Language Learning Motivation of EFL Students at LEU

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Abstract. Learning a foreign language is a process that demands a lot of efforts which should be supported by something that can help to achieve goals of learning. Motivation is responsible for most of our thoughts and deeds. Human motivation is extremely complex both to account for and understand. This paper explores the significance of motivation as a contributing factor in foreign language acquisition. Motivation is the learner’s orientation with regard to the goal of learning a foreign language. Motivation is divided into several types: intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, integrative, achievement motivation. The aim of this paper is to try to get an insight into motivating factors of EFL students at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences.

Keywords: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, achievement motivation, self-determination.

Introduction

Aptitude and motivation are the two most important variables in language learning, and motivation demonstrates the most appealing, yet complex, variable used to explain individual differences in language learning. According to Franken (2006), motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements. These include effort, desire and affect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and then drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language, and affect illustrates the learner’s emotional reactions with regard to language study. Csizer and Magid (2014) assume that motivation is involved in the performance of all learned
responses, i.e., a learned behaviour will not occur unless it is energized. Explanations regarding the sources of motivation can be categorized as either extrinsic (outside the person) or intrinsic (internal to the person). Intrinsic sources and corresponding theories can be further subcategorized as either physical, mental or spiritual. Other authors present more various types of motivation, such as integrative, instrumental or achievement motivation. The main goal of this paper is to reveal what motivating factors stimulate the students of English at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences in the process of studying the English language.

The object of the research is language learning motivation.

The material of the current research is the data of 70 sampled questionnaires about language learning motivation. The survey consisted of 10 statements with 2 possible answers presented. The questionnaires were submitted to a group of first-year students between the ages 18 to 25, studying different specialities at LEU.

The aim of the research is to disclose the language learning motivation of EFL students at LEU.

The objectives of the present paper are 1) to discuss the importance of motivation in language learning, 2) to present different types of motivation, and 3) to reveal what motivating factors stimulate the students of English at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences in the process of studying the English language.

The following methods were used for the current study:
1. Scientific literature analysis was used to provide some theoretical background to the problem.
2. The descriptive method was used to define and present the classification of motivation types.
3. The quantitative analysis helped to find out the frequency of factors that motivate EFL students at LEU.

1. Motivation in Learning a Foreign Language

Motivation is responsible for the success of learning a foreign language. There are a number of different definitions of motivation. Psychologists define it as an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a need, desire, or want) that serves to activate or energize behaviour and give it direction. Speaking about language learning motivation, Norris-Holt (2002) gives the following one: “Motivation is defined as the learner’s orientation with regard to the goal of learning a foreign language”.

Dornyei (2014), Ushioda (2013) and other motivation theorists describe one more classification that distinguishes two more types of motivating factors: extrinsic and intrinsic. Internal or intrinsic rewards are closely connected to the activity itself and include interest in the task itself and the enjoyment that a person gets from doing something out of a
sense of curiosity. High levels of intrinsic motivation are characteristic of learners who are mature and truly independent. Extrinsic motivating factors range from praise and approval to financial rewards. Language learners should be motivated less by extrinsic factors and more by intrinsic ones, because if a student who is used to getting plenty and attention and praise at school, (s)he may be reluctant to take up new learning challenges at university, as the old incentives are no longer present. However, Archer (2014) argues that the influence of intrinsic or extrinsic factors depends on the stage of learning, i.e. on the level of competence: in the early stages of learning something new and unfamiliar internal motivation is not enough to provide adequate incentives, but when a certain level of competence has already been reached, an activity becomes interesting for its own sake. Praise and encouragement may help such a young and immature learner reach that stage.

Lasagabaster and Doiz (2014) claim that extrinsic motivation has traditionally been seen as something that can undermine intrinsic motivation, i.e. students lose their natural intrinsic interest in an activity if they have to do it to meet some extrinsic requirements. Various types of regulation exist between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic) forms of motivation, depending on how internalized they are, i.e. how much regulation has been transferred from outside to inside the individual. If they are sufficiently self-determined and internalized, extrinsic rewards can even lead to intrinsic motivation.

Different motivation theorists give different classifications of motivation. Huitt (2005) distinguishes between the basic types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is characterized by the learner’s positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. According to Ahmed (2011) and Gardner (2010), in this case the most successful students are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with the society in which the language is used, i.e. integrative motivation represents the desire of the individual to become bilingual while at the same time becoming bicultural. In contrast to integrative motivation is the form of motivation called instrumental motivation. It is characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a foreign language. In this case the purpose of language acquisition is more practical and necessary, such as applying for a job that demands to speak a foreign language, meeting the requirements for university graduation, reading technical material or achieving higher status, i.e. using the foreign language just for practical or commercial purposes. Menegal and Coonan (2013) claim that both integrative and instrumental motivation are essential of success, but it is integrative motivation which was found to sustain long-term success during learning a foreign language. Murray and Gao (2011) state that it has been found that generally students select instrumental reasons more frequently than integrative reasons for the study of language. However, it is necessary to note that motivation depends on situational factors most of which are unique to each language learner.
Waitzkin (2008) investigated achievement motivation which is defined as the desire to perform well and reach high standards. The extent to which a person desires to do well influences their activities, and consequently their degree of success. Nakata (2006) claims that although everyone wants to do well and strives to achieve good learning results, there are substantial differences between individuals in the strength of their achievement motivation. Children who try to succeed often become adults who are equally motivated to do well as a consequence of a person’s early experiences. According to Fredrickson (2009), achievement motivation tends to be strong in young people whose parents have been warm and supportive, have given their children plenty of rewards and encouragement. However, for a good result there should be a combination of encouragement for independence and self-reliance with plenty of help and support.

Pink (2009), Hedge (2010) and other motivation theorists claim that in order to make the language learning process a more motivating experience teachers need to put a great deal of thought into developing programmes which maintain students’ interest and have reachable short term goals. At university level this may include any number of foreign exchange programmes with other universities, homestay programmes or any other activities motivating students to improve their target language proficiency.

According to Roehlkepartain (2012) and Tejkalova (2009), one more way of increasing the motivation is creating interesting classes. Teachers should gain the students’ attention. Encouraging students to become more active participants in a lesson can help them to see a purpose for improving their communication skills in the target language, thus resulting in students feeling some sense of accomplishment. Moreover, Cosburn (2012) suggests that in order to increase learners’ interest in the culture of the foreign language, many aspects of that culture can be presented through the use of videos, the web, or classroom visitors. One of the most important drives of university students’ motivation is the cognitive one, i.e. finding the task interesting and relating to the individual’s need for competence. In this case the motive for becoming involved in the activity is intrinsic to the task itself. Wlodkowski (2008) states that being quite adult people who have made their choice in life, university students realize the fact that they enter the university for the purpose of getting knowledge that could be applied in their future. Thus, age-related changes play a big role in achievement motivation. Furthermore, there is no single influence on learning. It is a whole range of influences that can have various kinds of effects, depending on the circumstances. According to Petri and Govern (2012), the relationships between motivation and learning a foreign language are not always straightforward: a reward that provides an effective incentive for one kind of person on one set of circumstances may be less effective under different circumstances.
2. Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaires were submitted to a group of first year students between the ages 18 to 25, studying different specialities at LEU in spring 2015. The survey consisted of 10 questions and 2 possible answers presented. The data of 70 sampled questionnaires was analysed, calculated and submitted in the article.

Statement 1 refers to extrinsic motivation of EFL students; statements 2 and 4 refer to achievement motivation of the respondents; statements 5, 6 and 7 illustrate intrinsic motivation of the respondents; statements 3 and 9 inquire into their instrumental motivation, whereas statement 8 shows integrative motivation of the respondents.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I study English because I have to according to my study programme requirements.</td>
<td>86 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I study English because I want to be able to speak fluent English.</td>
<td>90 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I study English because in the future I am planning to study or live abroad.</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I study English because I want to be able to speak it like other proficient students.</td>
<td>84 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. I study English because it makes me happy.</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I study English because English classes are interesting and attractive.</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I study English because the material (texts, listening recordings, presentations, etc.) is interesting.</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I study English because I am interested in the culture of English speaking countries.</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I study English because I want to show good results during my English examination.</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have no motivation for studying English.</td>
<td>24 %</td>
<td>76 %</td>
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The first statement represents that 86% of students agree that they study English because of study programme requirements. It shows that they have extrinsic motivation and only 14 % of learners have intrinsic motivation for learning English language.

90% of students approve the second statement. They have intrinsic or achievement motivation for becoming fluent at the English language. The majority of students want to do well and strive to achieve good learning results. 10% of learners do not consider the following motivation strong enough for studying English.

The third statement exhibits that 30 % of respondents consider English language as a possibility for further studies and living abroad. Though 30% of of students have extrinsic or instrumental motivation for studies, 70 % of learners do not view English as a part of their future life or studies abroad.

According to the results of the fourth statement, 84 % of learners have extrinsic or achievement motivation for learning English. They tend to catch up with the proficient students. Competition among students can raise their motivation for achieving good learning results, nevertheless 16 % of learners disagree with the following statement.
The distribution of percentage in the fifth statement shows nearly equal results. 48 % of students claim that studying English language makes them happy and 52 % disagree with the statement. The results show that almost the half of respondents have intrinsic motivation for learning the language.

The sixth statement demonstrates the results with the equal division of students’ opinion. Interesting and attractive classes is extrinsic motivation for learning English for 50 % of respondents. The rest 50 % do not consider interesting and attractive classes a sufficient stimulus for learning.

The seventh statement indicates that 62 % of learners do not view the material (texts, listening recordings, presentations, etc.) as enough extrinsic motivation, while 38 % of students agree with the following statement.

The eighth statement points out that interest in the culture of English speaking countries is of great importance for 56 % of students. They have intrinsic or integrative motivation for studying English language and tend to become bilingual and bicultural individuals. However, 44 % of learners do not support the following opinion.

According to the results of the ninth statement, 68 % of the respondents have extrinsic or achievement motivation for learning English. A strong desire to perform well, reach high standards and compete with the rest of the group can impel students to learn English. Only 32 % of learners disagree with the statement.

The distribution of the results of the last statement reveals that 76 % of students have motivation for studying English, while 24 % of learners do not have it.

**Conclusions**

The analysis demonstrated that many different factors can affect the incentive value of a particular motivational influence. These include the individuals personality, age, and developmental stage, and various aspects of learning situations such as their perceived familiarity and difficulty. Foreign language learning motivation is mainly a part of student’s personality. Students may be intrinsically, extrinsically, or even cognitively oriented towards language study. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are expected to be correlated to a greater or lesser degree. The research findings revealed that:

1. The majority of students at LEU study English because of study programme requirements, while only a few have intrinsic motivation for studying.
2. The absolute majority of students strive to be fluent at the English language, which shows their achievement motivation.
3. Two thirds of the learners do not view English as a part of their future life or studies abroad, which is a proof of instrumental motivation.
4. Catching up with proficient students stimulates almost all the respondents to study English.
5. Half of the students feel happy studying English, while the other half of them do not feel happy studying the English language.

6. Interesting and attractive classes distribute students opinion equally by 50% percent.

7. For more than a half of the learners the material (texts, listening recordings, presentations, etc.) is a sufficient motivation for studying English.

8. Half of the students are interested in the culture of English speaking countries, therefore they study English willingly because of their integrative motivation.

9. A strong desire to show good results during English examination and competition among students is an important factor for two thirds of the respondents to study English.

10. Three quarters of the students have motivation for studying English.

The tendency is that EFL learners at LEU are not driven solely by one goal or another but rather endorse several reasons for learning English. Students’ motivation and attitude can best be affected in the classroom. The learning process can be made enjoyable. Learning activities, instructional materials, and even individual tasks can motivate students. Teaching and learning can have both motivating and demotivating components. No matter what the underlying motivation to study a foreign language, what cannot be disputed is the fact that motivation is an important variable when examining successful foreign language acquisition.

**References**


LEU anglų kalbos studentų užsienio kalbų mokymosi motyvacija

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Santrauka

Užsienio kalbos mokymasis yra procesas, reikalaujantis daug pastangų, kurios turėtų būti palaikomos motyvuojančių faktorių, padedančių pasiekti mokymosi tikslus. Motyvacija yra atsakinga už didžiąją dalį mūsų minčių ir poelgių. Žmogaus motyvaciją yra sudėtinga apskaiciuoti ir suprasti. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama motyvacijos svarba besimokant užsienio kalbų. Motyvacija yra besimokančiojo orientyras studijuojant užsienio kalbą. Šio straipsnio tikslas yra pabandyti pažvelgti į EFL studentų vidinius ir išorinius motyvuojančius veiksnius Lietuvos edukologijos universitete.

Esminiai žodžiai: vidinė motyvacija, išorinė motyvacija, integravota motyvacija, instrumentinė motyvacija, motyvacijos nebuvinas, apsisprendimas.

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