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Motivating students to learn English for Professional Purposes (non-linguisticuniversity)

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the main motivation factors to learn English for Professional Purposes and how they enable the formation of students' English foreign language communicative competence (non-linguistic university). The importance of this subject is caused by the need of effective training professionals able to compete in the modern labor market. The paper suggests the survey of one hundred and fourteen Crimean Business Institute and Tomsk Polytechnic University students. The methods used in the research are a questionnaire and the survey that comprises fifteen items developed to achieve the aim of the study. Three types of survey questions are used to collect the data: open-ended, ordinal scale and multiple-choice questions. The findings reveal that instrumental motivation prevails among students who are learning English for Professional Purposes as they focus on personal or professional interests and contacts, as well as ambitions. The study suggests the list of the most important motivation factors to learn English for Professional Purposes.

1. Introduction

Motivation has been undoubtedly considered by researchers and teachers as one of the important factors that influence the success of the second or foreign language learning (Moiinvaziri, 2008). Motivation is the dynamic force that provides an effective learning process. If there is no sufficient motivation, even individuals with outstanding abilities can not achieve long-term goals, and any relevant education programs and good teaching can not provide students' achievement (Dörnyei, 1998). Learning

English for Professional Purposes is hardly possible if the students are not motivated. The importance of this subject is caused by the need to train professionals able to compete in today's job market.

The study aims to investigate the factors of students' motivation to learn English for Professional Purposes.

Contemporary scholars (Nilsen, 2009; Sincero, 2012; Froiland, Oros, 2012;) define two types of motivation for learning English: inner (intrinsic) and outer (extrinsic). Intrinsic motivating refers to taking some action for the enjoyment or the satisfaction that learners receive, achievement, a sense of competence. The person is motivated to act following his (her) tastes, interests, hobbies, preferences, curiosity. The advantage of intrinsic motivation is that it can be long-lasting and self-sustaining. Extrinsic motivation refers to taking some action in order to obtain a reward or outcome. Instead of doing something because of positive attitude, persons, who are extrinsically motivated, act basing on what they receive as a result (Ryan, & Deci, 2000). For example, students may learn English to get good grades or employees may work for the expected salary.

Gardner, and Lambert (1972) have proposed to consider the most common understanding of the motivations that are typical for those who study a foreign language. The above mentioned scientists differentiate two types of language learning motivation: instrumental and integrative motivation. Gardner, and Lambert determine the instrumental motivation as the desire to get practical benefits. For example, a person who wants to learn a second/foreign language in order to improve his/her future career and have the prospect of salary increaseswould have instrumental motivation. Persons with integrative motivation to language learning have a desire to learn the language in order to better understand the lifestyle of native speakers and to get acquainted with their culture.

Dornyei (1994) believes that instrumentally motivated individuals have a favorable attitude towards the second /foreign language community, a desire to communicate, interact and collaborate and even become like the distinguished members of a given community. Some scientists assume that instrumental motivation prevails more often, because the main students' objectives are to find a prospective job and communicate with foreign speakers (Brown, 2004; Ryan, & Deci, 2000). Personal goals are also important as effective motivation factors (travelling, understanding of foreign films and songs, etc.). American scholars Williams, and Williams (2011) investigated wider range of reasons effecting successful learning of foreign languages. They focused on self-motivation, the teacher's personality and teaching techniques as well as creating a favourable linguistic environment.

It should be noted that well-known researchers, supporting the socio-psychological approach believe that motivation is responsible for determining a person's behavior by acting on it and pointing the direction to it (Gardner, & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, & Clement, 1990; Gardner, & Macintyre, 1993). Ajzen (1988) focuses on a person's intention that performs the particular behaviour, the attitude towards the behaviour and the subjective norm.

The supporters of expectancy theory approve that motivation is based on the individual's expectancy of success that enables one to perform various tasks and obtain the individual's value of the success in that task (Atkinson, & Raynor, 1974; Wigfield, 1994; Pintrich, &Schunk, 1996; Lunenburg, 2011).

The authors of this study suggest that the restriction of this theory is that the researchers did not focus attention on the learners' motivation, but on the factors that form and direct motivation. Besides, intentions, attitudes, and behaviour do not totally explain the origin and development of individuals'

motivation. Actually, motivation is a multifaceted phenomenon that is influenced by culture, environment, cognition, personality, society.

Thus, filling in the gap in the research of the second/foreign language learning motivation, the authors of this study attempt to answer the following questions: 1). What types of students' motivation to learn English for Professional Purposes prevail? 2). What are the main motivational factors to learn English for Professional Purposes? 3). How to improve students' motivation to the foreign language communicative competence formation? What methods could be used to motivate students to learn English for professional purposes?

The study is based on two well-known methods of motivation when learning a foreign language. The first method involves the socio-pedagogical model of second language acquisition which was used to study the relationship between students' motivation, attitudes and language achievement (Gardner, & Macintyre, 1993; Ushida, 2005). The second one includes the components of the motivation model which was used to identify motivational factors (Dörnyei, 1998, Dailey, 2009).

2. Methodology

Motivation is regarded as a vital component in the process of English Foreign Language learning for Professional Purposes. The authors applied the descriptive analysis of the data collected during the survey, qualitative research to find the deep students' motives to learn English for Professional Purposes.

2.1. Sample

The survey involved 114 students of Crimean Business Institute and Tomsk Polytechnic University: 1st year (N = 60), 2nd-year (N=30), 3rd-year (N=24) students (66 females and 48 males). All the respondents have learnt English for several years. Nevertheless, 7% of them assessed their English Language Level as elementary, 71,9% as pre-intermediate and 12% as intermediate. With regard to the detailed students' self-assessment of English Knowledge, the results of the General Background Questionnaire are presented in Fig. 1.
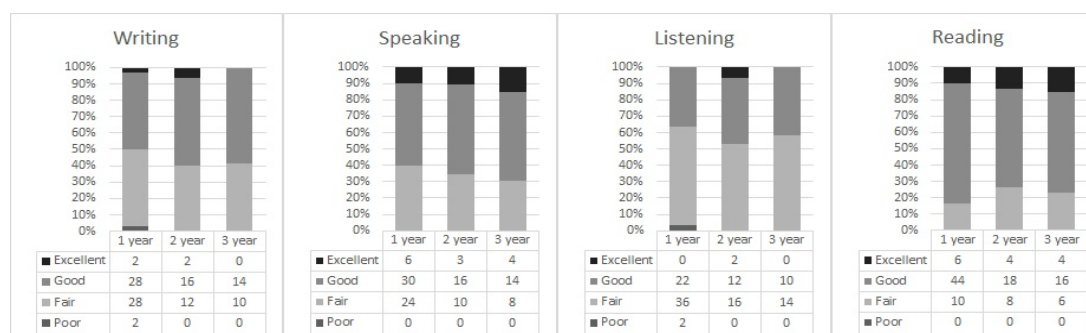

Fig. 1. Self-assessment of English Knowledge

2.2. Materials

The instruments used in the research to collect the information are a General Background Questionnaire and a Survey that includes fifteen items developed to achieve the aim of the study (see Fig. 2).

Name:					
Age:					
Gender:	Male		Female		
Profile:					
Academicyear:	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Graduate student
EFL Level	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Advanced	
Please, assess your English Knowledge:					
Writing	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Speaking	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Listening	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Reading	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	

Survey questions:

1. How long have you been studying English?

2. Why do you study English?

need for achievement	self-confidence	language use anxiety	prestige and higher salary	other (please specify)

3. *Please rank* (from *most important* to least important) the following:

intelligence	language aptitude	strategies	language attitudes	motivation	language anxiety

4. How are you going to use English in professional environment and every-day life?

5. What are the most important motivation factors for learning English?

6. What are the most effective teaching strategies for English Language Learners?

7. Which effective teaching techniques do you find the most appealing in your classroom when learning English? What are your favourite activities?

8. What is the role of your English teacher at the lessons?

a trainer	a facilitator	an instructor	other (please specify)

9. What is the role of the teacher in learning English? What features should an ideal English teacher possess?

10. Which international exams did you pass?

IELTS	TOEFL	BEC	other (please specify)

11. Why did you take the international exam(s)?

to master English	to apply for a job	to visit another country	other (please specify)

12. Have you ever been abroad? How often do you visit foreign countries?

13. Have you got friends abroad?

14. It is important for you to study English culture, traditions and business practices? Why?

15. Do you face factors which are not motivating to learn the language? What are these factors? (demotivators).

Fig. 2. General Background Questionnaire and a Survey

Three types of Survey questions were asked to collect the data: open-ended, ordinal scale and multiple-choice questions. The Survey reveals both internal and external motivation factors. Open-ended questions (4-7, 9, 14, 15) helped to clarify the students' attitudes to future job and prospects. They displayed the students' need for cultural and professional awareness, and revealed some lack of motivation factors and negative attitudes to the learning process.

The ordinal scale of Survey gave opportunity to rank the students' individual incentives to learn a foreign language in order of importance (questions # 3) and to define the main of them (intrinsic motivation).Replies to multiple-choice questions showed the teacher's role as a significant and extended the range of motivating factors to learn English for Professional Purposes.

2.3. Procedure

The data were collected in April 2016 by students - volunteers, who were informed about the purpose of research. The respondents were asked to fill out questionnaires in English or Russian. It was revealed that 59.6% of respondents completed the survey in English. The results were processed by the authors and presented for discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Self-reports

Question #2 is aimed to define the reasons for studying English: Why do you study English? Five variants have been proposed for the response: the need for achievement, self-confidence, language use anxiety, prestige and a higher salary. In addition, respondents were asked to state other reasons. Twenty two students chose *the need for achievement* (19.3%), fifty eight (50.8%), – *prestige and higher salary*, twenty four (21%) specified establishing contacts with foreigners and the need for personal correspondence, and ten students (8.8%) preferred *language use anxiety*. It may be noted that more than half of the respondents are instrumental motivated, i.e. they wish to learn a language for practical reasons, such as getting a higher salary, or success. Intrinsic motivated students focus on personal interests and contacts, as well as ambitions.

Question #3 was developed to rank thestudents' individual incentives in the order of importance: language aptitude, strategies, language attitudes, motivation, language anxiety. *Motivation* was ranked the first by 52 students (45.6%); *language anxiety* was the priority of 10 students (8.8%); *strategies* was the 18 respondents' option (15.8); *language aptitude* – 16 students (14%), *language attitudes* – 14 students (12.3%). The findings proved that the success in the learning process is closely connected with the students' motivation.

In Question #4, the respondents dwelt upon *the use of English in professional environment and every-day life*. The survey revealed that 84 students (73.7%) are well aware of their future career. They stated that they will use English at interviews, at customs, in the banks and other business institutions, in engineering activities, in business letters and different business documentation, while negotiating, speaking on the phone, meeting business partners and concluding contracts. 18 students (15.8%) expressed willingness to master English in order to listen to foreign news agencies and analyze the data, exchange rates, Stock Exchange reports, etc. Twelve respondents (10.5%) expressed intention to practice and use English for travelling abroad. The survey showed that the rest ones are integrative motivated learners. They want to learn the target language so they could better understand and get to know English-speaking people and mix up in their culture.

Questions ## 5, 9, 10, 11 were aimed at finding the most important students' motivation factors for learning English. As a result of analysis, the following main factors of motivation to learn English for Professional Purposes were singled out:1) developing English foreign language communicative competence in professional environment (instrumental motivation): students proved to be more motivated to take international exams IELTS, TOEFL, BEC to apply for a job abroad; 2) developing language skills to raise linguistic and cultural competence (integrative motivation);3) participating in students exchange programs that satisfies both professional and personal goals (combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation);4) taking up language courses (extrinsic motivation); 5) the teacher's personality.

Question # 15 helped to discover some demotivators that prevent the learning process: 1) lack of English-speaking environment (94 respondents – 82.5%); 2) unwillingness to learn grammar rules (26 respondents – 22.8%); 3) misunderstanding due to low linguistic competence (18 respondents – 15.8%); 4) curriculum restrictions: some students wish to study wider range of topics (6 respondents – 5.3%).

3.2. The teachers' evaluation

The conducted Survey contributed to the overall research and helped to answer the following research questions:

*Research Question # 1.*What types of students' motivation to learn English for Professional Purposes prevail? The results of the second and the third questions of the Survey proved that the most respondents (89.5%) are instrumental motivated, i.e. they desire to learn the target language for practical reasons, such as getting a higher salary, or gaining success. Intrinsic motivation prevails as the students focus on personal interests and contacts, as well as ambitions. 10.5%of students appeared to be integrative motivated as they expressed a strong willingness to learn English in the country of the target language, to get a job there and become a part of that society.

*Research Question # 2.*What are the main motivation factors to learn English for Professional Purposes? The globalization of the economy and industry leads to new contacts, cooperation and information exchange. Therefore, employees must possess foreign language communicative competence, which includes linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge and skills. No one doubts, English as a global language is an effective means of communication and collaboration in business, science, education, industry, and culture.

The authors of this study believe that the main motivation factorsto learn English for Professional Purposes can be divided into linguistic and extra linguistic ones. The rapid development of information technology provides many opportunities for students: distance learning, video conferencing, access to electronic libraries, authentic sources and professional websites, the use of multimedia, etc. Taken together, all these possibilities are a powerful motivator.

*Research Question # 3.*How to improve students' motivation to the foreign language communicative competence formation? What methods could be used to motivate students to learn English for professional purposes? Motivation of students to learn English for Professional Purposes is a principal factor that influences the efficiency of an overall teaching process. The nature of needs of learning a foreign language defines the strategies and activities used in teaching. The results of Survey questions # 6 and # 7 defined the most effective and appealing teaching strategies and classroom activities. The study suggests the Survey analysis in the context of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The first one is *Listening*. Most students (80%) preferred videos equipped with closed captioning that gives them opportunity to see what narrators and actors are saying and to correlate written and spoken English. It helps them see spelling and sentence construction. Hiding closed captioning during the second listening motivates students to remember the facts, professional vocabulary and encourages them to construct the narration.

The second is *Vocabulary*. The Survey showed that the most respondents' favourite activities were: creating thematic word lists or word banks (84 students – 73.7%), matching synonyms or antonyms (72 students – 63 %), matching pairs: terms and definitions (58 students – 51%), completing mind-maps (76 students – 67%), ranking words in the order of importance - ordinal scale (46 students – 40.4%), playing word games: unscramble, Bingo, Hangman, Scrabble etc. (110 students – 96.5%).

Speaking analysis revealed that 98% of students prefer different means of visualization: using flow charts, pictures, and outlines. Graphic organizers (maps, diagrams, mind-maps) require minimal language and therefore are helpful tools in teaching Economics and Engineering to English language learners. 54 respondents (47.4%) consider brainstorming to be an essential part of classroom activities. Interpersonal strategies appeared to be the priority of 74 students (65%). Group projects and cooperative learning were recognized as an efficient means of swapping, writing, and presenting ideas.

In fact only 14.3% of students (18) gave feedback on *Reading.* They mentioned only two reading comprehension activities (cloze and jigsaw) that seemed to be the most amusing for them. Thirty eight students (33.3%) consider *writing* business letters, reports and analysis to be an essential part of professional competence, but they find most of writing activities quite boring.

According to the Survey, Case Study preferences dominated (31,5%) as this method engages students into realistic business situations and provides the reality of engineering and managerial decisions. The students enjoy this activity as they learn how to analyze professional situations. Case Study is one of the most effective methods that stimulates students' thinking skills and encourages discussions.

The above-mentioned studies and findings confirm the view of the authors that visualization, cooperative learning, including group projects, and Case Study are the most effective strategies that can be used to enhance students' motivation to learn English for Professional Purposes. The teacher must select a job-related content that will develop generic skills, English foreign language communicative competence and increase professional competence.

4. Conclusions

From the outcome of the investigation it can be concluded that for foreign language learners' integrative motivation is not as important as instrumental motivation.Foreign language learners due to lack of contacts with native speakers have less positive attitudes about learning the foreign language. They are reluctant to integrate into an English speaking society and identify themselves with that society. Instrumentally motivated students feel quite confident that English will lead to an improvement in future careers. In the process of learning, positive emotions enhance the students' motivation, increase self-evaluation and may even speed up the period of study. Skillful application of the combination of teaching strategies and techniques, adroit handling of them in real-life situations, stretching through the boundaries of the curriculum as well as self-motivation of students are an essential part of effective study.

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