The Role of Motivation in Literary Translation Classes
Seyed Reza Beh-Afarin, Ph.D. (TEFL)[*]

Abstract

Motivation is perhaps the most frequently used term for explaining the success and failure of educational tasks. Numerous studies have shown that motivation is a key to learning (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). However, such experiments give us an understanding of what motivation is and what the components of motivation are. But they usually fail to reveal that someone is motivated or how we can create, foster or maintain motivation. The correlative effects of three dimensions of students' motivational behavior (i.e., motivational intensity, learning preference orientation, and impressions about literary translation course) and their engagement in the course were examined. The analysis of data revealed that there existed a positive correlation between students' motivational behavior and their achievement. The findings proposed that students who were not properly engaged received less response from their teacher, which further undermined their motivation.

Background

There is no doubt that motivational factors are involved in every aspects of human experience. Recent research reveals that motivation is valued by professionals and non-professionals for its own sake as well as for its long-term

[*] Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch.

contribution to the process of learning. Highly motivated learners are more interested, involved, key-up and curious, try hard, and eagerly cope with challenges and restrictions. Such learners stay more hours at college, learn more and feel better to continue their education. Motivated learners, however, are not easy to find. Psychological and educational researchers have investigated the factors that promote or undermine motivation.

Skinner and Belmont (1993) provided a comprehensive historical overview regarding such research. They maintained that psychological research has focused on issues as such attributions, self-efficacy, perceived ability, perceived control and competence, self-concept, intrinsic motivation, goal orientations and learning strategies. In contrast, educational research has focused on the teacher behavior that should be effective in promoting student motivation. Therefore, issues such as guidance, modeling, enthusiasm, provision of choice, reinforcement and interest induction were among the topics, which have been dealt with.

At the same time, in his review of the history of motivational research in education Weiner (1990), summarized current motivational theories by pointing out that "dominant perspectives are varieties of cognitive approaches to motivation. The main theories today are mostly based on the cognition of efficacy and control beliefs, helplessness, and thoughts about the goals for which one is striving" (p. 617). In fact, these discussions in psychology and education provide complementary standpoints on the links between course achievement and student motivation. Surely, the educational literature serves as a guide for understanding the genuine classroom practices that influence

students' attitudes and beliefs and the psychological literature explains how theses beliefs influence student's engagement in the classroom (Weiner, 1990). Motivation is commonly thought as "an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action" (Brown, 1994, p. 152). Brown (1994) quoted Keller (1983) referring to motivation as " the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that certain need or drive" (quoted in Brown, 1994, p. 189). There are other possible factors that could be listed with respect to motivation. Maslow (1970) listed hierarchical human needs from fundamental physical necessities to higher needs of security, identity, and self-esteem. Other psychologists, however, have noted further basic needs like achievement, autonomy, affiliation, etc.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) carried out their best-known and historically significant studies of motivation in second language learning. They examined motivation as a factor of a number of different kinds of attitudes. They introduced two basic kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation, according to them, refers to motivation to acquire a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals, furthering a career, reading technical materials, translation and so forth. An integrative motivation is employed when learners wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves with and become a part of that society. Gardner and Lambert (1972) believed that instrumentally oriented learner can be as intensively motivated as an integratively motivated one,

however, they hypothesized that the latter orientation would be better in the long run for sustaining the drive necessary to master the second language.

The conclusion from their study was that integrative motivation might indeed be an important requirement for successful language learning. However, Lukmani (1972) challenged this view in her study and showed that students with instrumental motivation outperformed those with integrative one. In the face of pros and cons about integrative and instrumental motivation, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) held that the type of motivation and its strength are likely to be determined by some generalized principle and more by "who learns what in what milieu" (p. 288).

In the meantime, Newby (1991) developed a theoretical integration of achievement motivation, particularly as motivation related to achievement in schools. He distinguished three types of motivators: a) extrinsic involvement or rewards, b) ego-involvement, c) task involvement. In extrinsic motivation learning is pursued in order to get an external advantage. In ego involvement the learner does not value learning but is instead preoccupied with looking able or good. Finally, in task involvement the student shows full interest in the task to be learned or performed and no interest in self-aggrandizement or the external advantage. It seems that in task involvement learning is more inherently valuable, meaningful or satisfying and attention is focused on the task and the strategies needed to master it rather than on the self. In ego involvement, on the other hand, learning is a means to the end of looking smart or avoiding looking stupid, and attention is focused on the self. One might conclude that task involvement is clearly the preferred mode of motivation

because it leads to superior learning and higher satisfaction on the part of the learner with his or her accomplishments.

Motivation might also be considered as one of the important aspects of personality. One can talk reasonably of a general trait of motivation within people (Fontana, 1995). One person may be strongly motivated to succeed in a job, another strongly motivated to get on with others, yet another talking of fluctuating motivational states.

This study attempted to present a motivational model focusing on the relation between student's motivational behavior (motivational intensity, learning preference orientation and their impressions about literary translation) on the one hand and their achievement on the other. The study suggested that student's attitudes and self-esteem and their impressions about their course are good predictors of their motivation. The researcher attempted to identify the components of students' engagement in the classroom and to adopt relevant dimensions of student behavior. The study also aimed at examining the reciprocal effects of student behavior and teacher engagement over the course and students' final achievement.

In the model of motivational behavior utilized in this study, it was assumed that learners' engagement was optimized when the context of the classroom fulfilled students' basic psychological needs. These needs included the needs to be competent, involved and related to others. On the basis of these needs, dimensions of students' motivational behavior that should foster the fulfillment of their basic needs could be derived. Students' needs for becoming oriented of their learning preferences are fostered when they experience their classroom as

an optimal one. When students are oriented towards the course, the amount of information about how to effectively achieve the desired outcomes increases. Making the students aware of their preferences is a very tough job. However, teachers might be very helpful by a) clearly communicating their expectations, b) instrumental help and support, and c) adjusting teaching strategies to the level of the students.

Another dimension of students' motivational behavior is how well they are motivated. As stated earlier motivation is an inner psychological derive that impels learners to action (Brown, 1994). But why does a learner decide to learn? is the motivation to begin leaning similar to or different from the motivation to continue (or discontinue) learning? What part does motivation play in situations in which it is someone other than the student who decides what will be learned, and how? Even more significantly, what part does motivation play when it is someone else who decides that the course of instruction shall take place at all? Specially important in probing into learners' real motivational intensity is the degree of their active participation about what they are going to learn in their course. What happens if they have a problem understanding something they are translating in class? Do they immediately ask for help or just forget about it?

Students' motivational behavior results from their needs for relatedness (involvement). Although involvement has been little studied in the achievement domains, researchers have suggested that students' needs for belongingness or their connectedness to a community of learners, might represent fundamental motivated learners. Teachers are involved with their students to the extent that

they take time to express affection toward, enjoy interaction with, and provide resources to their students.

The third dimension of students' motivational behavior was their ideas and impressions about literary translation course and how strongly they felt about it. Did they think that their course was meaningful, enjoyable, and absorbing or did they believe that it was meaningless and monotonous? To this end nearly twenty-four presumed aspects of a literary translation course were provided to the students. The list was adapted from Gardner and Lambert (1972). The purpose was to see whether the course was important and satisfying to them or it was unnecessary and unappealing. Empirical support for this proposition was derived from the questionnaire designed for the same purpose.

A key issue to the researcher was the relationship among these dimensions of students' motivational behavior. Did too much motivational intensity lead to a constructive classroom atmosphere? Did too much involvement lead to a student feel that the course was hard and awful? Did engagement make them feel useful and satisfied? Were theses three dimensions conceptually independent?

Students could get themselves engaged in the course either with great deal of freedom and awareness or with a blind image of the course and the course content. It was of course an empirical question to determine the most common configuration in the classroom. The convergence between specific students' motivational behavior was encouraging. It can be argued that the strength of this model was its provision of a theoretical frame that can be used to organize

students' behavior into higher categories and to explain the mechanism by which learner motivation can be influenced.

Participants

The participants in this study included a sample of 75 juniors studying English language translation at Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch. This sample removed the effect of sex as a moderating variable. The subject pool took part in literary translation classes with an identical instructor. The students' level of proficiency in English was measured by a standard test (i.e., FCE), most of them showing intermediate and lower-intermediate levels of proficiency. To make the results more reliable and to come up with a controlled subject pool, the researcher selected 75 students of those 96 excluding students with low (below elementary) and high (upper-intermediate and above) levels of proficiency.

Instrumentation

In constructing the questionnaires for this study, content and format were taken into consideration. The number of items was determined based on the topic of each section. However, it was attempted to avoid too many items for each section. Only those items were utilized that were meaningful to the respondents. The study utilized two questionnaires (seventeen multiple-choice items in the first questionnaire and twenty-three items in a 1-7 rating scale in the second one). The first questionnaire was devised to elicit information about subjects' motivational intensity and learning preference orientation and the second questionnaire planned to collect data on subjects' impressions about the course.

The questionnaires were first pre-tested and modified before being used in the study. To estimate the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher maintained conversations with three raters who were supposed to score the items of the questionnaire based on an evaluation profile developed by the researcher. The profile had four main criteria including format, clarity, content, and relevance. Each criterion was scored based on the following rating scale:

Rating: 5   Very good

            4   Good

            3   Acceptable

            2   Bad

            1   Very bad

The inter-rater reliability was therefore calculated to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire:

Number of raters	3
Number of items before rating	58
Mean before deletion	625
Standard deviation before deletion	19.6
Cronbach alpha after rating	0.77
Number of items after deletion	40
Cronbach alpha after exclusion of problematic items (items with lowest ITC)	0.89

Table I: Reliability estimate for both questionnaires

Procedure

To carry out this research, the following stages were followed:

- Selection of the subjects

- Homogenization of the subjects

- Administration of the first questionnaire

- Administration of the second questionnaire

In order to determine the students' level of proficiency a standard FCE test was administered to the students. After tabulating the results only the students with scores ranging from lower intermediate to intermediate were selected for the purpose of the study. The researcher avoided inclusion of advanced students as well as elementary students and below. The reason behind was to come up with a homogeneous sample.

After making the students homogeneous, the first step was to administer the first questionnaire. Comprising of seventeen items (with two different but related parts) the questionnaire aimed at determining the students' motivational intensity as well as their learning preference orientation. By the end of the term, the subjects were provided with the second questionnaire. The purpose of the second questionnaire was to find out students' ideas and impressions about their literary translation course and how strongly they felt about their course. The second questionnaire consisted of twenty-three items aimed at extracting data regarding subjects' perceptions about their course.

Data analysis

The primary analyses focused on testing each link in the model of reciprocal relations between students' motivational behavior and their engagement. Strong empirical support was found for a reciprocal relationship between students' behavior and their engagement in the classroom. . Teacher's interactions with the students predicted behavioral and emotional engagement on the part of the

students, both directly and through their effects on students' mental pictures of their interactions with the teacher. Teachers' involvement with individual students had the most powerful effect on students' judgement of their courses

Results obtained on the first part of the first questionnaire revealed:

√Students thought about what they were going to learn in their literary translation classroom.

√They were will to resort to other variable sources for learning the literary translation.

√The students of literary translation classes liked to immediately resort to teacher for help in case of having a problem.

√Students were definitely not interested to volunteer or put some effort into literary translation.

√When the time of translation came, they really attempted to improve their abilities.

√Regarding their errors, they usually seemed to be easygoing and careless. Generally, they looked them over, but they did not bother themselves correcting the mistakes.

√For the most part, students were very satisfied, if the teacher explained what he was going to teach how the rules of translation worked and how the tasks helped the students learn better. In fact, they wanted him to tell them what to do at all times.

Figure (1) shows the status of each question in the first questionnaire.

Questions 8, 14, 16, and 17 had lower mean values, which might be interpreted as the most problematic areas:

Question 8: Practical aspects of literary translation course

Question 14: Assessment in literary translation course

Question 16: Classroom dynamics in literary translation course

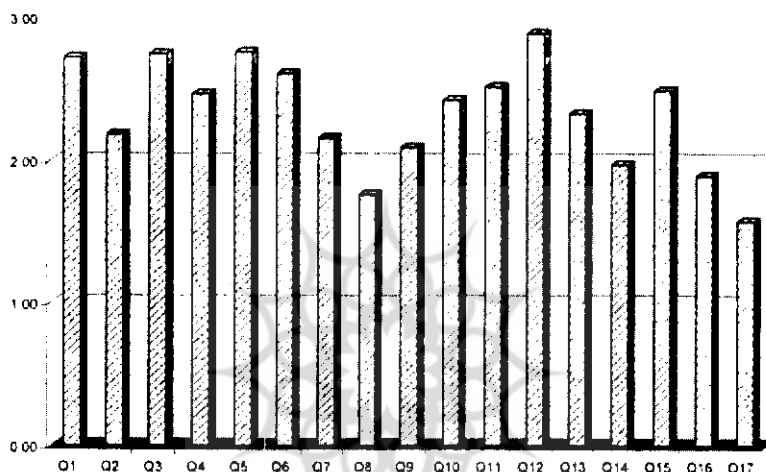Question 17: Objective setting in literary translation course

Figure (I): The status of each question (first questionnaire)

In other words, compared to other dimensions of motivational intensity, and learning preference orientation, these four dimensions seem to be of more concern. The overall status of the two partsofthe first questionnaire is presented in figure (2) and table (2). As it is seen, the majority of the subjects were well motivated and well oriented towards their learning behavior.

	Mean	SD	Variance	SE
Motivational Intensity	2.427	1.91	3.65	0.22
Learning Preference Orientation	2.244	1.96	3.84	0.23

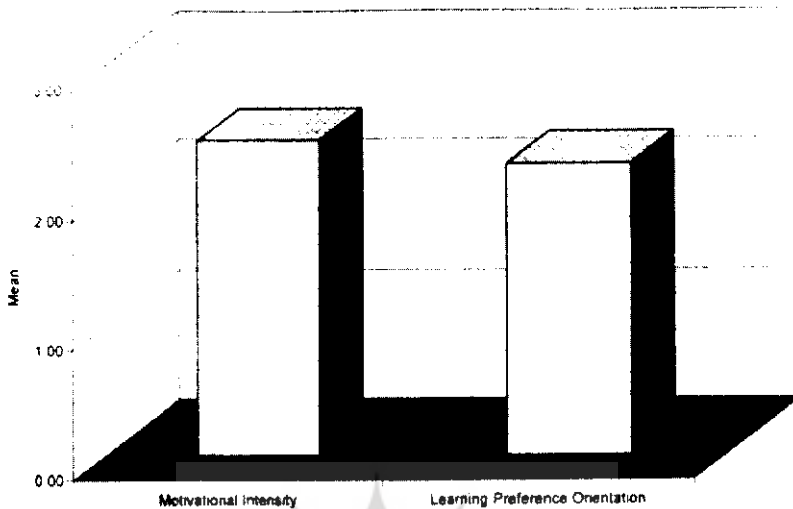**Table 2: Mean values, first questionnaire**

Figure (2): Motivational intensity and learning prefeence orientation

Results obtained on the second part of the second questionnaire revealed that majority of the students agreed upon the fact that literary translation course was a satisfying, fascinating, effortless, and appealing course while being meaningless, hard, boring, unnecessary, useless and to some extent unimportant. They also declared that they are not well aquatinted with the course, as it is a new subject and that there are some differences between literary translation course and other translation courses. Figure (3) shows the subjects' viewpoints regarding the second questionnaire:
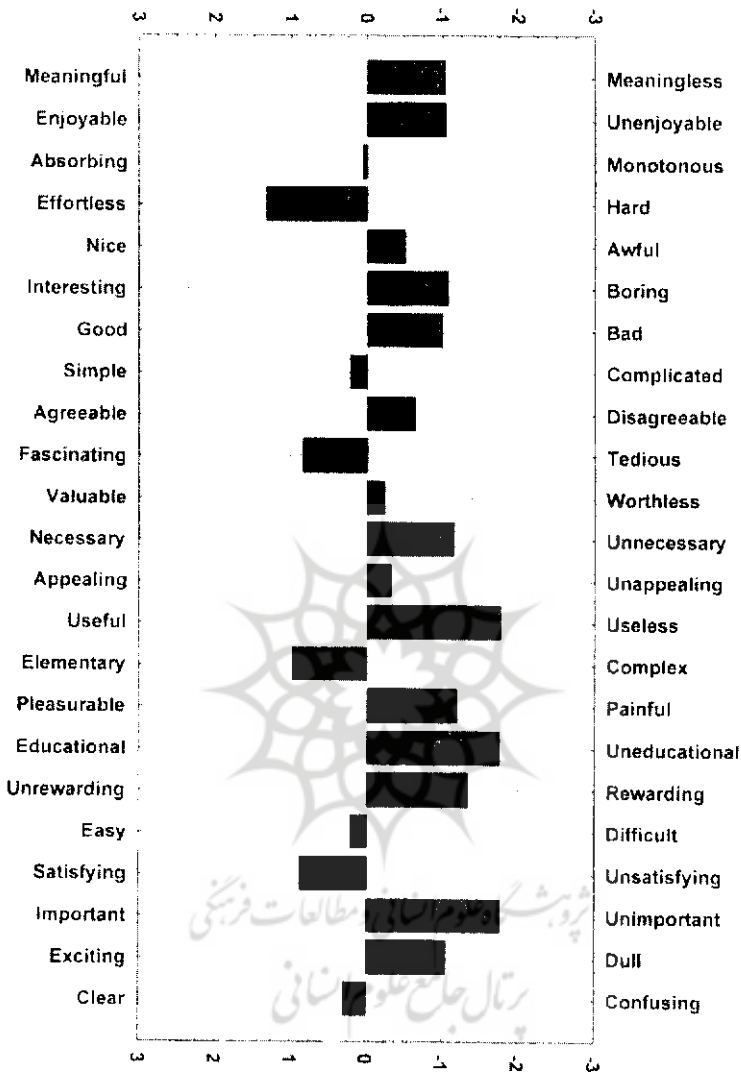
Figure (3): Subjects' viewpoints

Discussion

Motivational factors have pervasive effects on the way in which students experience interaction in the classroom. The affection, agreement, and dependability expressed to them shape the extent to which students feel their needs are met, not only for relatedness but also for competence and self-determination. The relative lack of motivation can be viewed in the context of overall high levels of involvement expressed by teachers and perceived by the students. Nevertheless, even in the context of generally high and relatively stable involvement, variations in students' involvement seems to be the most salient feature of their interactions in class.

Students who experience their teacher as providing clear expectations, controlled responses, and help are more likely to be more effortful and participating. When students experience teachers as warm and affectionate, they fell happier and more enthusiastic. At the same time, students' engagement influences teacher behavior. Positive student engagement elicits positive teacher response. Mostly, teachers respond to those who have initially high motivational engagement, consistency, and control. Meanwhile, towards more passive student teachers respond with more neglect and even inconsistency. Students who have high motivation are treated naturally in a way that is likely to increase their active participation in class, where as in the case of students with lower behavioral engagement, teachers might act in a way that will worsen the students initial passivity and withdrawal form learning activities.

Student passivity, although being natural, is unpleasant. It might make a teacher feel bad and incompetent and even poorly liked by the students. Passivity might

be considered as lack of internal motivation as well, which might lead teachers to use more pressure to make the students participate in the classroom. Another important factor, which might be as aversive to teachers as passivity, is students' negative emotions. Students are generally anxious and bored. This might be taken as a signal that they need more interesting activities and tasks. Given the high correlation between students' motivational and emotional engagement, it is likely that most students who have low engagement will receive subsequently less support. Student emotion seems to be influential in teacher behavior as well.

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