Empowering ESL Learning: Motivation in Acquiring English as a Second Language

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Abstract
This study investigates the role of motivation in enhancing English as a Second Language (ESL) acquisition among Grade 7 students. It employs a qualitative-descriptive method as it analyzes the complex dynamics of motivation in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, providing a nuanced grasp of the motivational elements that influence ESL learners' language acquisition journeys. The study investigates the varied nature of motivation using interviews and thematic analysis, with the goal of uncovering ESL learners' subjective experiences, challenges, and attitudes. Grasping the complexities of motivation within the ESL context is dominant, as it can influence students' engagement and language proficiency. Results of the study have shown that English as a Second Language Learning (ESL) is one of the common factors that affects students learning in a classroom setting. Motivation also plays a significant role in determining students' academic performance and overall accomplishment in acquiring proficiency in English as a Second Language (ESL). The study assessed the motivational factors among Grade 7 students, focusing on Integrative Orientation with a composite mean of (5.14) and Instrumental Orientation with a composite mean (5.07) respectively. Problems encountered were evaluated through Survey Questionnaires (composite mean: 3.65) and Interviews. Integrative Orientation significantly influences English as a Second Language motivation, while difficulties in English language usage emerge as primary issues. Grade 7 students, undergoing a transitional academic phase, face challenges in adjusting to learning. Recommendations of the researchers focus on academic importance that will help enhance and increase learning motivation of the students in English as a Second Language.

1. Introduction

English is one of the most prominent languages in the 21st century all over the world. It serves as the main form of communication between countries of people with different cultures. It is capable of reaching a larger reach when it is used in business and it is widely used in a wide variety of professions (Rao, 2019). Therefore, it is recommended for professionals to be capable in terms of English language proficiency. Literacy, in its many forms, is a must for all individuals who wish to be considered as a professional in the 21st century. It is a part of the skill set and competencies that are expected by many business organizations today. A lot of this prominence of the English language can be attributed to the colonization of various countries by the British empire, where the language originated from. As a result, when their colonies expanded and as they engaged in trading with countries from Africa and Asia, the language also spread in its use. In time, the use of the language was incorporated in the daily lives of people, spanning commerce and businesses, especially when concerning foreign trade wherein English is often the standard.

Learning English as a second language has become more of a requirement than a demand in the academic contexts as it is viewed as a key competency in many educational systems.

However, picking up a second language is no easy task. Second language learners and their acquisition of a certain second language can be affected by multiple factors that decide how efficiently they can learn, and use said language. These factors may include, but are not limited to age, learning style, attitudes, intellectual capacity, and more. This is further made difficult due to the fact that second language learners already have preexisting knowledge about their first language (Khasinah, 2014).

In the Philippines, the 1987 constitution states that both Filipino and English are official languages of the country. With this, it is no surprise that the country's people and their different areas of life have incorporated English as a medium of communication. Furthermore, the country's enhancement of bilingual education is also governed by law, with D.O. 52, series of 1987 – The 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education, stating that "Since competence in the use of both Filipino and English is one of the goals of the Bilingual Education Policy, continuing improvement in the teaching of both languages, their use as media of instruction and the specification shall be the responsibility of the whole educational system." This results in the learning of English as a second language to be a requirement in the local communities of the country where education is available. However, the thought of learning a second language puts many things into consideration, such as motivation which could affect how well students learn (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015).

However, motivation is not a very simple concept, it must be seen as numerous things that are intricately related to an individual's situations which are distinct for each second language learner, it is complex more so in the context of adapting or learning a second language (Carrió-Pastor & Mestre, 2014; Azar & Tanggarajau, 2020).

Motivation can also come intrinsically or extrinsically. Intrinsic motivation refers to the individual's own sense of enjoying and being satisfied with something. In other words, this type of motivation's source is within the individual. This means that the motivation and the action it brings forth comes from a sense of self-regulation, desire, and independence. Intrinsic motivation can also be classified into three separate components: intrinsic motivation for knowledge, intrinsic motivation for accomplishment, and intrinsic motivation for stimulation. Intrinsic motivation for knowledge simply pertains to the act of doing things for the sake of learning something new or developing new knowledge about certain topics, particularly those that interest the individual. Intrinsic motivation for accomplishment is concerned with the sense of satisfaction upon doing something that improves the individual's skill in a certain activity (for example: in sports or dance), and the achievement of a certain goal

(for example: ranking the highest in an examination). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, pertains to motivation in response to attaining something in return such as a reward or even to steer clear of punishments. The reward, which sparks motivation, comes from an external source rather than the satisfaction that an individual can give to themselves.

Motivation is one of the most essential aspects in the process of learning a second language. This study focuses on the learner's motivation in acquiring English as a Second Language and to identify various motivational factors that affect it. The Gardner's Theory of Motivation is a theory created by Robert Gardner during the Social Psychological Period in a bilingual context in Canada. This theory had a significant impact on second language (L2) motivation for many years. It also includes three important elements--the effort (the effort required to learn the language), desire (wanting to have an objective accomplishment), and positive effect (enjoying the process of learning the language). This theory defines motivation as to eager an individual to learn a language and the fulfillment experienced in that acquisition activity. This is also considered as a foundation to understand the language learner's motivation (Guerrero, 2015).

Gardner proposed two concepts within this framework in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the terms that are frequently used in this theory of motivation: Integrative Orientation refers to a motivational factor in which individuals have a positive disposition to learn a language of their own will. They have a genuine interest and passion about the language they want to learn and deeply value the people and culture associated with the language they are learning (Guerrero, 2015). On the other hand, Instrumental Orientation refers to a motivational factor wherein individuals learn a language only for utilitarian and practical reasons. Their only perspective is to achieve and learn specific objectives and demands for language acquisition.

The Gardner's Theory will be used to determine the Integrative Orientation and Instrumental Orientation in investigating the difficulties that Grade 7 students have while learning English as a Second Language and how motivational factors affect them in acquiring it. The theory will also be used to determine a learner's attitude and perseverance in learning the language.

1.1 Literature Review
The Role of Enjoyable Learning Activities
Interactive and enjoyable learning activities, such as language games, role-playing, and storytelling, have been proven to enhance students' motivation. These approaches make learning more engaging and relevant, encouraging active participation and involvement in the learning process (Bridge Education, n.d.).

Fostering Intrinsic Motivation
Creating a positive and supportive classroom environment can enhance intrinsic motivation among adult ESL learners. Approaches that emphasize curiosity and appreciation for the target language's culture motivate students to engage more deeply in the learning process (Qashoa, 2020).

Integration of Social Media in Learning
Using social media as a learning tool has shown a positive impact on the academic motivation of ESL learners. These platforms provide opportunities for students to interact in the target language outside the classroom, enhancing their language skills through authentic and contextual practice (Alqurashi, 2023).

Content-Based Learning Approaches
Content-Based Instruction (CBI), which integrates language learning with specific subject content, has been

effective in boosting students' motivation. By learning the language through engaging and relevant topics, students become more motivated to participate and achieve higher language competency (Brinton et al., 2021).

Support for Teachers in Migration Contexts
The increasing number of migrant students in ESL classrooms requires teachers to develop effective strategies to address language barriers and student trauma. Additional support and training for teachers are critical to ensuring that students' needs are met and their motivation to learn the language remains high (Reuters, 2024).

2. Research Methods

This study utilized the qualitative-descriptive method. Descriptive Method is a widely used technique in institutional research forms, including education. It is a form of methodological technique that is best adapted to understanding the perspectives and experiences that people have had within their natural environments (Kamau et al., 2023). The descriptive method also includes more specific questions than other forms of interpretative investigations. In this study, the researchers utilized Survey Questionnaires and Interviews as a method in conducting the study as it can answer issues while enhancing through analysis and observation. The qualitative-descriptive method will help the researchers to determine the different motivational factors in acquiring English as a Second Language of the Grade 7 students.

Description of Respondents

The study used Simple Random Sampling to get the desired number of participants. Simple Random Sampling is a process of choosing sample participants at random and solely by chance (Bhardwaj, 2019). The respondents of the study are the 50 Grade 7 students of Sections Hebron and Jezreel from Rizal High School.

In Grade 7, students are expected to have been taught and learned about the basics of language but are still getting better at using more complex language use. With that said, the researchers therefore think that it is essential to know what motivates them during this time so they can be taught English as a second language effectively. The respondents were 50 students from the Junior High School level of Rizal High School. The table below displays the description of the respondents in terms of the following aspects:

Instruments Used

The researchers made use of survey questionnaires and interviews as research instruments of the study. The survey questionnaire consists of twenty (20) questions that identify the respondents Integrative and Instrumental Orientation in acquiring English as a Second Language.

The researchers also conducted a structured interview which was divided into two parts. The first half of the interview was made up of ten (10) survey questions divided according to the Integrative and Instrumental Orientation regarding the problems they encountered in learning English as a Second Language. For the second half of the interview, it consists of 3 open-ended questions for Integrative Orientation and 3 open-ended questions for Instrumental Orientation to further justify and determine the problems and experiences they have encountered in learning English as a Second Language.

Data Analysis

The study utilized coding and formulating themes thematic analysis, which is a qualitative research method as the data analyzing method in order to process and interpret the data that have been gathered from the Grade 7 participants. Thematic analysis is used by researchers to systematically organize and analyze complex data sets. It is a way to look for themes that can grasp the narratives in the account of data sets. Argued to be

theoretically flexible for identifying, describing, and interpreting themes within a given data set (Dawadi, 2021). The study's main method for determining the frequency of the motivational acquisition and themes will be the incorporation of coding and theme formulation through thematic analysis. The researchers can provide a clear and observation-based picture of the motivational variables inside the English as a second-language learning of the Grade 7 Students through coding and formulating themes. Interviews and data analysis will be performed using the method of thematic analysis, which will uncover insights into the motivational factors affecting students' learning of English as a Second Language, specifically in relation to integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. This approach will show the motivational aspects affecting students' learning experiences and the challenges they encounter when studying English as a Second Language. Thematic analysis will yield valuable data, providing current feedback on the development of motivational learning in English as a Second Language.

3. Result and Discussion

The researchers obtained a thorough grasp of the data as represented by the study participants by carefully going over the transcriptions. Participants were given unique identifying numbers for clarity and to ensure confidentiality. The transcripts were then decoded and interpreted using these identifiers.

Integrative Orientation and Instrumental Orientation are two primary motivational factors that plays a crucial role in the academic performance of the students in learning the English Language. Diversity of the language helps the students to have an aim of learning the language for different reasons. In terms of Integrative Orientation, , it appears that most students are fairly motivated to learn ESL, driven primarily in respect of responsibility. This orientation emphasizes the perception that students view English to attain their future career aspirations and to be able to fulfill academic obligations. Students are notably motivated to acquire English due to its inclusion in the school curriculum, offering a sense of obligation to meet educational requirements. Furthermore, the desire to converse effectively with professional English speakers and to be able to gain respect from others surfacing as a significant motivator for acquiring the said language. These perceptions clear up on the multifaceted nature of students' motivations, focusing the complex actions between instrumental goals and dynamics.

Motivational Factors in Learning English as a Second Language

The exploration of Grade 7 students' motivational factors in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) reveals a nuanced understanding of their engagement with the language. The study assessed two primary orientations: Integrative Orientation and Instrumental Orientation. These orientations provide valuable insights into why students are motivated to learn English and how these motivations can be harnessed to enhance their learning experience.

Integrative Orientation

The students demonstrated a composite mean score of 5.14, indicating a Moderately Agree level regarding their Integrative Orientation. This suggests that many students possess a personal interest in the English language that transcends mere academic necessity. They are not only motivated by the practical aspects of learning English but also by a genuine curiosity about the language and its associated cultures. This intrinsic motivation is crucial, as it can lead to deeper engagement and a more meaningful learning experience.

In short, the desire to interact with English-speaking cultures is evident among the students. This cultural curiosity can be leveraged in the classroom by incorporating lessons that explore various aspects of English-

speaking societies, including their traditions, values, and current events. Such an approach not only enriches the curriculum but also fosters a sense of connection between the students and the language they are learning.
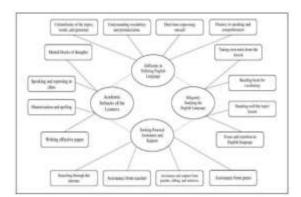
Instrumental Orientation

In addition to their integrative motivations, the students also exhibit a strong Instrumental Orientation, with a composite mean score of 5.07. This orientation reflects their recognition of the practical benefits of learning English, such as improved career opportunities and academic success. Students are increasingly aware that proficiency in English can serve as a valuable asset in their future endeavors, motivating them to invest time and effort into their language studies.

To further support this instrumental motivation, educators can implement goal-setting workshops that help students articulate their aspirations related to English language proficiency. By guiding students in setting realistic and achievable goals, teachers can empower them to visualize the tangible benefits of their efforts, thus enhancing their motivation to learn.

Problems Encountered in Learning English

Despite their motivations, the students face several challenges in learning English, as indicated by a composite mean score of 3.65, reflecting a Slightly Agree level regarding the problems encountered. Individual interviews revealed four prominent themes that encapsulate the difficulties faced by these learners.

Thematic Map Showing the Four Main Themes

Fig. 1 Thematic Map

Four main themes with each category highlights specific actions or challenges that impact learners' academic performance and language proficiency, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support and effective study strategies.

Difficulty in Utilizing the English Language

One of the most significant challenges identified is the students' difficulty in effectively utilizing the English language. Many students struggle with speaking, writing, and comprehending English in various contexts. This struggle can lead to decreased confidence and reluctance to participate in class discussions. For instance, students often find it challenging to articulate their thoughts verbally, which can create a barrier to active engagement in lessons.

Academic Setbacks

The language barriers encountered by students contribute to academic setbacks, affecting their overall performance in school. Difficulties in English can hinder their ability to follow lessons, complete assignments, and perform well on assessments. This situation can lead to increased anxiety around academic tasks, further exacerbating their challenges. As a result, students may experience a cycle of frustration that impacts their motivation and self-esteem.

Seeking Potential Assistance and Support

Recognizing the need for additional support, students expressed a desire for resources that could help them overcome their challenges. Many indicated that personalized assistance, such as tutoring or mentorship, would be beneficial in addressing their specific difficulties. Additionally, access to supplementary materials, such as language apps or online resources, could provide them with extra practice and reinforce their learning outside the classroom.

Diligently Studying the English Language

Despite these challenges, the students demonstrated a commendable commitment to improving their English skills. Many expressed a willingness to study diligently and engage in activities that enhance their language proficiency. This intrinsic motivation is a positive indicator that, with the right support and resources, students can overcome their difficulties and achieve their language learning goals.

Recommendations for Improvement

Based on the findings, several recommendations emerge to enhance the motivation and support Grade 7 students in learning English as a Second Language. First and foremost, educators should focus on enhancing students' Integrative Orientation. This can be achieved by incorporating cultural globalization and appreciation into lessons, allowing students to explore the rich tapestry of English-speaking cultures. Such exposure can deepen their connection to the language and increase engagement.

To strengthen Instrumental Orientation, schools can implement goal-setting workshops that encourage students to articulate their aspirations related to English proficiency. By helping students recognize the practical benefits of their language studies, educators can empower them to pursue their goals with greater determination. Addressing the problems encountered by students is equally important. Targeted language support should be provided, focusing on grammar and eloquence. This could involve developing strategies and guidelines that help students navigate common language pitfalls. Additionally, leveraging technology through language learning apps and online platforms can offer interactive exercises that reinforce language skills in an engaging manner.

Finally, establishing peer support groups can create a collaborative learning environment where students can practice English together, share challenges, and motivate one another. Such initiatives can foster a sense of community and encourage students to take an active role in their language learning journey.

4. Conclusions

Using the above provided data, the researchers drawn the following conclusions:

a. The Grade 7 Students motivational factor that affects their English as a Second Language is solely in the Integrative Orientation. It is clear from these findings that a personal interest in the language and choice of language acquisition are fostered by integrative orientation which therefore becomes an important component for successful English language acquisition among learners.

b. The Grade 7 students encountered challenges of effectively utilizing the English Language as a primary problem in their English language learning journey. This problem creates a significant hurdle to their educational journey, hindering their capacity to understand, interact, and express with any English-related topics and activities.

c. The Grade 7 students are at a stage of transition. Meaningly, moving from the primary school, which is Grade 6, to more difficult ground in secondary school. This is a key point in their educational path where they have to adjust to different schedules and expectations as well as cope with increased academic requirements especially in the areas of English Language. Therefore, it is important to comprehend what these learners are going through during this changeover period and provide necessary assistance so that their transfer into secondary level could be easy for them and guarantee further achievements in studies throughout this part of their learning journey.

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