

Motivation in Group Cooperative Learning: A Study of Chinese University Business English Major

Jian-na WANG

Xi'an Fanyi University, Shaanxi, China

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Abstract. Motivation in second language has been a hot issue during the past twenty years. Although motivation research has made great progress, the researches on motivation in group cooperative learning are far less to meet the need of second or foreign language teaching and learning. Therefore, this paper focuses on the study of motivation in cooperative study which interview Chinese university students of business English major. And then the inference can be drawn from the study that group cooperative learning is an effective mode to improve English proficiency and English learning achievement. What's more, the research on motivation in group cooperative learning is significant in linguistic pedagogy that enlightens the English teachers to instruct the learners to master second language with correct strategy.

Introduction

Group cooperative learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students group together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. A group of students discussing a lecture or students from different schools working together over the Internet on a shared assignment are both examples of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning, which will be the primary focus of this workshop, is a specific kind of collaborative learning. In cooperative learning, students work together in small groups on a structured activity. They are individually accountable for their work, and the work of the group as a whole is also assessed. Cooperative groups work face-to-face and learn to work as a team.

In small groups, students can share strengths and also develop their weaker skills. They develop their interpersonal skills. They learn to deal with conflict. When cooperative groups are guided by clear objectives, students engage in numerous activities that improve their understanding of subjects explored. In order to create an environment in which cooperative learning can take place, three things are necessary. First, students need to feel safe, but also challenged. Second, groups need to be small enough that everyone can contribute. Third, the task students' work together on must be clearly defined. The cooperative and collaborative learning techniques presented here should help make this possible for teachers.

This paper mainly attaches importance on three questions: a) what are the motivation types of group cooperative learners; b) which motivational orientation does the learners' in cooperative group mainly perform; c) how to trigger the motivation of learners in cooperative group.

The Relative Theories of Motivation in Group Cooperative Learning

Motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. The word "motivation" is often used to describe certain sorts of behavior. A student who studies hard and tries for top grades may be described as being "highly motivated", while her friend may say that he is "finding it hard to get motivated" to study for an exam or to start an assignment. Such statements imply that motivation has a major influence on our behavior but they don't really tell us how.

Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation theory, a valuable framework for understanding motivation in school, was developed by David McClelland (1961). He found that some learners prefer challenging and

moderately difficult tasks. They attempt to succeed in them, seek feedback, and always measure their own success. McClelland's work showed important variation in the extent to which learners have and show needs for achievement. He also found that most learners could be taught to increase their focus on achieving designated results. He worked with students, providing training in which they learned to set specific objectives and measure their progress toward these objectives. His work was similar to that of other researchers who have studied ways to foster a sense of "personal agency" in learners by helping them to establish and achieve realistic goals. In David C. McClelland's research (1961), achievement-motivated people have the capacity to set high personal but obtainable goals, the concern for personal achievement rather than the rewards of success, and the desire for job-relevant feedback rather than for attitudinal feedback.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Theory

Intrinsic means "from within". If a person performs behavior for his own sake rather than for rewards or outcomes the behavior might produce, this person is intrinsically motivated. Intrinsically motivated behaviors require no external support or reinforcement. In other words, when a person does something because of interest and enjoyment, or the reason for doing it lies within the activity itself, and then the motivation is likely to be intrinsic. Thus intrinsic motivation is called self-motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the stimulation or drive stemming from within oneself. Deci (1975) defines intrinsic motivation as following:

Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. Intrinsic motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feeling of competence and self-determination (Deci 1975: 73). People are intrinsically motivated not because the activity they do brings a reward, but because doing the activity itself is a reward. The feeling of competence and self-determination are significant factors of intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic means "from the outside". The questions "What can I get if I do this thing?" and "What's the reward from my parents if I pass the exam?" reflect the extrinsic motivation. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989) states that extrinsic motivation occurs when the learner performs an act to gain something outside the activity itself, such as passing an exam is to obtain financial rewards. They pass an exam not because they want to, but because they feel they need to. They feel it is useful because there will be an outcome. In other words, extrinsic motivation is encouraged by outside force; behavior is performed because of the expectation of an outside reward. Extrinsic rewards can be used to persuade someone to do something that they would not do on their own. So there are some problems of extrinsic motivation. One problem is that extrinsic rewards do not produce permanent changes.

A recent extension of motivation research that has both theoretical and practical potential involves the study of L2 speakers' willingness to engage in the act of L2 communication. Willingness to communicate (WTC—McCroskey & Baer, 1985) can be defined as the probability that an individual will choose to initiate communication, more specifically talk, when free to do so (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). As such, WTC can be conceptualized as a goal of second language instruction, a variable that facilitates language learning itself, and an internal psychological event with socially meaningful consequences. Initiating communication represents the culmination of a network of processes at both the cultural and individual levels.

Activity Theory

Human behavior results from the integration of socially and culturally constructed forms of mediation into human activity, defined as goal-directed, motivated action. Thus, two activities might look alike but be in fact very different activities because of the motives, goals ect. of the participants. Major advance in children: joint attention and perspective taking. Similarly in adults: Activity focuses the attention of interlocutors on objects, a problem to be solved or a task to achieve.

Focus is on meaning creation in goal-directed activities. The choice of form is dependent on the

purpose and the goal of the activity. The LAD is not in the heads of individuals but in their dialogic interaction with one another. Activity theory is one necessary part in social cultural theory, which mediates the humans' external and internal world.

Group Dynamics-Bringing Up Competitiveness

Group dynamics seem to be important in SLA. Bailey (1983) records in some detail the anxiety and competitiveness experience by a number of diarists. Some classroom learners make overt comparisons of themselves with other learners. Competitiveness may be manifested in a desire to out-do other language learners by shouting out answers in class, or by racing through examinations to be the first to finish. McDonough (1978) notes that although rivalries can promote confusion, they can also serve as a stimulus for learning. McDonough also advances the interesting idea that group cohesiveness based on learners' collective rejection of pressure and acceptance failure may depress performance.

As a result of her analysis of competitiveness in different language learners, Bailey (1983) proposes a model of how the learner's self-image in comparisons with other L2 learners can either impair or enhance SLA. In the case of the latter, learners increase their efforts in order to compare more favorably with other learners, and, as a result, learning is enhanced. Where the comparison results in a successful self-image, the learner experiences positive rewards and thus continues to display effort, so learning is also enhanced.

The Methodology for the Research

Motivation has been studied for decades as an important factor of affection. The researchers find that some students lack of the initiative to learn English while others are motivated highly, which are caused by various factors. In this investigation, it presents the motivation questionnaire for the students of the vocational college business English majors based on the Motivation Test Battery or AMTB. It is aimed at investigating to business English majors' motivation in group cooperative learning. The motivation of the learners' in group cooperative learning is focused by this research, which is (a) to see whether the university business English majors are motivated to develop their English competence and whether they are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated, including identifying the main motivation types; (b) how to trigger the motivation of learners in cooperative group.

The Motivational Orientations in Group Cooperative Learning

According to the questionnaire and interview on university business English majors, the results shows that intrinsically motivated activities do better achievement than extrinsically motivated activities. Intrinsic motivation are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. Intrinsically behavior is aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feeling of competence and self-determination. As it describes, the intrinsic motivation in group cooperative learning plays an indispensable role which stimulates the students to learn English automatically.

In terms of the statistics of the questionnaire, 58.64 percent students somewhat agree that they learn English for their language interests and 16.13 percent students have strongly agreement on learning English by its interest. There are about 61.29 percent students interested in English because they like it. The statistics show that the average 93.57% of the subjects are motivated in group cooperative learning. The intrinsic motivation plays a dominant role in learning and those who have strong intrinsic motivation are ready to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a second language. They are willing to communicate. Under this circumstance, it shows that intrinsic motivation can permanently promote learning momentary, which will be greatest under conditions that foster feelings of challenge, competence and self-determination.

Extrinsic motivation is encouraged by outside force; behavior is performed because of the

expectation of an outside reward. Extrinsic rewards can be used to persuade someone to do something that they would not do on their own. In the questionnaire, it indicates that the extrinsic motivation still plays a necessary role to motivate the students to develop their English competence in group cooperative learning. However, compared with intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation makes the learners less willing to communicate in second language.

Motivation Types in Group Cooperative Learning

Interest Motivation

This interest is from hobbies and is a type of intrinsic motivation which has been studied in Gardner and Lambert's (1972) classical model. As we know, interest is the best teacher. Promoting interest in the learning task can be achieved by designing or selecting varied and challenging activities; adapting tasks to students' interest; making sure that something in each activity is new or different.

Achievement Motivation. Achievement motivation is a valuable understanding motivation at school. The learners with achievement motivation prefer challenging and moderately difficult tasks. They attempt to succeed in them, seek feedback, and always measure their own success, which help them to establish and achieve realistic goals.

Self-regulation Motivation. Learners can be endowed with appropriate knowledge and skills to motivate themselves. Motivational self-regulation involves self-management skills that help to overcome environmental distractions and completion or distraction emotional or physical needs and states.

Pedagogic Implications

Promoting Motivation in Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups in which students work together to maximize their learning, as well as their group members (Johnson & Smith, 1991a). Cooperative learning requires interaction and negotiation between members of the group. Cooperative learning has gained wide spread use in language classrooms around the world because of the positive affective classroom climate it creates and its potential for providing supportive and more opportunities for learners to use the language. To sum up, cooperation learning can bring up learners' motivation to communicate with others and to improve their oral English.

Reducing Anxiety and Constructing Expectancy-Value. If people are anxious, but allowed to affiliate, their anxiety level is reduced. Greater likelihood of success reduces anxiety and results in promoted participation and language learning. An increase in self-confidence and self-esteem will lead to increased learners' efforts in learning language and a greater willingness to take risks or to continue attempts to make one's views understood.

Providing Comprehensible Input and Improving Learners' Autonomy. Providing comprehensible input can help the learners promote their interests, correct attitude to English learning a higher motivation. Besides, achievement appears to be closely linked to self-determination. Students should do everything by themselves virtually and communicate with others actively. They should foster autonomy on English learning. The teachers should give students responsibility and help them to know that success requires efforts, so as to increase their intrinsic motivation.

Summary

As a result of the findings, analysis and discussion, the aspects of orientations, desire, attitude and effort are exactly studied. It has demonstrated that the university English majors are motivated to develop their English competence in group cooperative learning. To sum up, the Chinese university

business English majors are motivated to develop their English competence in cooperative group, which is considered as an effective way to improve their English.

Limitations of the Study

The study is designed by great effort. However, there also exist some limitations that need to be further overcome.

Firstly, the design questions don't demonstrate the motivation in cooperative group so enough, for motivation is a polyhydric individual difference.

Secondly, the scope of the study is rather small and limited which is just collected the data from one university.

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