Research Digest

Second Language Teacher Motivation:
An Exploration into Classroom Strategies

Nancy Lee

The University of Tokyo

Abstract

Motivational research has been carried out extensively in the field of second language (L2) learning and teaching. However, despite the popularity of this topic, it has often centered on the students and issues related to the teacher have been overlooked (Dörnyei, 2001b). Second language teacher motivation can be defined as the teachers' enthusiasm to teach the second language that has positive influences on students' motivation and language learning. Teacher motivation can be influenced by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This paper introduces four motivational strategies for teachers; improving student motivation, commitment to the teaching profession, maintaining positive student relationship, and participating in professional development. Through investigating the motivational issues of the teacher, it presents an alternative paradigm for understanding second language and teaching.

SLA分野において動機づけ研究が広く行われている。しかし、これらの研究は学習者に焦点を当て、教える側に関する研究が少ない（Dörnyei, 2001b）。教師の動機づけは第二言語を教えるための熱意

Nancy Shzh-chen Lee teaches in the Department of English, College of Arts and Science at the University of Tokyo. She holds an MA in foreign language and education from Kyoto University. Her main research interests are student and teacher motivation. Her other research interests include English academic writing for L2 learners and language policy.

であり、学習者の学習動機に大きな影響を与えている。教師の動機づけは内発的な要素や外発的な要素から影響を受けている。教師の動機付けを向上するため、以下の四つのストラテジーが挙げられた：学習者動機づけの向上、仕事への積極的な態度、学生と良い関係の維持や継続的な研修への参加。教師の動機づけ問題を明らかにすることによって、新たな観点から第二言語教育を理解することができると考えられる。

Introduction

Motivation is a widely researched area in second language (L2) learning and teaching relating to learners' enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence toward the learning of target languages. Motivation can be used to explain reasons behind learners' decisions for learning the target language, including how successful they will be, and their willingness to maintain the activity (Dörnyei, 2001a). Therefore, it is considered to have an important role in determining the success or failure of language learning and teaching.

Currently, a lot of motivation research is about the language learners especially strategies for improving learner motivation. However, Dörnyei (2001b) argues that no strategies can be employed successfully in the classroom without the presence of motivated teachers. Teacher enthusiasm and commitment have been acknowledged to be important factors of student learning. However, despite the repeated acknowledgement, research conducted on teacher motivation has been limited (Dörnyei, 2001a; Dörnyei, 2001b; Malmberg, 2006).

This paper will examine L2 teacher motivation. First, it conceptualizes second language teacher motivation. Second, it investigates factors of teacher motivation and looks at some elements for university teachers. Third, it defines the teacher and student motivation relationship. Lastly, it introduces strategies for improving teacher motivation. It is hoped that this study on teacher motivation will bring new insights to the understanding of L2 learning and teaching.

Motivational Theory in Second Language Teaching and Learning

Motivation is a complex concept, interpreted broadly across different fields. In the area of second language learning and teaching, the interpretation of motivation has also varied widely according to different theorists. McDonough (1986) defines motivation as the

energy and willingness to learn with an interest and enjoyment as well as incentives and benefits of knowing the language. The following are some ideas about the role of motivation by other well-acknowledged theorists, focusing on language learners:

1. "Motivation is probably the most important characteristic that students bring to a learning task. Motivation, or the will to learn…" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 160).
2. "More highly motivated learners use a significantly greater range of appropriate strategies than do less motivated learners. Motivation is related to language learning purpose…" (Oxford, 1990, p. 13).
3. "Social context leads to attitudes which appear in the learner as motivation…" (Spolsky, 1989, p. 28).
4. "Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language." (Gardner, 1985, p. 10).

Conceptualizing Second Language Teacher Motivation

According to Dörnyei, second language teacher motivation can be defined as teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to teach a second language (2001b). Teachers are more satisfied if their needs are met, and an increase in satisfaction increases teacher motivation (Frase, 1992). Teacher motivation can be conceptualized from two perspectives. First, teaching is one type of human behavior. According to this perspective, teaching is no more complex than other human behaviors. Motivation is the reason for engaging in a specific human behavior and it refers to the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of such behaviors. These reasons range from basic needs such as desires for food or objects, to achieving goals and certain states of minds. The second perspective refers to teaching as a specific professional activity (Romano, 2006). According to this view, teachers have certain unique motivational characteristics which are different from other professions (Dörnyei, 2001b). This paper falls in between the two perspectives. It perceives teaching to be similar to other human behaviors yet it also recognizes teaching to be a special activity influenced by needs specifically related to the teaching profession.

Factors of Second Language Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation can be influenced by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Dörnyei, 2001b; Papanastasiou & Zembylas, 2006). Intrinsic factors are closely related to teachers' work content whereas extrinsic factors are concerned with contextual factors that lay between teachers and the work place (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2007).

Intrinsic factors

Teaching is closely related to intrinsic motivation, including factors such as achievement, recognition for achievement, work interests, growth and advancement, and teacher autonomy. Most important of all, teaching is associated with teachers' internal desire to educate people such as imparting knowledge and values. It is believed that many teachers join the profession because of their internal desire to become teachers. For these teachers, intrinsic rewards of teaching are a satisfying aspect of their profession. These rewards can be divided into two categories: (a) rewards from the educational process itself, and (b) rewards from the subject matter ((Dörnyei, 2001b). The first source of intrinsic motivation relates to teachers' enjoyment in working with students. The witnessing of students' improvement and positive behavior contributes to the growth of teacher motivation. The second source relates to teachers' respect and value of the subject they teach. For example, university teachers who understand and value the importance of English are more likely to integrate new information into their teaching and thereby increase their own level of professional skills and knowledge.

Intrinsic motivation relates to three basic human needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). To fulfill these needs, teachers need to experience class autonomy, a sense of accomplishment in teaching as well as feeling connected to the students, other teachers and the administration staff. Among these three needs, autonomy has been considered to have the strongest influence on teacher motivation (Benson, 2000). Definitions of autonomous influences can be categorized into three groups. First, autonomy allows teachers the "freedom of control from others" (Benson, 2000). Second, it provides opportunities for teachers "to engage in self-directed teaching" (Little, 1995). Third, autonomy allows teachers the opportunity to be engaged in self-directed professional development.

Teachers need to be involved in lifelong learning to feel confident and competent about their profession. This third interpretation of teacher motivation concerning professional development will be discussed later in the strategies section of this paper.

Teachers become intrinsically motivated when they have the capacity, freedom, and responsibility to make choices for their own teaching (Aoki, 1999). The more teachers perceive themselves to be autonomous in the classroom, the more motivated they become (Benson, 2000). Autonomy encourages teachers to be in a continual state of discovery to find better solutions to answer questions and solve problems regarding teaching. Competent teachers tend to be more intrinsically motivated about teaching. Conversely, intrinsic motivation also increases teachers' needs for wanting to become competent. Motivated teachers are more likely to spend time on professional development and consequently become more competent and motivated as they pursue this aim. Additionally, teachers need to feel they are a part of the school community. For example, native English-speaking teachers in Japan may face certain barriers such as communicating with the administration or attending faculty meetings due to a lack of Japanese ability.

Extrinsic factors

Regardless of how intrinsically motivated teachers are, their feelings toward teaching are likely to change by their physical and social surroundings. Contextual influences can be divided into two categories: (a) macro-contextual influences, and (b) micro-contextual influences (Dörnyei, 2001b). Macro influences are related to all members of society. They range from parents to politicians, and also people on the streets. On the other hand, micro influences are teacher specific and relate to the physical teaching environment. Some micro influences are listed below:

1. School's general climate and norms
2. Class size, resources and facilities
3. Collegial relations
4. Definition of the teacher's role by other teachers and authorities
5. General expectations regarding students' potential
6. School's reward and feedback system
7. School's leadership and decision-making structure

(Dörnyei, 2001b, p. 161)

Teacher motivation can also be influenced by institutional policies. It is believed that teachers become more motivated when they agree with policies of their university. For example, at universities where the curriculum focus is on the enhancement of students' TOEIC scores, teachers have a higher tendency to become frustrated if they perceive their curriculum focus to be different than that of the university administration. Therefore, too many university policies can stymie the intrinsic motivation of teachers (Dörynei, 2001b).

The relationship between administration personnel and teachers also influences teacher motivation. Teachers become more motivated when they find their working climate to be more positive and supportive. Positive collegial relationship is another determining factor of teacher motivation (Henson, 2001). Collegial collaboration allows teachers more opportunity to interact with other teachers, to communicative socially and academically. It reduces isolation and increases professional satisfaction.

The working condition factors include both physical and psychological elements. Teachers become motivated if they can work in a safe and comfortable physical environment. For example, the provision of a private research room or lounges provides a comfortable working environment for teachers. From the psychological aspect, teachers can become unmotivated because of inadequate career support. For example, many current native English-speaking university lecturers are employed on fixed-term contracts with limited promotion and self-advancement opportunities. English (1992) further argues that teachers become motivated if they work under desirable financial conditions. However, as Frase (1992) reported, financial compensation has been a debatable issue in teacher motivation. An increase in salary does not necessarily lead to an increase in teacher motivation. Rather, Frase and English both argue that teacher motivation is the result of a combination of these factors.

Teacher Motivation in Change

Teacher motivation can change over time as teachers mature and develop (English, 1992). Therefore, motivational factors also change accordingly throughout different stages of teachers' professional careers. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954), there are five degrees of human needs: physiology, safety, the social aspect of love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The first four levels

are called deficiency needs and are associated with extrinsic factors or lower level intrinsic factors. The last level is a growth need associated with intrinsic psychological needs. Teachers' lower level needs must be met first before their higher level needs are fulfilled. As teachers mature, they become less responsive to lower level deficiency needs and more responsive to intrinsic psychological motivators (English, 1992).

The Teacher-Student Motivational Relationship

Teacher motivation influences student motivation and vice versa (Malmberg, 2006). Therefore, teachers need to motivate themselves in order to motivate and receive similar positive influences from their students. Teachers also become intrinsically motivated when they can witness the improvement of their students' English learning. From seeing students' improvement, teachers become more satisfied and confident in their teaching. According to Dörynei's survey on language teachers (2001a), teachers believe their own behaviors to be the most important motivational tool for students. For second language teachers, it is vital for them to be enthusiastic toward the target language and also possess the ability to demonstrate their enthusiasm to students to help increase their motivational level. Furthermore, teachers need to identify and share with students their reasons for being interested in L2 acquisition. Teachers need to express their feelings toward the importance of L2 learning by demonstrating the practical usages of English. This can be done by using authentic teaching materials in class, introducing up-to-date world news and topics, and encouraging cultural exchanges of students with students from other countries.

The teacher-student motivational relationship can be analyzed under the following three headings: (a) enthusiasm, b) commitments and expectations, and c) student relationship (Dörnyei, 2001b). Students can usually discern if their teachers are passionate about their teaching. Therefore, if a language teacher does not like his/her job, students are likely to sense this feeling and can be affected by their unmotivated teachers. Teachers need to have reasonable yet high expectations of their students (Dörnyei, 2001a). Students perform better and become more motivated when they are expected to do so. This cause and effect relationship is called the "Pygmalion effect" or the "teacher-expectancy effect" (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 35). However, these expectations need to be moderate and individualized. It is important for teachers to have

a good relationship with students. English teachers who succeed in establishing relationships of trust and respect are more likely to inspire their students in academic matters. Ideal teachers are ones who are easy to talk to and approachable. They need to show a professional attitude and win student respect by being knowledgeable about English learning and teaching.

L2 Teacher Motivation Strategies

Teachers become unmotivated when they are frustrated, disaffected or simply not interested in teaching. According to Dörnyei (2001b), this can be the result of (a) a stressful working environment, (b) limited autonomy due to set curricula and institutional constraints, and (c) insufficient self-efficacy due to inappropriate training. Dörnyei (2001b) calls for the attention of teacher motivation on the improvement of language teaching. According to Dörnyei, effective motivational strategies for language teachers are: (a) improving student motivation, (b) increasing teacher commitment, (c) maintaining trustworthy and positive student relationships, and (d) participating in professional development (2001b).

Improving Student Motivation through Teacher Commitment

Student motivation is the primary incentive for teacher enthusiasm. As discussed in the above sections, teacher motivation and student motivation are highly intertwined. Teachers should encourage students' motivation in order to receive similar positive influences. There is a wide range of literature on student motivational strategies. However, those strategies will not be discussed in this paper.

Student motivation can also be improved by teacher commitment. Teachers need to express commitment toward student learning by utilizing strategies that make for successful teaching such as:

1. Offering concrete assistance
2. Offering to meet students individually to explain things
3. Responding immediately if help is requested
4. Correcting tests and papers promptly,
5. Sending learners copies of relevant interesting articles
6. Arranging extracurricular opportunities
7. Encouraging extra assignments
8. Showing concerns when things are not going well

(Dörnyei, 2001b)

However, it becomes more difficult for teachers who do not see their students regularly outside class time to demonstrate their commitment. Teachers need to assure their students that teachers are approachable both inside and outside of the classrooms.

Maintaining Positive and Trustworthy Student Relationships

Maintaining a positive relationship with students is another strategy for teachers to improve motivation. For teachers to maintain this relationship, they need to have: (a) acceptance toward their students, (b) ability to listen and pay attention and (c) availability for personal contacts and consultations (Dörnyei, 2001b). Teachers need to accept students' differences. For example, freshmen students entering university have different English learning backgrounds along with different levels of English abilities. Teachers need to accept this difference and incorporate it into lesson planning.

Teachers also need to have the ability to listen when students have problems or questions. This listening ability should not be language dependent: Both native and non-native teachers need to create interactive classroom environments where students feel comfortable to approach their lecturers. Teachers need to pay attention to students and changes in the classroom by observing students weekly and keeping teaching logs. After-class student consultation is also important for maintaining positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers need to set up consultation times and provide students with contact details. However, teachers need to avoid a relationship that may turn into an over-personal one.

Teacher Professional Development

Sometimes the best motivational strategy is simply for teachers to improve their quality of teaching (Dörnyei, 2001a). There are two important reasons for teacher professional development. First, student motivation decreases if instructors have limited subject knowledge and skills or use unclear instructions. A decrease in student motivation subsequently results in a decrease of teacher motivation. Therefore, it is important for teachers to participate in continuous professional development. Second, professional development increases teacher motivation because it helps teachers feel competent about themselves and their work (Malmberg, 2006).

Richards (1998) stressed professional development as the fundamental

issue in second language learning and teaching. However, there is no general consensus on what knowledge, skills or concepts should be included in professional development programs for language teachers. Different programs are influenced by different institutional policies. They can also be influenced by teaching theories such as the behaviorist, cognitive-developmental, information-processing or the social-psychological theories and implement different content accordingly. This is especially true for universities in Japan as there are no shared policies on developmental programs for teachers. Universities can encourage their teachers toward lifelong learning by providing research fund reimbursements for joining academic societies and promotion opportunities. Some universities such as the University of Queensland offer professional development in the form of in-house developmental programs for their teaching staff (http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/sdh/index.asp). These programs range from introducing new teachers to university teaching, to the improvement of teaching strategies and promotion opportunities. Programs for new teachers at University of Queensland cover principles of student learning and provide student support strategies in a range of contexts. Some of the topics offered in the new teacher programs are: (a) the design of learning activities, (b) support and feedback on learning progress, (c) preparing students for assessment, (d) assessing student learning, and (e) evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Best of all, the participation in developmental programs for university teachers is usually voluntary.

Conclusion

Teacher motivation is an important area of second language learning and teaching. It is the enthusiasm and commitment for language teachers to teach the target language. Due to close teacher-student relationships, positive teacher motivation encourages students' motivation and their second language learning. Teacher level of enthusiasm can be shaped by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Among the different intrinsic factors, teacher autonomy is predominant. It allows teachers the capacity and responsibility to make choices and stimulates teachers to improve themselves by looking for solutions to questions and problems.

This paper introduced four strategies for improving teacher motivation: (a) improving student motivation, (b) increasing teacher commitment, (c) maintaining positive student relationships, and (d) participating in continuous professional development. The improvement of student motivation is the most direct strategy for teachers because teacher

motivation and student motivation are often intertwined. For example, higher teacher motivation improves student motivation. Consequently, improved student motivation can increase teacher motivation and this relationship continues in a cyclic process. Student motivation can be achieved by teachers expressing a higher level of commitment to students such as: (a) offering concrete assistance and individual consultations, (b) responding and giving immediate feedbacks (c) providing additional learning opportunities, and (d) showing concerns toward students. Teachers can maintain positive relationships with students by accepting their differences and being readily available for contact when necessary. Professional development is the last yet most effective strategy discussed in this paper. It develops teachers' skills and knowledge for the classroom as well as encourages teachers to become competent and motivated in their profession.

There are several shortcomings in this paper. Firstly, a discussion about the disparity between teacher and institutional perceptions and its influences on teacher motivation was neglected. Secondly, a further inquiry into the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic teacher motivation was needed to expand the discussion of teacher motivation. Lastly, a separate examination of strategies for improving intrinsic and extrinsic teacher motivation was not achieved. In order to grasp a clearer picture of how teacher motivation can be improved for the area of language learning and teaching, the author intends to examine the above three topics in the next stage of her research. It is believed that an improvement in teacher motivation will improve the teaching and learning of second language. Students would be able to engage in better language learning experiences and be benefited from the improvement of their teachers.

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