

The Effect of Motivational Strategy Training on Chinese EFL Learners' Motivation

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Abstract

This intervention study aimed to test the effectiveness of motivational strategy training and the effects of the use of certain motivational strategies on Chinese EFL learners' motivation. The participants consisted of ten Chinese EFL learners, who were second year, non-English major university students. The data were collected by means of learner diaries, follow-up interviews, and semi-structured interviews. The ten learners kept a diary of their English learning for a period of six months. Their diary entries were collected once a week. After keeping their diary for three months, they were randomly allocated to the two groups: five in the intervention group and five in the control group. The five learners in the intervention group started to receive the intervention (i.e., motivational strategy training), which also lasted for three months, that is, till the end of the sixth month of keeping their diary. The control group did not receive any intervention. Due to the context and scope of this study, the motivational strategy training focused on two specific motivational strategies: setting specific learner goals and promoting self-motivating learner strategies. Data were analyzed by following the typical sequence of a qualitative analysis: coding for themes – looking for patterns – making interpretations – building theory. The results showed that the 10 EFL learners belonged to four learner types in terms of their motivational profiles. The effect of the motivational strategy training on Chinese EFL learners' motivation differed according to their motivation type. This suggests that further research needs to explore which motivational strategies are appropriate for which types of learners in terms of their motivational profiles.