Language Learning Strategies and the Motivation Level of Second Language Learner in Karachi (PK)

Huma Roshan[1]
Notre Dame Institute of Education, UoK, Karachi, Pakistan[1]

Abstract

Studies dedicated to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) highlighted the importance of motivation in learning a second language. Lu and Berg (2008) reported motivation as a key factor in learning a second language. Motivation theories attempt to answer questions about "what gets individual moving" and towards what activities or tasks (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). In second language research, "motivation is considered as a driving force that initiates learning and later helps to sustain the process of learning" (Dornyei, 2005). This correlational study aims to investigate the relationship between language learning strategies and the motivation level of second language learners in private schools of Karachi, Pakistan. The study also explores the relationship of language learning strategies and the motivation level of Cambridge students on one hand and the students of Matric system on the other. To collect data, two questionnaires SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) and ATMB (Attitude Motivation Test Battery) were adapted. These questionnaires were then administered to students (n=250+) from private schools (n=8) that comprised those that followed the O level examination system (n=4) as well schools which were registered with the Matric examination system (n=4). Data collection was done through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed with the help of SPSS and Pearson r to explore the relationship between the language learning strategies and the motivation level of second language learners. The results of the study indicated a significant relationship between language learning strategies and the motivation level of second language learners.

Keywords: *Second language learners, Language learning strategies, Motivation, O level, SSC system.*

1. Introduction

Studies dedicated to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) highlighted the importance of motivation in learning a second language (Moradi & Saricoban, 2012; Rahimi, Riazi & Saif, 2008). Motivation often compensates for deficiencies in language learning ability (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). There are many other factors that also have an impact on language learning strategies such as proficiency level, gender, learning styles, etc. (Lu & Berg, 2008; Oxford, 2003; Chen, 2002). However, motivation has become the central subject in the theories of SLA (Clément, 1980; Gardner, 1985; Krashen, 1981; Spolsky, 1988). Many studies have been done on second language learning strategies (e.g., Far, Rajab & Etemadzedah, 2012; Moradi & Saricoban, 2012). According to Cohen and Maraco (2007), 'What the good language learner can teach us by Joan Rubin in 1975' is one of the articles which introduced the concept of language strategies for the first time. Since many researchers have contributed to the area of language learning strategies. Rebbeca Oxford (1990) described learning strategies as those actions taken by the students that make learning much easier, faster, more pleasurable, more self-directed, more effective and help learners to be able to transform that learning into new situations.

English is the official language of Pakistan (Baumgardner, 1993). Since English is an international language, proficiency in the language brings more opportunities for education and employment to people (Lau and Yuen, 2010). This has also been confirmed by Manzo and Zehr (2006) that many countries such as Africa, the Middle East and South America opted English as their medium of instruction in schools and for tertiary institutions. Therefore, English is being promoted everywhere and so in the educational enterprise (Mansoor, 2004)

This study intended to investigate the relationship between language learning strategies and the motivation level of second language learners in some private O level and Matric system schools in Karachi, Pakistan. In addition, it aimed to find out strategies students prefer to adopt for learning English. Furthermore, this study examined the relationship between motivation and language learning strategies in O level students and SSC school systems that were sampled for this research undertaking.

The main research questions which had been formulated are as follows:
- What type of language learning strategies do second language learners use?
- What is the relationship between language learning strategies and the level of motivation of learners?

2. Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature and used a correlational design because of the nature of the research question. Robson (2002) suggests that in correlational designs, measurements or observations are made on a range of variables. Relationships between the scores on the variables are analyzed. Similarly, this study investigated the relationship between the language learning strategies and motivation level of second language learners. Moreover, motivation served as the dependent variable whereas language learning strategies were considered as the independent variable in this study.

Constructing hypotheses is an essential element in quantitative research. Yates (2004) argues that hypotheses tend to be constructed from one aspect, one feature of a theory. Thus, to prepare the theoretical grounds for this research the following nine hypotheses were formulated:
- H01: There is no significant relationship between motivation and language learning strategies of L2 learners.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between motivation and language learning strategies of L2 learners of the O level system.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between motivation and language learning strategies of L2 learners of the Matric system.

The data was collected through a questionnaire which had three sections. The first section comprises details of the demographic information of the respondents. Sections two and three comprise Motivation Questionnaire and Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL), respectively. The validity and reliability of the research tool was also checked. Moreover, it was also piloted before administration.

After convenience sampling, data collection for the main study had started. For this purpose, consent was taken from schools as well as students' assent was also taken. A total of 264 grade VIII and IX students including males (n=129) and females (n=135) participated in the study. Before entering the field for data collection, several measures were taken to complete the data collection process in an organized manner within the stipulated time frame. The data collected for this study were analyzed using version 19 of the statistical software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. Results

The demographics of the sample that comprised students (n= 264) of grades 8 and 9 including males (n=129) and females (n=135). Female participants comprised 51% (n= 135) while male participants constituted 49% (n=129) of the sample.

The results indicated a positive significant relationship between language learning strategies and the motivation level of second language learners (r= .214; $p<0.01$). The relationship indicates that those L2 learners who are highly motivated to learn language are more likely to use different language learning strategies. Thus, language learning strategies are significantly and positively correlated with the level of motivation of L2 learners ($R2$=4.41%).

4. Discussion and Recommendation

Language learning strategies (LLS) are considered as those actions that are targeted for language learning (Cohen, 1995) and are significant contributors of language learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Moreover, Oxford (1990) conceptualized LLS as a comprehensive process- oriented tool that facilitated language learning, and which also promoted autonomous learning as well as the achievement of communicative competence (Tamada, 1996).

Thus, the findings of the study found a positive relationship between language learning strategies and level of motivation of L2 aged 13 to 15 years. Interestingly, the study also revealed a positive association existed between language learning strategies and the level of motivation among students of the Matric section as compared to students of the O level system of schooling. Similarly, in this study students have shown that they are familiar with different language learning strategies, and they might be considered as

active users of language strategies (Ghavamina, Kassaian & Debaghi, 2011). Furthermore, the study has also found a positive relationship between language learning strategies and motivation of L2 learners which implies that students who are more motivated tend to adopt a wider range of language learning strategies and use them more frequently.

As this study indicated a significant relationship between language learning strategies and the motivation level of L2 learners, the curriculum of the learners' second language should be designed in accordance with the needs and interests of L2 learners. The curriculum needs to be based on a learner-centred approach to learning as well as include task-oriented activities that focus on personal interest, the engagement of learners with real-life experiences, critical thinking, and acquisition of language through cognitive, memory and social language learning strategies.

References

[1]   Baumgardner, R. J. (1993). The English language in Pakistan. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chamot, A.U. (2005). Language learning strategy instruction: Current issues and research. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics. 25, 112-130.

[2]   Chen, I.J. (2002). Language learning strategies used by high and low English proficiency students in a technology college. Master's thesis, Changhua Normal University, Changhua, Taiwan.

[3]   Cohen, A.D. (1995). Second language learning and use of strategies: Clarifying the issues. Washington, DC: Department of Education.

[4]   Cohen, A.D., & Macaro, E. (2007). Language learner strategies: Thirty years of research and practice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[5]   Far, H.R., Rajab, A.B., & Etemadzadeh, A. (2012). Examining the relationship between L2 motivational self system and L2- Learning among TESL students. US-China Foreign Language, 10 (6), pp. 1266-1270.Frankel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2012). How to design and evaluate research in education. (8th ed). New York: McGrow Hill.

[6]   Gardner, R. C. (2000). Correlation, causation, motivation, and second language acquisition. Canadian Psychology, 41, pp: 10-24.

[7]   Ghavamnia, M., Kassaian, Z., & Dabaghi, A. (2011). The relationship between language learning strategies, language learning beliefs, motivation, and proficiency: A study of EFL learners in Iran. Journal of language teaching and research. 2(5), pp. 1156-1161.

[8]   Gravetter, F.J., & Forzano, L.B. (2012). Research methods for behavioural sciences (4th ed.). USA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

[9]   Lau, W. & Yuen, A. (2010). The impact of medium of instruction: The case of teaching and learning of computer programming. Springer (16), pp. 183-201.

[10]   Lu, Y. & Berg, D.R. (2008). ESL learners' learning motivations and strategies. The international journal of learning, 15(1), pp. 17-24.

[11]   Mahadi, T.S.T., & Jafari, S.M. (2012). Motivation, its types, and its impact on language learning. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3(24), pp: 230-235.

[12]   Mansoor, S. (2004). Language policy in Pakistan. In S. Mansoor, S. Meraj, & A. Tahir (Eds.). Language policy planning & practice: A South Asian perspective. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[13]   Masgoret, A.-M., & Gardner, R.C. (2003). Attitudes, motivation and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. Language Learning, 53(1), pp: 123-162.

[14]   Moradi, A., & Saricoban, A. (2012). Motivation and cognitive strategies of Turkish and Iranian learners of Englsih. H.U. Journal of Education, pp: 65:76.

[15]   O'Malley, J.M. & Chamot, A.M. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[16]   Oxford, R. (1990). Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

[17]   Pintrich, P.R. & Schunk, D.H. (2002). Motivation in education: Theory, research, and application (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[18]   Rahimi, Riazi & Saif (2008). An investigation into the factors affecting the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL learners. Journal of Applied Linguistics, pp. 31-60.

[19]   Robson, C. (2002). Real world research (2nd ed). USA: Blackwell Publishing.

[20] Spolsky, B. (1988). Bridging the gap: A general theory of second language learning. TESOL Quarterly, 22, 377-396.

[21] Tamada, Y. (1996). The review of studies related to language learning strategies. Washington, DC: Department of Education.

[22] Tremblay, P.F. & Gardner, R.C. (1995). Expanding the motivation construct in language learning. *Modern Language Journal, 79*, pp: 505-520.

[23] Ushida, E. (2005). The role of students' attitude and motivation in second language learning in online language courses. CALIC Journal, 23(1), pp: 49-78.

[24] Vidal, R.J. (2002). Is there a correlation between reported language learning strategy use, actual strategy use and achievement? Linuagem and Ensino, 5(1), 43-73.