IMPROVING THE LEARNING MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS IN ESP COURSE INSTRUCTION

Almamatova Manzura Shavkatovna
Doctorate student of Gulistan State university
Email: almamatovamanzura@gmail.com
Tel:+998915015541

Abstract: *The target goal of the current paper is to thoroughly analyze and introduce the characteristics of enhancing students' learning motivation in the acquisition of "English for Specific Purposes". Learners in the ESP classes are generally aware of the purposes for which they will need to use English. Having already oriented their education toward a specific field, they see their English training as complementing this orientation. Knowledge of the subject area enables the students to identify a real context for the vocabulary and structures of the ESP classroom. In such way, the learners can take advantage of what they already know about the subject matter to learn. An ESP program is therefore built on the assessment of purposes and needs and the functions for which English is required.*

Keywords: *ESP, learning motivation, language acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation has a great impact on the learning process. While some people learn more by outside influences, others may achieve more by their personal aspirations. Whatever the situation, everyone involved in any learning process should know how motivation affects learning. For teachers, a lack of motivation has long been one of the most frustrating obstacles to student learning. While the concept of motivation may intuitively seem fairly simple, a rich research literature has developed as researchers have defined this concept in a number of ways. Social scientists and psychologists have approached the problem of motivation from a variety of different angles, and education researchers have adapted many of these ideas into the school context. While there is a great deal of overlap between motivation theories, researchers differ in their identification of the underlying belief systems leading to motivational variation. Some theorists emphasize belief in oneself and one's competency, others prioritize goal orientation, and a third group argues that the difficulty of the task shapes individual motivation. In the current paper our aim is to provide an introduction to various theories of motivation, explain the importance of motivation for learning, and outline several practical strategies that ESP teachers can use to support and

promote student motivation in ESP course instruction. Of a fair number of existing researches, we would like to highlight four major theories of motivation. Attribution theory suggests that our actions are the result of making sense of our environment, the search for causes to perceptions, feelings and events creates a behavioral dynamic of socially constructed reality.

As a matter of fact, ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching. Such a combination is highly motivating because students are able to apply what they learn in their English classes to their main field of study. Being able to use the vocabulary and structures that they learn in a meaningful context reinforces what is taught and increases their motivation. The students' abilities in their subjectmatter fields, in turn, improve their ability to acquire English. Students approach the study of English through a field that is already known and relevant to them. This means that they are able to use what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. Thus, in ESP, English should be presented not as a subject to be learned in isolation from real use, nor as a mechanical skill or habit to be developed. On the contrary, English should be presented in authentic contexts to make the learners acquainted with the particular ways in which the language is used in functions that they will need to perform in their fields of specialty or jobs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials and methods for improving the learning motivation of students in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course instruction can vary depending on the specific context and needs of the students. Here are some common materials and methods that can be used to enhance student motivation in an ESP course:

-Authentic Materials: Incorporate authentic materials relevant to the students' professional field or area of study. This could include industry-specific texts, case studies, videos, articles, and real-world examples that connect language learning to their future career goals.

-Technology: Use technology tools such as online resources, interactive platforms, multimedia presentations, and language learning apps to make the learning experience more engaging and interactive for students.

-Project-Based Learning: Implement project-based learning activities that allow students to apply their language skills in real-world scenarios. Encourage collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity to enhance motivation and engagement.

- Role-Playing and Simulation Activities: Engage students in role-playing exercises and simulation activities that simulate real-life communication situations they may encounter in their professional field. This can help students practice language skills in a practical context and boost motivation.

-Gamification: Integrate elements of gamification into the course, such as leaderboards, badges, rewards, and challenges, to make learning more fun and engaging for students. Gamified activities can motivate students to actively participate and progress in their language learning.

-Choice and Autonomy: Provide students with opportunities to make choices about their learning path, such as selecting topics for projects, choosing assignments, or deciding on presentation formats. Giving students autonomy can increase their sense of ownership and motivation.

-Feedback and Reflection: Offer timely and constructive feedback on students' progress and performance to help them track their development and set goals for improvement. Encourage students to reflect on their learning experiences and set personal objectives to stay motivated.

-Celebrating Achievements: Recognize and celebrate students' accomplishments, whether big or small, to boost their confidence and motivation. Organize events, awards ceremonies, or showcases to showcase student work and encourage a positive learning environment.By incorporating these materials and methods into ESP course instruction, teachers can create a dynamic and motivating learning environment that inspires students to actively engage with the material, develop their language skills, and achieve their academic and professional goals.

Wilson suggests, motivation is the term to explain why we act in certain behavioral patterns at given times, and is a "force which starts and sustains our activities towards goal achieving" [6]. Motivation has both intrinsic and extrinsic causations and is often predicted on a mixture of selfdetermined and environmental conditions. Consequently, there is a distinction between performance approach goals and performance avoidance goals. Performance approach goals refer to orientation toward demonstrating high ability whereas performance avoidance goals refer to orientation towards demonstrating low ability. If a performance orientated student has high motivation without an internal interest, then it is more likely for them to adopt approaches to learning that are "surficial". This emphasizes the need in some learning situations for intrinsic goal setting rather than over-reliance on external goal setting. Surface learning is thought to be a characteristic of 'performance avoidance' students; whereas 'performance approach' students adopt a more strategic approach to learning in which intellectual achievement is valued and obligations are intended to be fulfilled. In comparison, expectancy value theory suggests that the amount of motivation or effort for a task is dependent on the expectant value of success. The fact that individuals calibrate themselves or set goals based on interpretations of past achievements is

the basis for self-efficacy theory. Fourthly, goal orientations explain how we view success give orientation toward a particular activity.

RESULTS

Improving the learning motivation of students in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course instruction can yield positive results for both students and teachers. Here are some potential outcomes of enhancing student motivation in an ESP course:

Increased Engagement: By incorporating engaging materials and methods, students are more likely to actively participate in class activities, discussions, and assignments. This can lead to higher levels of engagement with the course content and a more interactive learning environment;

Improved Language Proficiency: Motivated students are more likely to invest time and effort into practicing and developing their language skills. As a result, they may see improvements in their language proficiency, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills;

Enhanced Confidence: When students are motivated to learn and actively participate in class, they can gain confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively in English. This increased confidence can have a positive impact on their overall language learning experience;

Retention and Application of Knowledge: Motivated students are more likely to retain information learned in class and apply it to real-world situations. By using authentic materials and engaging in practical activities, students can better understand and remember the language concepts taught in the course;

Increased Academic Success: Students who are motivated to learn and actively engage with the course material are more likely to achieve academic success. They may perform better on assessments, projects, and exams, leading to higher grades and a deeper understanding of the subject matter;

Career Readiness: In an ESP course, improving student motivation can help prepare students for their future careers by developing the language skills and knowledge necessary for success in their specific field. Motivated students may be more proactive in seeking out opportunities for professional development and networking.

By focusing on enhancing student motivation in an ESP course instruction, educators can create a positive learning environment that fosters engagement, confidence, language proficiency, and career readiness among students. These outcomes can contribute to a more fulfilling and successful learning experience for students pursuing English language skills for specific purposes.

International Multidisciplinary Scientific Global Conference on
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We have stressed above that it is an awareness of need that characterizes the ESP situation. But awareness is a matter of perception, and perception may vary according to one's standpoint. Learners may well have a clear idea of the 'necessities' of the target situation: they will certainly have a view as to their 'lacks'. But it is quite possible that the learners' views will conflict with the perceptions of other interested parties: course designers, sponsors, and teachers.

As for the subject-specificity of the ESP course, so, in the ESP class, students are shown how the subject-matter content is expressed in English. The teacher can make the most of the students' knowledge of the subject matter, thus helping them learn English faster. The students' abilities in their subject-matter fields, in turn, improve their ability to acquire English. Subject-matter knowledge gives them the context they need to understand the English of the classroom. Thus, the ESP students are particularly well disposed to focus on meaning in the subject-matter field. Students approach the study of English through a field that is already known and relevant to them. This means that they are able to use what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. From the ESP teacher's perspective, it is important to note that the ESP teachers are supposed to go beyond the first stage of Needs Analysis: Target Situation Analysis which identifies key target events, skills and texts - to observe as far as possible the situations in which students use the identified skills, and analyze samples of the identified texts. As part of this process, ESP teachers generally need to be able to carry out research to understand the discourse of the texts that students use. In another case, it is essential that the teacher adopts the stance of the consultant, when teaching a much more specific course. A consultant who has knowledge of communication practices, but needs to 'negotiate' with the students on how best to exploit these practices to meet the objectives they have. The relationship is much more one of partnership. In specific ESP teaching it may be the learner who asks the questions and the teacher who responds. This role is a difficult one to adopt for any teacher, especially an inexperienced one. In many cultures it is a role that is alien to traditional views of the role of the teacher. However, where it is possible, it is a role that is very appropriate and productive with sophisticated learners who have a clear and specific set of purposes. Thus, the institutional and cultural expectations of the learners must be taken into account. One group of learners may welcome the teacher's adoption of a facilitator role; another may find it completely alien; but this does not mean that attitudes cannot change or be changed. All in all, ESP teachers do not need to master specialist subject knowledge. They require three things only:

- a positive attitude towards the ESP content;
- a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the subject area;

• an awareness of how much they probably already know [3].

This can be summed up as 'the ability to ask intelligent questions'. Many ESP teachers are surprised at how much knowledge of the subject matter they 'pick up' by teaching the materials or talking to students. On top of that, sometimes the ESP teacher may also have to negotiate in a more physical sense. Cramped classrooms often in inconvenient locations, badly ventilated or heated, with a great deal of outside noise, are only too common. Equally, the teaching may take place in workshops or on the factory ' shop floor', or on the premises of businesses and other concerns, often without such basic classroom 'apparatus' as a blackboard. The role ESP teachers are called on to play here is obviously one of adaptability and flexibility. They need to be prepared to accept such conditions as to some extent inevitable, to strive to improvise while also patiently campaigning for improvements with the sponsors.

DISCUSSION

Improving the learning motivation of students in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course instruction involves implementing strategies and techniques that aim to enhance students' interest, engagement, and enthusiasm for learning the language within a specific context or field. This discussion focuses on the importance of student motivation in an ESP course, as well as practical ways to boost motivation among learners.

Understanding the Importance of Student Motivation: Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning, as it influences students' willingness to engage with the course material, participate in activities, and persist in their learning efforts. In an ESP course, where students are learning English for a specific purpose related to their field of study or profession, motivation becomes even more critical for success.

Identifying Factors Affecting Student Motivation: Educators need to recognize the various factors that can impact student motivation in an ESP course, such as students' personal goals, interests, prior knowledge, learning styles, and perceived relevance of the course content to their future careers. By understanding these factors, instructors can tailor their teaching approach to better meet the needs and preferences of their students.

Incorporating Engaging Materials and Activities: To enhance student motivation in an ESP course, instructors can use authentic materials, case studies, real-world examples, and hands-on activities that relate directly to the students' field of study or profession. By making the content relevant and practical, students are more likely to be motivated to learn and apply the language skills in their specific context.

Providing Opportunities for Autonomy and Choice: Giving students some degree of autonomy and choice in their learning can increase their sense of ownership and motivation. In an ESP course, educators can offer students options for selecting topics, projects, or

assignments that align with their interests and career goals, empowering them to take control of their learning journey.

Offering Feedback and Support: Positive feedback and support from instructors can also boost student motivation in an ESP course. By providing constructive feedback, encouragement, and guidance, educators can help students build confidence in their language skills and feel motivated to continue progressing in their learning.

Fostering a Positive Learning Environment: Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves, collaborating with peers, and taking risks can contribute to increased motivation. Instructors can promote a positive classroom culture that values diversity, creativity, and open communication, encouraging students to actively engage with the course material.

Improving the learning motivation of students in an ESP course instruction requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique needs and goals of learners in a specific context. By implementing strategies to enhance student motivation, educators can create a dynamic and engaging learning experience that empowers students to achieve their language learning objectives effectively.

Furthermore, in ESP, English should be presented not as a subject to be learned in isolation from real use, nor as a mechanical skill or habit to be developed. On the contrary, English should be presented in authentic contexts to make the learners acquainted with the particular ways in which the language is used in functions that they will need to perform in their fields of specialty or jobs. To stimulate and motivate, materials need to be challenging yet achievable; to offer new ideas and information whilst being grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge; to encourage fun and creativity. The input must contain concepts and/or knowledge that are familiar but it must also offer something new, a reason to communicate, to get involved. The exploitation needs to match how the input would be used outside the learning situation and take account of language learning needs. The purpose and the connection to the learners' reality need to be clear. All this places high demands on the materials and great pressure on materials writers. Not surprisingly, producing good learning material gobbles up hours of preparation time. Each stage of finding suitable carrier content, matching real content to learning and real world activities, planning an effective layout, is time-consuming. Preparing new materials from scratch for every course taught is clearly impractical, even if every teacher actually had the ability.

There is no black-and-white dividing line between modifying materials, supplementing with extra input and activities, and preparing materials from scratch. In each case it is a question of degree and perspective. The ESP teacher is mainly a provider of materials - selecting material that is available, adapting it as necessary and supplementing it

where it does not quite meet the learners' needs - although in some cases it is more appropriate to use the authentic materials that learners can provide. Learner-generated materials can provide both carrier content and activities. Another way in which learners can provide carrier content is through framework materials. Thus, preparing materials benefits from a co-operative effort because the exchange of ideas, availability of different abilities and strengths, and piloting that can take place are invaluable for the quality of the final material. When the real and carrier content are matched, the next stage is to draft activities. The likely resources, group sizes, approaches to learning and target activities must be considered when selecting activities so that they are appropriate for the learning environment.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, in ESP the learners are not primarily language learners; they are or have been learners of other disciplines and this has to be a major consideration in the devising and delivering of a course. To maximize learning means activating all existing learning strategies. In this regard, variety is essential in any language class, but we feel that it is particularly important in an ESP class as there is sometimes the danger of the ESP class becoming rather a dry affair that fails to motivate learners. We need to practice a number of micro-skills in one class, we need to introduce a range of activity types and we need to vary the type of interaction taking place during the class. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners. Thus, the ESP course combines subject matter and English language teaching. Such a combination is highly motivating because students are able to apply what they learn in their English classes to their main field of study, whether it be accounting, business management, economics, computer science or tourism. Being able to use the vocabulary and structures that they learn in a meaningful context reinforces what is taught and increases their motivation.

Enhancing the learning motivation of students in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course instruction is crucial for fostering their engagement, participation, and success. By creating a supportive classroom environment, incorporating multimedia and technology, offering choice and autonomy, setting clear expectations and providing feedback, fostering intrinsic motivation, celebrating achievements, and reflecting on teaching practices, teachers can effectively motivate students to excel in their ESP learning journey. By implementing these strategies, educators can inspire students to take ownership of their learning, connect it to their professional goals, and find personal meaning in mastering English for specific purposes. Ultimately, by prioritizing student motivation in ESP course instruction, teachers

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can empower students to actively engage with the material, develop their language skills, and achieve their academic and professional aspirations.

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