative, and fun.

4) A cognitive problem of evaluating overall satisfaction about the course :

The overall satisfaction which might appear in the items under III except for III-2, which asked about the necessity of English learning for the learners, seems to be higher than the other groups of items. This might reflect the incongruence between their rational understanding of the course and the emotional satisfaction about the course. The item number 5 showed a remarkably high point compared with other items except for the items under III. This was about a specific skill of putting characters and numbers in order to take a systematic note of information. This might suggest if there is a few attractive things in a course they might affect the overall evaluation of the course or enlightening students for self-actualization could produce a hidden or indirect effect. In this sense, a motivation for evaluating preferably about a course might be different from their analytical understanding of the course contents. To explain this phenomena, human motivation in a more general sense should be dealt with. Franken, 1982 suggested three components of human motivation, biological, cognitive, and learned components. His explanation of an execution of human behavior is a complex mixture of these elements working at the same time. In this type of research, what affect students' evaluation might be, for example, memories of exciting discussions among their friends, or memories of teacher's enlightening speeches, or memories of displeasing events in the class. These might affect their biological factor of human behavior as excitement or depression, and their general feeling will change. Then their cognitive decision about the interpretation of things will be affected. Learned factors might also affect questionnaire results. The mood in a same circumstance will activate the learned pieces of behavior, which might also affect the general feeling of the students. The same thing could be said of everyday classes about the raising of the students motivation. The general excitement in a class might affect their analytical view of the class contents and this tendency is an attitude to be learned as a preferable and general motivation for learning and causes according effects on the learning of a L2. To support these hypotheses, origins of motivation should be tested by way of physiological and neurological approaches. The biological changes of the learners in a classroom measured by the use of an electroencephalogram (EEG) and the given stimuli could be compared and the learning of the biological condition under the same situation could be examined by identifying the activation of the part or the parts of brain for the learning of the biological condition under certain circumstances.

Conclusion :

The analytical examination of the students' motivation induced the conclusion that the holistic view about L2 courses would explain one. This is suggestive for a teacher to motivate students for learning. The use of enlightening readings might give hidden effects. These views about motivation should be tested in further researches, however.

References :

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Table 1 Questionnaire Results

*I-1	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	3	10	16	3
Wed 2	0	3	20	29	3
Thu 4	0	7	32	18	3
Total	1	13	62	63	9

I-1	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	4	7	18	5
Wed 2	0	0	21	30	1
Thu 4	0	10	30	17	3
Total	4	19	58	65	9

I-1	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	3	15	14	0
Wed 2	1	8	23	19	6
Thu 4	0	16	15	25	3
Total	2	27	53	58	9

3 A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Tue 1	7	16	1	2	4	1	0
Wed 2	16	24	3	12	5	1	0
Thu 4	10	16	5	9	3	5	0
Total	3	56	9	23	12	7	0

3 B	a	b	c	d	e	f
Tue 1	9	2	0	1	0	0
Wed 2	11	1	0	5	0	2
Thu 4	11	6	2	4	0	0
Total	31	9	2	10	0	2

Q-4	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	6	15	10	2
Wed 2	0	13	20	20	2
Thu 4	1	12	23	21	3
Total	1	31	58	51	7

4 A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Tue 1	5	12	0	5	4	4	0
Wed 2	13	15	3	11	4	6	0
Thu 4	11	16	2	9	5	5	0
Total	29	43	5	25	13	15	0

4 B	a	b	c	d	e	f
Tue 1	7	3	0	2	0	1
Wed 2	16	2	1	6	0	0
Thu 4	13	1	1	3	0	1
Total	36	6	2	11	0	2

Q 5	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	1	9	14	9
Wed 2	1	5	12	22	15
Thu 4	1	6	4	33	15
Total	3	12	25	69	39

5 A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Tue 1	10	10	1	7	3	2	0
Wed 2	27	16	5	11	3	3	1
Thu 4	21	20	3	10	9	5	0
Total	58	46	9	28	15	10	1

5 B	a	b	c	d	e	f
Tue 1	7	0	0	2	0	0
Wed 2	9	1	0	2	0	4
Thu 4	4	3	1	2	0	0
Total	20	4	1	6	0	4

Q 1-1	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	3	11	14	4

Q6-1A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Tue 1	7	8	0	5	1	1	4

Q6-1B	a	b	c	d	e	f
Tue 1	6	0	0	1	0	1

Q6-2	1	2	3	4	5
Wed 2	3	16	18	10	2
Thu 4	4	16	19	13	0
Total	7	32	37	23	2

Q6-2A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Wed 2	4	15	3	11	3	5	0
Thu 4	4	9	1	9	5	5	1
Total	8	23	4	20	8	10	1

Q6-2B	a	b	c	d	e	f
Wed 2	15	4	1	12	1	2
Thu 4	13	4	0	10	0	2
Total	28	8	1	22	1	4

II-1	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	all
Tue 1	12	5	1	5	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	5
Wed 2	17	13	6	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	10
Thu 4	25	11	5	3	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	4
Total	54	29	12	11	6	7	3	1	1	1	0	19

II-2	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	1	5	11	3
Wed 2	0	3	14	10	9
Thu 4	0	4	15	13	3
Total	0	8	34	34	15

II-3	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	3	8	10	0
Wed 2	1	1	17	14	4
Thu 4	2	2	15	13	4
Total	3	7	40	37	8

II-4	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	1	3	9	5	3
Wed 2	1	5	14	8	7
Thu 4	3	5	13	11	2
Total	5	13	36	24	12

III-1	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	0	1	21	10
Wed 2	0	4	14	27	11
Thu 4	0	1	14	32	12
Total	0	5	29	80	33

III-2	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	3	7	13	7	3
Wed 2	2	7	30	12	4
Thu 4	1	9	33	12	2
Total	6	23	76	31	9

III-3	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	2	13	11	5
Wed 2	1	4	17	23	8
Thu 4	0	3	21	23	11
Total	1	9	51	57	24

III-4	1	2	3	4	5
Tue 1	0	2	3	13	11
Wed 2	1	4	12	22	11
Thu 4	0	5	18	27	8
Total	1	11	38	62	30

* Tue 1 : optical majors in Class 1
 Wed 2 : electorical majors
 Thu 4 : optical majors in Class 2

Table 2 Number of Pages Read and the Average of the Evaluation Points

Pages read	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	ALL
Average	3.8	3.7	3.2	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	NA	4.0	NA	4.1

Table 3 Tendency of Preferences

	number(%)						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
3 A	33(20)	56(40)	9(6.4)	23(17)	12(8.6)	7(5)	0(0)
4 A	29(21.5)	43(31.9)	5(3.7)	25(18.5)	13(9.6)	15(11.1)	0(0)
5 A	58(34.9)	46(27.5)	9(0.3)	28(16.9)	15(9.0)	10(6.0)	1(0.6)
6-1 A	7(27.0)	8(30.8)	0(0)	5(19.2)	1(3.8)	1(8.8)	4(15.3)
6-2 A	8(10.3)	24(30.8)	4(5.1)	20(25.6)	8(10.3)	10(12.8)	4(5.1)

Table 4 Tendency of Preferences in Total

	number(%)						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Total	135(25.0)	177(32.7)	27(5.0)	101(18.7)	49(9.1)	43(7.9)	9(1.7)

Table 5 Factors of Dissatisfaction

	number(%)					
	a	b	c	d	e	f
3 B	31(57.9)	9(16.7)	2(3.7)	10(18.5)	0(0)	2(3.7)
4 B	36(63.2)	6(10.5)	2(3.5)	11(19.3)	0(0)	
5 B	20(57.1)	4(11.4)	1(2.9)	6(17.1)	4(11.4)	
6-1 B	6(75.0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(12.5)	0(0)	1(12.5)
6-2 B	28(43.8)	8(12.5)	1(1.6)	22(34.4)	1(1.6)	4(6.3)

Table 6 Comparison of the Number of the Negative and the Positive Answers

Item (I-1 vs. 4-5)

I-1(14, 72), I-2(21, 74), I-3(29, 67), 4(32, 58), 5(15, 108), 6-1(4.18), 6-2(20, 13), II-2(8, 49), II-3(10, 45), II-4(18, 36), III-1(5, 111), III-2(29, 40), III-3(10, 81), III-4(12, 92)
