

The Importance of “Motivation” in Studying English as a Second Language of International Students in Australia

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Abstract—People nowadays try to improve their English competency in many ways. Accordingly, enhancing English proficiency by studying abroad is considered the most effective strategy. However, learning a second language which is not your mother tongue always gives you a lot of challenges. Therefore, to achieve the best outcome in exploring any new language, particular English, this requires language learners to have high motivation, a clear goal, and to be aware of its importance. This is because there is no success without effort or determination; trying is hard but giving up is too easy. This paper aims at exploring into motivation, especially discussing its impacts on language learning to figure out how important it is to international students in Australia. This paper is to help increase international students' awareness of the importance of motivation, an indicator of success. The results have shown that motivation has both positive and negative impacts on studying English language.

Index Terms—Australia, English, international students, motivation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is not just for the young and is important to anyone, any organization or country. One cannot learn well, cannot do well and cannot live well without motivation [1]. Motivation is the engine that drives all human actions. This is an internal state, which energizes and directs people to purposeful behaviors. The foundation of motivation is emotions, in particular, it is based on avoidance, negative emotional experiences and seeking positive emotion [2], [3]. Each person's positive or negative views widely vary and depend on social norms, so they have different motivations toward their lives [4]. Motivation is important because it is involved in all aspects of life [5].

For society, creating motivation to express the increasing satisfaction of human needs, ensuring human happiness and comprehensive development, thus promoting society to contribute to economic development and sacrifice to the country. Additionally, motivation helps individuals to achieve their goals, each person's spiritual life will become richer. Thereby, positive motivation also helps create new values for society [6]. At the organization level, in an enterprise, human resources are an important and integral part, so employees' motivation at work plays a crucial role in determining the strength of the organization. At a personal level, for employees themselves, working motivation plays an important role in deciding employees' behaviors. Regarding students, particularly international

students who are considered in this paper, in order to achieve their goals in the host countries, they themselves have to possess manifolds of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Motivation often derives from two factors: "why and for what". In particular, people can only be motivated to do something when they know why we are doing it and what we are doing for. A student will not like to study philosophy if he does not understand what philosophy really is, why it is necessary to study philosophy and what philosophy ultimately does. And if an international student just wants to get a foreign university degree and show people that "he has a foreign university degree like everyone else". This will be different from an overseas classmate for the purpose of improving his English proficiency in order to get a deep understanding of global trade and regional trade, national trade and to later become a true expert on international trade. Thus, to have a strong motivation and sustainable from the inside, it is necessary to be able to live for a clear purpose and that reason must be big enough, real and beautiful enough.

To create motivation, people must know how to activate strong and positive emotions and towards them a specific benefit or a goal. Daniel Goleman argues that self-discipline is a basis for a character. He also claims an important attitude in one's personality is he must know how to encourage and guide himself, whether it is homework, completing a job or getting up early. As we have seen, the capability to postpone satisfaction as well as the capability to control and adjust the urge when human actions are the most basic emotional skill. In the past, this skill is named as such the will [7]."

Why motivation has become very important and impacts international students during the time of their studying in Australia compared with their counterparts in local and international contexts. Accordingly, Australia has become a country that attracts many overseas students from around the world. Education in Australia, hence, is considered the third-largest service market after tourism and transportation [8], [9], recently, it is climbing to the second position on the educational industry in 2019 [10]. Many scholars have revealed that international students have to face many challenges, including language proficiency [11]. Learning a foreign language that is not your mother tongue brings people difficulties, and language learners' failure or success mostly depends on the absence or presence of motivation. The more motivation people have, the easier it is for them to explore a new foreign language. Motivation can be defined as "activating orientation of current life pursuits toward a positively evaluated goal state" [12]. This means motivation is very important for foreign students learning

English in Australia, given that it brings many benefits such as boosting career prospects, obtaining confidence and higher achievements, and understanding self-concept or self-satisfaction.

In the following sections, firstly, the paper would operate what motivation is and types of motivation. Subsequently, theories of motivation will be considered before moving to the importance of motivation and how it impacts on learning language of international students in Australia.

II. DISCUSSION

A. What Is Motivation?

The topic of creating “motivation” has been set by sociologists, and business owners much concern right after the industrial revolution broke out in the West. However, research on motivation in public organizations only appeared in early years 1960s of the 20th century. During two decades (from 1960 to 1980), the research on motivation tends to focus on workers in industrial and economic organizations [13]. According to Kleinginna & Kleinginna (1981), there were at least 140 different definitions of motivation [14]. Kelenginna stated that motivation to work is the desire and the willingness of employees to strengthen efforts towards achieving organizational goals.” Within the limit of this article, this paper will discuss motivation in education, especially in studying English language of international students.

When it comes to motivation, it is often understood that something huge. However, motivation can come from something very small, but it creates a strong impulse within every human being [15]. Motivation is defined as *a process of initiating, leading and maintaining purposeful behaviors* [16]. Motivation is what drives us to act even though we take a glass of water to quench thirst or read a book to gain more knowledge. Motivation is related to the motivating factors such as biological, emotional, social and cognitive, which make a behavior appear [17]. Simply, in everyday life, the term motivation is often used to describe why a person does something.

B. Types of Motivation

There are two types of motivation, in which intrinsic motivation is to update what of the behavior actions are boosted by the dream inside each person. That could be a passion for studying English or a subject, an ideal job or a scholarship, an activity for the joy obtained from the activity itself [18]. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is applied from external factors such as examination, teachers, and parents, etc. Extrinsic motivation, for example, is reflected through solving a tough crossword just to make yourself satisfied when you solve a problem. According to Maslow, intrinsic motivation is remarkably superior to extrinsic given language learners are motivated to self-worth [19].

Besides, very recent research has divided motivation which is named as positive motivation and negative motivation [20]. These authors stated: *“positive motivation or incentive motivation is based on reward. The workers are offered incentives for achieving the desired goals. The incentives may be in the shape of more pay, promotion, recognition of work, etc. The employees are offered*

incentives and try to improve their performance willingly. Meanwhile, negative or fear motivation is based on force or fear. Fear causes employees to act in a certain way. In case, they do not act accordingly then they may be punished with demotions or lay-offs. The fear acts as a push mechanism. The employees do not willingly co-operate, rather they want to avoid the punishment [20].”

Each individual has a different way of motivation because each person has different needs and goals when doing anything. There are people who like to work on challenging tasks/ jobs, some like handsome salaries and bonuses, others like to go on business trips or like to be praised, etc. Nevid (2013) has revealed that motivation is often the question of “why” an action takes place - the need or desire is what drives the behaviors and explains the actions we take. We do not actually make an engine; instead we draw out an incentive to derive the behaviors we perform” cited in [21].

So, what is really behind the motivation that makes us act? Psychologists have proposed number of motivational theories. In the following section, motivational theories shall be discussed.

C. Theories of Motivation

There are 5 popular motivational theories mentioned in this article.

D. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory

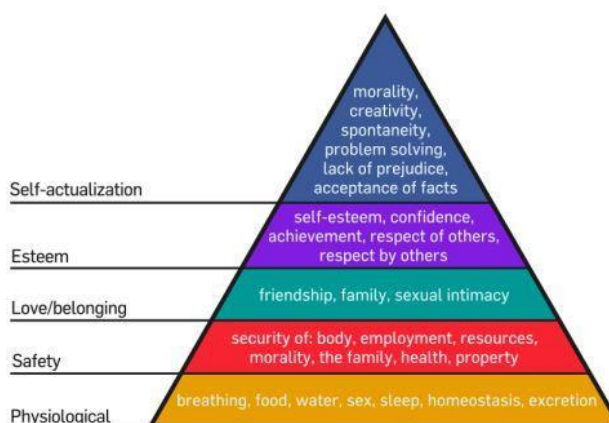


Fig. 1. Maslow’s needs tower (source: internet).

Maslow's Needs Tower (Fig. 1) is the most popular motivational theory, and it is also used extensively in most lessons at management universities. This theory was launched in 1943, when it was a theory of psychology in general. Then, Maslow expanded it into the theory of human development in 1954, cited in [22].

Maslow points out that people have five needs and divided from low-level needs (physiological, safe, social) to high-level needs (respect, self-improvement). Each person has a different need and is satisfied in a different way. When low-level needs are satisfied, the higher-level needs become the impetus for people to do something to satisfy them. This theory helps senior leader/ manager know the need to identify where their employees are in this hierarchy and find ways to meet that need. Similarly, regarding international students, this theory also helps an educational leader understand the demands of their students (e.g. personal life, academic life including learning English) so that

international students can be motivated through developing the capability of using personal skills (self-actualization level).

E. McGregor X-Y Theories

Theory X and Theory Y were introduced by Douglas McGregor in the 1960s referring to staff management of Project Manager [23]. Theory X believes people need to be observed every minute, people avoid responsibility, avoid study or work whenever possible, and desire only money. Meanwhile, theory Y believes that people are willing to work or study without supervision, want to achieve tasks with their own efforts.

F. David McClelland's Theory of Needs



Fig. 2. McClelland's theory of needs (Source: internet).

McClelland's Theory of Needs (Fig. 2) involves three elements which are achievement, power, and affiliation [23].

Achievement: people in general and particularly international students are motivated to succeed but they are striving for personal achievement rather than the reward of success. They want to do something better or more effective than it was before.

Power: the desire to have an impact, influence and control over others. These people are more likely in charge, trying to influence others, preferring competitive situations, being in position and often more being interested in gaining credibility and influence over others than they are with effective operating results

The third need that Mc Celland considers separately is *integration*. It is the desire to be loved and accepted by others. They often strive to make friendships, prefer cooperative situations rather than competitive ones, and they expect relationships that lead to a high level of mutual understanding.

G. Herzberg's Theory

Herzberg's theory was proposed in 1960, cited in [22] to take into account two factors: (1) Hygiene Factors and (2) Motivating agents. Accordingly, the first factors include elements of the organizational environment, such as corporate policies and governance, supervisory work, wages, awards, etc. If these factors are not satisfied, it will cause losing motivation; dissatisfaction and reduce the ability to do tasks (learning and working). The second factors include

key elements to create motivation and satisfaction in work such as success, recognition of achievement, nature inside work, labor responsibility, promotion, etc. If missing these factors, people will not be satisfied, lazy, and lack the focus on tasks.

H. Expectancy Theory

The Expectancy Theory was proposed by Victor Vroom in 1964, and he assumed that people choose or act on the expectation of intended results [24]. In this model, there are 3 variables:

- Expectancy (E): Expectation creates Performance.
- Instrumentality (I): Performance creates favorable Outcomes (Promotion, salary increase).
- Valence (V): Has a role in reward systems based on needs, objectives, and sources of motivation.

I. The distinguish between Motive and Motivation

In the international education context, in order to distinguish motive and motivation, this article would discuss its similarities and differences which are shown in the table 1 below:

TABLE I: THE SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND MOTIVE

Motivation	Motive
Similarity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation and motive at study both come from "inside" capability of students themselves and are subject to decisive impacts from the students themselves. Impressive motive and motivation, both of which is invisible, however, it is only visible through observing students' behaviors and conjecture. 	
Difference	
<p>Because there have many similarities that can easily lead to confusion, it is important to be aware of the following differences that are extremely necessary and to be more aware of learning, particular English language.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influenced by the international students themselves and the institutional environment where foreign students learn or study. Motivation refers to the change in level: high or low, yes or no. Answer to the question: "Why are international students choosing that university/institution but others, why are they learning so effective?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the great impact of international students themselves, their families and the surrounding social environment. Motivation refers to the diversity of things; at the same time there can be many types of motivation. Answer to the question: "Why do international students study abroad"

J. The impacts of Motivation on Learning English Language of International Students in Australia

The motivation for learning English is a vital factor influencing, increasing, and boosting language learners' career prospects with more opportunities because of their language skills [25]-[27]. By being fluent in a second or a third language, people are able to find another job outside their hometown result in the expansion of the job market dramatically [28]. Jakobovits (1970) claims that among factors affect language learning, the percentage of motivation and capacity was the same, following mentality and others. It was accounted for 33%, 20%, and 14% respectively [29]. This outcome was in line with the findings in Kormos, Csizér & Iwaniec (2014) that the participants had instrumental language learning goals and valued the experience of international study opportunity, which they believed, could help them obtain a better job

[30].

High motivation in learning English could help language learners build confidence, explore a new world, gain knowledge, and drive a better change to higher achievement [31]. Motivation inspires positive thinking to comprehend a specific activity [32]. Jack Ma is the evidence for the importance of motivation and it has changed his life indeed². Without money or relationships, the only way to help Jack Ma move forward is through education. He determined to become a teacher after nine years of self-study English. At the age of 12-13, he began to love English, but there were not any books or suitable places to study at that time. During nine years, despite the rain and snow, Jack Ma cycled 40 minutes each morning to the hotel in the city to be worked as a free tourist guide. This helped him improve English competency and bring him some chances to be worked with foreign companies in China and the US as well resulted in his achievements-Alibaba group today [33].

Another benefit of motivation is to help language learners understand self- concept, gain the feeling of self-satisfaction or self-expression. Maslow's hierarchy of Needs theory may give some insight into this sense of progress. As previously mentioned, there are 5 levels from low to high levels, and the more demands a the lowest level are met, the higher motivation is increased [34]-[36]. This means motivation promotes people, especially international students to approach achievements. Likely, the motivation for learning English, once fundamental needs (food and emotional security, etc.) are examined, language helps learners connect to a specific social group, and subsequently reach personal goals and explore the second language (expected to higher demands). Obviously, most of language learners in Australia in reality wish to become an Australian after graduation in Australia due to great policies that the Australian government treats its citizens including health policies and systems [37], and education system³. However, the English requirement has been becoming strict for international students' occupation and immigration from time to time [38], [39]. Motivation, hence, becomes significant to help them achieve their academic performance and personal goal. Cook (2007) found that students had seen their goals as getting closer relations to native speakers [40]. Furthermore, based on a questionnaire designed for 45 participants, Chunmei Long, Zhu Ming and Liping Chen (2013) supported to the evidence of how essential motivation in Gejiu junior middle school in studying English, helping them to set up the right self-concept [41].

Notwithstanding important benefits mentioned above, motivation becomes unimportant to language learners due to the difference in language mastering and pressure, cultures and beliefs, individual passions or parents' aspects [42]-[45]. In research written by Koizumi and Matsuo (2011), the outcome was documented that the deterioration of motivation caused by challenges raised in learning English and the pressure of passing the entry examination (Kozaki & Ross, 2011). Zoltan Dorney and Csizer (1998) reveal that without sufficient motivation, individuals with the most outstanding abilities cannot accomplish a long-term goal,

and no matter how good the teaching or program is, language learners will not be able to achieve the final goal. The higher the level of English language learners is, the greater motivation could be. In contrast, when the level is low, a dearth of motivation is increasingly found. This is quite understandable, given that learning English is a long-term goal [1]. Obviously, when a person has spent a certain amount of time without positive results, he/she will not want to try harder leads to deteriorated motivation and motivation lost. Due to the difference in cultural background, Arabia students did not have an opinion in learning English; they did not practice English outside the class due to their religious beliefs [46]. In relation to ESL students, motivation may be unimportant because it is just as simple as an interesting game, a toy reward, a park visiting, a sticker, or a competition with peers, pressure of examinations, pressure from parents and teachers [47], [48].

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, success is often determined by motivation [33]. Motivation is an issue worthy of investigation, given that it is comprised of how successful language learners are. Although evidence suggests motivation has many more advantages than its drawbacks, it is a dilemma situation to weigh how many percentages of its importance could be, given that motivation may vary among language learners and they hold different viewpoints on it. Within various situations may cause the various consciousness and consideration of motivation of language learners leading to different impacts on language learning process and its outcomes. Due to its importance, we would recommend and encourage you to read the valuable research written by Dörnyei & Csizer (1998), who proposed the most "ten strategies" in language teaching to improve language learners motivation [1].

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHk-jfz7dJk>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSxUKVAUoDo>

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