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A BETTER TOOL FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: INTRINSIC OR EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION



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Synopsis:

The purpose of the present research is to determine the most efficient type of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic need that drives students to learn a language.

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Abstract: The purpose of the present research is to determine the most efficient type of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic need that drives students to learn a language. In this study, anonymous questionnaires using the *Escala de Motivación de Logro (EAML)*, or *Achievement Motivation Scale* as well as the *Escala de Motivación Académica (EMA)* or *Academic Motivational Scale* from María Antonia Manassero Más and Ángel Vázquez Alonso, were given to students completing a Master's Degree in Spanish, in a Study Abroad Program in Madrid, Spain. The study also addressed the role of teachers in the classroom in order to motivate students learn a foreign or second language. The results of the questionnaire show, without question, the positive impact that educated professors in this field can have on students acquiring another language.

Introduction

Motivation is a term that dates back to ancient times. Etymologically, the term has its roots in the Latin word *movere*, which means to move. The meaning of motivation goes beyond simple movement and a stimulation of interest. According to Burden and Williams, motivation also involves a sustaining of interest and the investment of time and energy needed that is necessary to achieve certain goals, which is key to learn a second language. The purpose of the present research is to determine the most efficient type of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic need that drives students to learn a language.

Language learning and behavioral and cognitive theories

Behavioral theories, which include types of associative learning, have been extensively used to study motivation in the field of animal research. At first, under behaviorism, it was believed that biological necessity explained the dynamic of motivation, which consists of necessity, incentive, activity as well as reduction of incentive and reduction of necessity. Later, it was concluded that a motive or objective should be sought, so that the process of achieving this goal would take place. The first and most influential behaviorist of the twentieth century that concluded this is Clark Leonard Hull. Hull debated with Edward Tolman on the principles of behaviorism. "Tolman believed that learning could occur in the absence of a goal (identifying this as "latent learning"), whereas Clark Hull stressed that the goal should be thought of as a "reward" or "reinforcement" and was necessary for learning to occur. Hull explained learning and motivation by scientific laws of behavior" (New World Encyclopedia, 1).

The social constructivism of motivation is a category that is classified under the branch of cognitive theory. According to Burden and Williams, motivation varies in every person and each individual assigns a different significance to her or his own objectives. Therefore, each individual gives importance to what surrounds him or her. It is this motivation that impels the individual to perform an action in a particular way. As Burden and Williams state: "Motivation of an individual is also influenced by social and contextual factors, which include culture, context, social situations as well as other relevant people and personal interactions with these individuals" (Burden and Williams, 1999 p. 128)

In contrast to the behaviorist notion of *extrinsic* motivation, cognitivism focuses on the workings of the human mind and *intrinsic* motivation. Tolman states that the critical determinants of learning are not associations nor reinforcements but rather the cognitive organization of structures. Choice is an important aspect of success, which Burden and Williams also consider it as significant. Individuals make choices that are related to the way they behave and, therefore, control their own actions, which is in contrast to behaviorist theory, states that actions depend on external forces such as rewards (1999, p. 127).

In order to conduct a more thorough analysis of motivation, it is important to examine the subject of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in more depth due to its effect on people. According to Bruner, intrinsic motivation can be divided into three classifications, depending on each situation: *curiosity* (interest in the novel aspect of a situation), *competence* (that which motivates the subject to control the environment and to develop personal skills and reciprocity) and *necessity* (the adoption of *standards of behavior*). In contrast, extrinsic motivation, according to Skinner, refers to constant effort. Therefore, the intrinsic concept is, a preference for interest or curiosity versus the extrinsic where there is a preference for easy work to satisfy the instructor; the intrinsic concept of independent mastery versus the extrinsic of dependence on a teacher to solve problems; internal criteria to achieve success versus the need for external criteria to be successful.

Methods

This study was based on a twenty-question survey given to 30 students completing their Master's Degree in Spanish in a Study Abroad Program in Madrid, Spain. In this study, anonymous questionnaires implementing the *Escala de Motivación de Logro (EAML)*, or *Achievement Motivation Scale* as well as the *Escala de Motivación Académica (EMA)* or *Academic Motivation Scale* from María Antononia Manassero Más and Ángel Vázquez Alonso were used.

Más y Alonso (1997, 1998) designed the Achievement Motivation Scale (EAML) for educational settings, based on the Weiner's motivational theory, grounded in the causal attributions (attribution - emotion- action). The EAML is divided into five categories: motivación de interés or interest motivation, motivación de tarea/capacidad or ability motivation, motivación de esfuerzo or effort motivation, motivación de exámenes, motivation related to exams and motivación de competencia de profesor or motivation related to the professor. (Morales-Bueno & Gómez- Nocetti, 2009, p. 4).

With the exception of one, the thirty participants were graduate students. In this particular study, the students of Spanish as a Second Language were mostly Americans, except for one student who was Rumanian. The participants' ages ranged from twenty-two to thirty, being the majority women. All the students were exceptional since the program they were completing is one of the best programs in the United States. It has competed with Harvard University. These students had the experience of having had an instructor who had influenced their learning process by motivating them, which is an important aspect when acquiring a second language.

Instruments

In this research, the Achievement Motivation Scale (EAML) and the Academic Attributional Academic Motivation Scale (EMA) from María Antononia Manassero Más and Ángel Vázquez Alonso were used and have been modified and adapted to the needs of the study.

The EAML questionnaire contains ten questions. The questions range from 1 to 7. One, representing the least applicable to the student, to number seven, demonstrating what is closest to the student’s personal experience. As researchers Más and Alonso affirm, the questions are designed in such a way that each one is related to one of the following types of motivation, indicating only the first part of the questionnaire (1998, 6): Motivation of Interest (questions 3, 4, 7 and 10); Motivation of Ability (questions 2 and 8); Motivation of Effort (1 and 6) and Motivation of the Professor (questions 5 and 9). The *Achievement Motivation Scale (EAML)* includes eight questions which focus on intrinsic motivation to “know and experience stimulation” (1998, 7) and two which relate to extrinsic motivation, which is referred to as “external regulation.” The second part of the questionnaire consists of “the different reasons to participate in the classroom” (Más and Masero, 1998, p. 6) and the motivation that prompts them to learn a second language.

Data collection and procedures

Both questionnaires based on Más and Angel’s *Achievement Motivation Scale* as well as the *Academic Motivation Scale* were collected and analyzed once they were completed in a period of one week, to assess the results.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Results of Part A: Achievement Motivation Scale Questionnaire (EAML)

Variables of motivation and questions related to categories of motivation	Points				Results: Prevailing No.
MOTIVATION OF INTEREST :					
Importance	1. = 0points 5. = 3	2. = 1 point 6. = 10	3. = 1 point 7. = 14	4. = 1 point	6 y 7 = great importance

Level of Satisfaction	1. = 0 5. = 4	2. = 0 6. = 2	3. = 0 7. = 21	4. = 3	# 7= great satisfaction
Self- imposed demands	1. = 0 5. = 7	2. = 0 6. = 9	3. = 0 7. = 14	4. = 0	#7= great number of demands
Own boredom	1. = 0 5. = 5	2. = 2 6. = 17	3. = 1 7. = 2	4. = 4	#6= great boredom
ABILITY MOTIVATION :					
Self- confidence	1. = 0 5. = 9	2. = 0 6. = 13	3. = 2 7. = 5	4. = 1	#6= quite confident
Behavior when solving a complex task	1. = 0 5. = 4	2. = 0 6. = 12	3. = 1 7. = 11	4. = 2	#s 6 y 7 = effective behavior
EFFORT MOTIVATION:					
Degree of Subjectivity	1. = 1 5. = 5	2. = 4 6. = 8	3. = 2 7. = 2	4. = 6 No answer.= 2	#6 = degree of subjectivity
Eagerness to learn	1. = 0 5. = 3	2. = 0 6. = 12	3. = 0 7. = 12	4. = 3	# 7= great eagerness to learn
MOTIVATION OF THE PROFESSOR :					
Exams	1. = 0 5. = 7	2. = 0 6. = 8	3. = 0 7. = 3	4. = 7 No answer.= 5	#6 = importance of exams
Eagerness to learn	1. = 0 5. = 1	2. = 0 6. = 3	3. = 0 7. = 25	4. = 1	# 7= great eagerness to learn

The results indicate that the level of student motivation to learn Spanish as a second language is high (6 and 7). Number 7 represents the students' eagerness which obtained 12 points at number 6 and 10 and number 7, showing that students possessed a great desire to learn the subject.

The high scores regarding self-confidence (6) and behavior when solving complex problems (6 and 7) also reflect the positive attitude of the students. Both aspects belong to the category of ability motivation while the degree of subjectivity (6) and the desire to learn the language (7) belong to the category of effort motivation. These results also show the influence and importance that the professor has on the students even if the students already possess implicit motivation. Thus, it can be observed that all the categories of motivation reflect a high score in the Achievement Motivation Scale (EAML).

Table 2

Results of the second part: Academic Motivation Scale Questionnaire (EMA) (Some of the terminology or format is based on the empirical analysis from the two scales motivational scales of María Antonia Manassero Más y Ángel Vázquez Alonso. They have been modified and adapted in accordance with the needs of the study (Más y Alonso, 9).

Reasons for learning the foreign language studied	Type of Motivation	Prolific #
1. Earn a degree that leads to a higher-paying job	Extrinsic	2 y 4 with 8 points each
2. Communicate ideas to others	Intrinsic	6 with 15 points
3. Improve as a person	Intrinsic	6 with 18 points
4. Have a more prestigious job	Extrinsic	5 with 7 points
5. Satisfaction of discovering new things	Intrinsic	6 y 7 with 9 points
6. Satisfaction from enjoying readings	Intrinsic	6 with 11 points
7. Felt motivated in the past, but hesitant to continue	Amotivation	1 with 12 points
8. My studies allow me to continue learning many things that interest me	Intrinsic	6 with 14 points
9. I feel excited reading material with interesting themes and topics	Intrinsic	6 with 13 points
10. I am motivated when I get good grades	Extrinsic	6 with 10 points

According to researchers Más and Alonso, the terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and demotivation (lack of motivation) are useful in comprehending the results. They are defined in the following way: Intrinsic motivation refers to stimulating sensations, such as sensory pleasure, aesthetic and exciting experiences. With extrinsic motivation, the action is usually performed whether the result is rewarding or not. Finally, demotivation is defined as the absence of any type of motivation. Demotivation is a vision of incompetence and low expectations for success.

In general, the results of the EMA show a high score in terms of motivation whether it was intrinsic or extrinsic. Specifically, the results demonstrate that intrinsic motivation is higher in number, 89 points, while extrinsic motivation had 33 points and amotivation had 12 points. What the results present is that while the thirty students are part of a very competitive program nationwide and therefore are excellent students, they possess a high intrinsic motivation and though they also find test grades and the professor's motivation rewarding, extrinsic motivation is secondary.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to determine the most efficient type of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic need that drives students to learn a language. The present results provided strong support that the reasons of why the students were able complete their Master's degree in Spanish at such a prestigious Study Abroad program in Madrid, was mainly due to intrinsic motivation, but yet it also evident that the remarkable quality and preparation of the professors of the program help maintain, nourish the students' interest and love for the subject and even take it to the next level.

The questionnaires completed by students pursuing their Master's Degree in Spanish, clearly show an existing motivational relationship between learners and teachers as well as the intrinsic motivation that learners have that spurs them to keep learning the language and, ultimately, achieve their objectives. In this study, it can be observed that a good teacher has a strong effect in motivating a student, since the stimulus of most of the students interviewed, study for the desire to learn. It is here that the attitude of the teacher towards the student comes in. A teacher's positive attitude results in increased and sustained interest in assignments on the part of the learner. On the other hand, a student will either not feel interested in the class or, in the worst case, may develop a fear of participating in the classroom. The author and professor, Kim Griffin, states that fear of participation in second language classes can be debilitating for the learner:

A bad experience with learning (many times in the classroom) causes the learner to reject the material. In contrast, if the learning experience has been pleasant, the student will have a positive attitude toward the material. A positive or negative attitude is also formed by the pedagogical method used, by the personality of the teacher and by how the teacher communicates with the students, the type of educational materials, whether they are textbooks, videos, CDs, films or any other (Griffin 2005, 10).

Students respond to different types of motivation. Those students who are oriented to the domain, try to master an activity, whereas those who feel anxious and helpless have learned to regard their failures as some sort of personal deficiency and abandon the activity (Burden and Williams, 145). It is here, that the role of extrinsic motivation plays an important role when the professor can impact the students, by motivating them to persevere and continue learning the language. It is the teacher who can influence the students in a positive way, so that learning can continue to take place if intrinsic motivation is not present. Likewise, the teacher must find a balance and must not exceed the motivational rewards to the students. This action could have a negative impact on the students.

In psychological terms, this is defined as the over justification effect. Kendra Cherry states that “offering excessive external rewards for an already internally rewarding behavior can lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation” (2018, 3). Therefore, it is essential that instructors have the necessary education and preparation due to the enormous impact they can have on the students as extrinsic motivation to take the students even further when intrinsic motivation already exists, or even when the intrinsic motivation is non-existent.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE Motivation in the classroom

Please select the answer that most matches what you think, drawing on the most recent experiences that you have had in the classroom. The answers in this questionnaire will be anonymous.

The questions were retrieved from the empirical analysis from María Antonia Manassero Más y Ángel Vázquez Alonso of the University of the Islas Baleares, Spain, and have been modified and adapted in accordance with the needs of the study.

Parte A

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION SCALE (EAML)

Rate the degree of subjectivity of the grades given by professor:

TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NOT SUBJECTIVE AT ALL

Rate the confidence you have in getting a good grade in the language class:

HIGH CONFIDENCE 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 NO CONFIDENCE

Rate the importance of good grades for you in the language class:

HIGH IMPORTANCE 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 NOT IMPORTANT FOR ME

Rate the level of satisfaction the studying this language gives you:

GREAT SATISFACTION 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 NO SATISFACTION

Rate the degree to which the exams might raise or lower the grade that you would deserve in the language class:

LOWER MY GRADE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 RAISE MY GRADE

Rate the desire that you have to get good grades:

GREAT ENTHUSIASM 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 NO ENTHUSIASM

Rate the demands that you place on yourself to study the language:

VERY LOW DEMANDS 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 VERY HIGH DEMANDS

Rate your behavior when you solve a difficult problem in the foreign language class:

I KEEP WORKING UNTIL THE END 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 I QUIT SOON

Rate your desire to learn the foreign language:

NO DESIRE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT DESIRE

Rate your level of boredom in the language class:

I'M ALWAYS BORED 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I'M NEVER BORED

Parte B

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION SCALE (EMA)

Select the answer that best matches your personal experience with the acquisition of the language you are/were studying.

I am/was interested in learning a foreign language because:

1. Without a degree in my studies, I cannot find a job that pays well

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. I will be able to communicate my ideas to others, and this pleases me

NADA EN ABSOLUTO	MUY POCO	POCO	MEDIO	BASTANTE	MUCHO	TOTALMENTE
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. I am pleased to see that that I can improve in my studies

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I want to find a more prestigious job after I graduate

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. I feel happy when I discover new and unknown things

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. I feel happy when I read

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. I was motivated in the past, but I am doubtful now and hesitate whether I should continue

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. My studies allow me to continue learning many things that interest me

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. I feel excited reading material with interesting themes and topics

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. I am motivated when I get good grades

NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	A LITTLE	AVERAGE	MORE THAN AVERAGE	A LOT	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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