Role of Motivation and Attitude in Introduction and Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Libyan High Schools

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Abstract

The acceptance of English as an international language has encouraged many nations to introduce curriculums that cater for teaching of English. Learning of English in many nations has been very successful because of the cooperation that educational stake holders have provided to students and teachers. However, in other nations with very strong attachment to their native languages such as Libya, introduction of English as a new language has been a tasking process. Such nations consider introduction of English in their education curriculum as a form of neo colonialism thus very considerate in accommodating the leaning programmes. On the other hand poor motivation and negative attitude on the part of teachers and students has contributed greatly to the poor acceptance of English learning in these nations. Introducing a new language in a nation where there is an already effective and established language requires total motivation and positive attitude from the trainers and students.

Keywords: Educational stake, Motivation, Curriculum, Teaching of english, Foreign language, Attitude

1. Introduction

English language has grown to be among the most spoken languages in the world. According to Bernaus (2005), many countries in the world which have their own languages have adopted English as their second language. Most of the government institutions and offices in these countries have set English as their official language. This has been due to globalization which has necessitated a need to have a common language in the globe that can help in communication (Chun, 2010; Bidin, 2009). Schools and colleges and institutions of higher learning are some of the organizations where English is highly used and propagated. However, Africa is among the continents which have reported low levels of adopting English in educational programmes.

The adoption of English as a second language among African states has been a challenge due to existence of native languages which are deeply rooted in the language development of African communities. However, the advancements in globalization have required all nations to nature a universal language thus English has received major introductions in different schools across African continent. Libya is among these countries which are trying to provide English learning to students as a second language to Arabic. However, the process has encountered several challenges mainly among them being low motivation among the teachers and students as well as negative attitude to the learning of English.

The teaching of English was banned from schools and universities during the late 1980s. However, due to the negative consequences of this situation (Abdullah, 2006), a new curriculum for English language teaching was introduced in 2000.

Several researchers have shown that it is not easy to be proficient in second language learning. Wang (2006) regarded second language learning to be a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors. Motivation is one of the major factors affecting second language learning. Vaezi (2008) and Reimann (2001) stated that motivation has been widely accepted as a key factor which influences the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal combined with the energy to word towards that goal. Many researches consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language; it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning; it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning, (Purdie, 2003).

Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative. Some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the motivation. Some individuals might possess neutral feelings. Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning and teaching. According to Pan, Zang and Wu (2010), a successful learner is the one who possesses positive attitudes towards the target language.

However, As a result of the rapid changes around the world, there was a high demand on

more academic institutions and foreign languages to expand and get in touch with the outside world. In order to meet and cope with such increasing demand teaching English as a foreign language in Libya has become one of the necessities of everyday life (Al-Ansari, 1993). English is taught in Libya as a foreign language in post-secondary and higher education including schools, colleges, and universities (Yihong, Yuan and Ying (2007). Learners encounter many problems in acquiring EFL. Language teachers and scholars in Libya relate these problems to many factors and causes involving learning materials, teaching methods, and other related issues.

Nowadays, The Ministry of Education in Libya is responsible for creating the goals of teaching English at lower education levels such as schools in general, whilst the Ministry of Higher Education is interested with the teaching of EFL at higher education levels such as colleges and universities. English language teaching materials and textbooks in Libya is the responsibilities of both the ministries in which the four language skills are taught. The main objective of teaching English language at schools and colleges in Libya is to use the language and communicate effectively with the outside world for a better knowledge economy and social development (Douglas, 2003).

2. Motivation and attitude in learning English in Libya

One of the problems faced by the Libyan higher education sector after 1986 (American air raid) was the decision to stop teaching the English and French Languages in all the educational sectors. Consequently, the English language was phased out of school and university curricula for 10 years. In 1996, all Libyan students were again exposed to English as a foreign language at both school and university levels. English is taught as a compulsory subject at both private and public schools form. (Libyan high schools students face difficulties in learning English as a foreign language). This may be related to different causes such as the reading materials presented, economic environment, teaching methods and techniques, an Arabic-speaking environment, and unfamiliar linguistic features (Harden, 2006).).

There are many factors that might cause students' low proficiency in English. One might be attributed to students' motivation towards English language. The other one is students' attitude toward English as a second language. Gardner (1991) sees attitudes as components of motivation in language learning. Irene (2010) asserts that "attitudes are necessary but insufficient indirect conditions for linguistic attainment. Only when paired up with motivation proper do attitudinal tendencies relate to the levels of student engagement in language learning, and to attainment".

Attitude is a major variable that is considered specifically in this study, which Khan (2007) says 'is complex, and many definitions have been proposed to describe its essence (p.78).' According to Mohideen (2005) 'attitude is the concept that has probably played the most central role in the development of social psychology during the twentieth century (p.25).

Attitude has been defined by Bidin (2009) as a mental or neural state of readiness, shaped

through experience or dynamic influence on the response provided by an individual to situations and objects. Kim and Merriam (2004), define an attitude as the general feeling (ranging from positive to negative) or evaluation (good/bad) a person has towards self, other people, objects or events. With regard to learning of languages, Lopez (2007) refers to 'attitudes' as sets of beliefs possessed by learners about such factors as the target language culture and the learners' own culture. Lopez (2007) believed that attitudes are not subject to inheritance because they are internalized predispositions.

Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative. Some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the motivation. Some individuals might possess neutral feelings. Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning and teaching.

A successful learner is one who possesses positive attitudes towards the target language. Everyone agrees that high motivation and positive attitudes towards a language, its culture and people help to achieve a certain goal. Chalak and Kassaian (2010) claim that "teachers, learners and researchers will all agree that a high motivation and a positive attitude towards a second language and its community help second language learning". Therefore, Studies that were conducted on language attitude made an attempt to confirm that attitude is a crucial factor in second language learning besides intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and age (Li, 2007). Besides the importance of language attitudes in language learning, attitudes are object-specific and very sensitive to the angles of the target object. As a result, there is a possibility of coexistence of multiple attitudes towards one thing.

Positive attitudes towards a community promote other positive attitudes towards the language of that same community (Weiyun, 2006). In her study of pupils' attitudes towards language and culture, Wright (1999) used a Likert type questionnaire to scrutinize the attitudes of a large sample consisting of 898 pupils in the U.K. from both Grammar schools and Secondary schools. She focused on the pupils attitudes towards French and the French culture and found that students' attitudes were influenced by several factors such as gender, inside and outside school factors (i.e. teachers, textbooks, class activities), school type that the students attended, and international experience in which students visit the country where the target language is spoken. She claims that gender is a significant predictor of students' attitudes. Moreover, she adds that inside school influences such as teachers, textbooks, tapes and teaching assistants also have stronger influence on students' attitudes.

A combination of poor motivation and negative attitude towards teaching and learning of a particular language can present a very complicated environment to develop such a language. It can be more difficult if a country where this language is being introduced has an already functioning and effective language system that can be used by all citizens in this country. Libya is one such country where Arabic is well developed and has been used for along time in the country. Thus introducing English as a foreign language is subject to resistance in terms of poor motivation and negative attitude.

Libya is an Islamic nation and Arabic is the most used language in all sectors and services. Schools, offices and other important institution of service delivery use Arabic as the first language. There have been measures adopted to introduce English as a second learning language in high schools and other institutions of learning. These initiatives started in the 1980s when English was introduced in learning grammar and comprehensions (Irene, 2010). This seemed progressive until late in 1980s when Libya and the West developed political differences thus the learning of English was banned from Libyan schools. The learning of English was re-introduced in 2000 when a new English curriculum was included in the then Libyan educational programme. This was a step to ensure that Libya was not cut out from the rest of the world because by the start of 21st century almost all nations in the world had learned or initiated programmes to learn English as their second language.

Students in Libya lack the required motivation that should be extended in learning another language. The resources needed to teach English may be available but the drive to learn my not be there. The relations of Libya and the West have been a continuing de-motivating factor. The fact that America and other supper powers have targeted Muslim countries as potential threats to the world peace makes Libya to have the lowest motivation in adopting anything that is considered to have a western origin.

Parents, teachers and educational stakeholders may be partly to blame for not motivating the students to accept English as a second learning language so that they can open up to the world. Motivation is one of the main determinants of second or foreign language learning achievement (Jameson, 2007). On the other hand, attitude of an individual determines how that particular individual will be able to accomplish that result. Learning of English as a second learning language in Libyan high schools requires a positive attitude from the students, the teachers, the parents and all other stakeholders in the education sector.

Browsing on the main issue in the current study, Krashen's (1981) monitor model postulates that attitudes and motivation play a largely filtering role in influencing the extent to which second-language material is satisfactorily input. Krashen (1981) proposed that language aptitude relates more to conscious language learning, attitudes. In Krashen's monitor model, motivation is seen as a component of the passive-cognitive filter that screens incoming language based on the learner's motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states. Gardner's socio-educational model considers motivation and attitudes to be important because they influence how active the individual will be in learning the second language Gardner's model also proposes that two variables, motivation and language aptitude, interact with the second-language acquisition context to promote second-language proficiency.

However, in any setting, there is always a negative attitude towards introduction of an extra learning language but in order to prevail in learning a second language, positive attitude is very crucial because it strengthens the motivation to teach and learn. A successful learner is one who possesses positive attitudes towards the target language. Everyone agrees that high motivation and positive attitudes towards a language, its culture and people help to achieve a certain goal.

Motivation is the way learners set up goals and spend effort to pursue them. Studies of motivation of second/foreign language learners often refer to a distinction between two types of motivation namely, instrumental versus integrative motivation. If someone is motivated it means he or she is energized or activated toward an end. Dornyei, Csizer, and Nemeth (2006) assert that motivation is humans' behaviour, that is, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it and the effort expended on it.

Gardner (1985) defines motivation as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". In this definition motivation is described as goal-directed; the learners' immediate goal is to learn the language. Gardner proposed that in order to understand why learners are motivated, it is necessary to understand the learners' ultimate goal or purpose for learning the language. Gardner refers to this as the learner's orientation. He identified two distinct orientations for learning a language: integrative and instrumental. These orientations are part of the learner's motivation at the goal level and affect the learner's core motivation.

Integrative orientation refers to a learner's desire to learn more about the cultural community of the target language or to assimilate to some degree with the target community. A learner is integratively motivated when he/she learns a language because he/she wants to "know more of the culture and values of the foreign language group… to make contact with the speakers of the languages… to live in the country concerned" (Wilkins, 1972, p.184). Integrative motivation is defined as "learning a language because the learner wishes to identify himself with or become integrated into the society" of the target language (Gardner, 1983, p.203). Gardner's hypothesis was that interactively oriented learners were more persistently and intensely motivated than other learners. He felt that an interactively oriented learner would likely have a stronger desire to learn the language, have more positive attitudes towards the learning situation, and be more likely to expend more effort in learning the language.

Vaezi (2008) carried out another research study on motivation in language learning. In his study, 79 non-English major students from the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) were selected to complete a questionnaire reflecting their motivation for learning English. In order to determine the students' tendency towards the two kinds of motivation a modified 25-item survey was administered to undergraduate students in a university located in east of Iran. The results have shown that Iranian students had very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English and they were more instrumentally motivated.

Instrumental orientation is a more utilitarian orientation; it refers to the learners' desires to learn the language in order to accomplish some non-interpersonal purpose such as to pass an exam or to advance a career. Gardner (1983, p. 203) defines instrumental motivation as "learning a language because of someone or less clearly perceived utility it might have for the learner". More specifically, a learner is instrumentally motivated when he/she wants to learn a language "to pass an examination, to use it in one's job, to use it in holiday in the country, as a change from watching television, because the educational system requires it" (Wilkins, 1972, p.184).

In their early investigations of L2 motivation, Gardner and Lambert (1959; 1972) suggested that an individuals' motivation to learn L2 is nurtured by both attitudes toward the L2 community and the goals, or orientations, sought through the acquisition of the L2. However, many theorists and researchers have found that it is important to recognize the construct of motivation not as a single entity but as a multi-factorial one. Crookes and Schmidt (1991), and Gardner and Tremblay (1994) explored four other motivational orientations: (a) reason for learning, (b) desire to attain the learning goal, (c) positive attitude toward the learning situation, and (d) effortful behaviour. Oxford and Shearin (1994) analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models, including those from socio-psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology, and identified six factors that impact motivation in language learning: attitudes (i.e., sentiments toward the learning community and the target language), beliefs about self (i.e., expectancies about one's attitudes to succeed, self-efficacy, and anxiety), goals (perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning), involvement (i.e., extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process), environmental support (i.e., extent of teacher and peer support, and the integration of cultural and outside-of-class support into learning experience), personal attributes (i.e., aptitude, age, sex, and previous language learning experience).

The attitude of students in learning English as a foreign and second language in Libya is favourable. Seventy per cent of the high schools students have a positive attitude towards the introduction and learning of English in Libyan high schools. Though this may be attached to the need to be relevant in the global world, it still helps in the adoption of English in Libya. The rest of the students are not interested in the study of English because they are sure to get employment and live lively with the knowledge of the Arabic language. Some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the their motivation.

On the other hand, motivation to learn a second language stems from the attitude of an individual to that language. Most of the high school students in Libya are moderately motivation in learning english as a second language. Notably, the success of many people in this nations who haven't learned english decreases the motivation that the students may have towards learning english as an extra language. However, globalization is playing a crucial role in motivating libyan high schools students to study English because many new technology applications are provided in english.

3. Conclusion

Introducing a successful process of learning a foreign language is a difficult task that is subject to many internal and external factors in the nation where it is introduced. Motivation towards learning a particular foreign language as well as the attitudes of students and the education stakeholders are among the key influential factors in the success of introducing a second learning language in any organization (Reimann, 2001). The motivation and attitude levels towards English as a foreign language are moderate; not blocking the learning of

English as foreign language but also not providing the best environment for the introduction and study of the language in high schools. Education stakeholders propagating the learning of English as a second language should establish the students' motivation and attitude weak points then address them by finding appropriate methods of teaching English which are motivating and cultivating positive attitudes towards English.

Motivation and   is one of the major factors affecting second language learning. on the other hand, Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative. In this respect, Some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the their motivation. however, Few researches have been done to investigate Libyan students' Motivation and attitude towards learning English as a second language among high school. after presenting the analzysis of this study, It would be useful for Libyan teachers to develop techniques to their way of teaching   in order to improve their students' english learning ability. after warping the result of this study the researcher believe that, This study would also help Libyan teachers to understand better their students' Motivation and attitude and to find an appropriate way for teaching english. the coming part of this study will manly foucs on the summary, discussion and conclusion of the current study.

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