

MOTIVATION IN LEARNING LISTENING COMPREHENSION BY FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

PART A: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the study

Motivation, believed as one of the most important factors determining the rate and success of second language (L2) attainment, provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (Dornyei, 2001, cited in Ha 2009, p163). Research shows that motivation is crucial for L2 learning (Dornyei, 1994). According to Oxford and Shearin (1994, cited in Ha 2009, pp.163-164), motivation directly influences how much effort students make, how often students use L2 learning strategies, how much students interact with native speakers, how much input they receive in the language being learned, how well they do on curriculum related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency level becomes, and how long they preserve and maintain L2 skills after language study is over (Ely 1986, Oxford & Shearin 1994). Particularly, toward learning listening comprehension, which is assuming a more and more important place in foreign language teaching and learning process, and is probably one of the most difficult tasks of language learners, motivation is one important element directly influencing their achievement. *“Motivation is the crucial force which determines whether the listener embarks on a task at all. The primary motive for learning a language is that it provides a means of communication”* (Littlewood, 1984:53). Brown (2000:143, 160) asserts, *“It is easy in SLL to claim that a listener will be successful with the proper motivation.”*

Having recognized the importance of motivation on learning listening comprehension, this study focuses on ***Motivation in learning listening comprehension by first-year English major students***. This study will examine the students' goals of learning listening comprehension, in other words, their tendency towards the integrative and instrumental motivation in learning listening comprehension.

2. Aims of the study

The study is to describe and examine the students' integrative and instrumental motivation towards English language learning. In other words, the study aims to determine their tendency toward the two types of motivation.

3. Research question

To what extent are the first-year English majors at HUI instrumentally or integratively oriented towards learning listening comprehension?

4. Research methodology

In this study, quantitative method was used. The data were collected via questionnaire. The modified questionnaire was based on Vaezi (2008)'s 25-item survey questionnaire which was adapted from Gardner (1985)'s AMTB and Clement et al.'s (1994).

5. Scope of the study

The study describes and examines the students' integrative and instrumental motivation towards English language learning, in particular listening comprehension.

6. Design of the study

The study consists of three parts as followed:

Part A – Introduction. This chapter discusses the rationale, aims, scope, methods, significance and design of the study.

Part B – Development consists of two chapters:

Chapter 1 - Literature Review- this chapter is intended to give some theoretical background related to motivation and listening comprehension.

Chapter 2 - The study – In this chapter, the collection instruments, data collection and data analysis and discussion are presented.

Part C – Conclusion – this chapter presents the major findings, conclusion, implications, and suggestions for further studies.

PART B: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Motivation

1.1.1 Definition

1.1.2 Gardner's motivation theory

1.1.3 Types of motivation

1.1.3.1 Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

1.1.3.2 Resultative motivation

1.1.3.3 Instrumental vs. integrative motivation

1.1.4 The role of motivation in L2 learning

1.2 Theoretical basis of listening comprehension

1.2.1. Definition of listening

1.2.2. Significance of listening

1.2.3. Different views on listening comprehension

1.2.4. Listening process

1.3 The role of motivation in learning listening comprehension

CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY

2.1 Research questions

To what extent are the first-year English majors at HUI instrumentally or integratively oriented towards learning listening comprehension?

2.2 Informants

The current research involved 30 English freshmen of DHAV6 at Faculty of Foreign language at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry. The students, both male and female, aged from 19-20 years old, have been learning English for at least 7 years. The total number of students participated in the study was 30, 22 of which were females and eight were males. Before starting their university education, all of them had to take the University Entrance

Exam (UEE), which consists of multiple choice test items mainly focusing on reading, grammar and translation. The aural-oral skills are not the focus of attention in the UEE, that is, speaking is tested indirectly and listening is not included at all. At the time the study was conducted, they had been learning listening skills as a compulsory subject in the syllabus for first-year students.

2.3 Data collection instrument

In order to collect data of the students' integrative and instrumental motivation towards learning listening comprehension, the study used a modified 25-item survey questionnaire by Vaezi (2008), which was adapted from Gardner (1985)'s AMTB and Clement et al.'s (1994). Following is the sample questionnaire by Vaezi (2008).

Accordingly, the questionnaire about integrative and instrumental motivation of the original 7-point Likert Scale format of Gardner (1985)'s Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and Clement et al. (1994) was adapted to a 5-point scale, ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. These were coded as Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5. The study investigated the students' integrative and instrumental motivation towards learning listening comprehension as followed:

Integrative motivation: there are 12 items (items 1-12, see Appendix) that would show integrative motivation toward learning listening comprehension.

Items 1-4 examine the students' integrative orientation

Items 9, 10, 11, 12 ask for the students' attitudes toward the target language group

Items 5, 6, 7, 8 ask for the students' attitudes toward the target language

Instrumental motivation: this scale includes 13 items (items 13-25) and the informants are asked to measure their utilitarian purposes for learning listening comprehension.

Items 13-25 are to assess the students' other practical goals for learning listening comprehension.

2.4 Data collection procedures

Access to the subjects was made via the relevant class teachers. During the contact with the participants, the nature of the study was explained: that is to investigate first-year English majors' integrative and instrumental motivation in learning listening comprehension. The students were ensured that all the information gained through their

answers would be kept confidential and only support for the study. For their satisfaction, they were also informed that permission had been sought to contact them from the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry. Each participant was given a 'Survey Questionnaire about Motivation in Learning Listening Comprehension'. Then, they were instructed that they simply tick the boxes which indicate best they disagree or agree with such statements to show how important each reason was for learning listening comprehension. The purpose was to give them a general view of their purposes in learning listening comprehension.

2.5 Data analysis and discussion

The data were analysed by using SPSS 13.0. Descriptive statistics of all the questionnaire items: frequency, mean and standard derivation are presented and discussed. Firstly, the study presents the results of all questionnaires in the table 2. After that, based on such results, it discusses the students' integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Finally, the study compares their integrative versus instrumental motivation toward learning listening comprehension to examine whether they are integratively or instrumentally motivated.

2.5.1 Integrative motivation

From the table 2, the mean scores of the 12 questionnaire items on the integrative motivation showed that first-year English major students were strongly motivated in questions 1 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to be more at ease with other people who speak English* (Mean = 4.36), 2 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to meet and converse with more and varied people* (Mean = 4.03), 6 - *to understand English pop music* (Mean = 3.76), and 9 - *to keep in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances* (Mean = 3.63) because they realized the importance of listening comprehension if they want to be able to be at ease with English-speaking people, to comprehend what English songs are implied and to sustain their relationship with their foreign friends.

Meanwhile, the students demonstrated their moderate integrative motivation in the questions Q8 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to know various cultures and peoples* (Mean = 3.16), Q4 - *I study English, especially listening*

comprehension to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups (Mean = 3.13), Q5 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to know the life of English speaking nations* (Mean = 3.13), Q12 - *I the Americans are kind and cheerful* (Mean = 3.13).

In addition, in comparison with other questions, Q10 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to know more about native English speakers* (Mean = 3.03), Q11 - *The British are kind and friendly* (Mean = 3.06) showed the students' low level of motivation.

Moreover, the two questions Q7 - *the more I get to know English speaker, the more I like them* (Mean = 2.90), and Q3 - *I study English, especially listening comprehension to better understand and appreciate English art and literature* (mean = 2.83), had the lowest means in integrative motivation. To sum up, with an overall mean score of 3.35, the informants involved in the study have quite high integrative motivation.

In general, all of the students agree that learning English, especially listening comprehension help them to meet and converse with more and varied people, to keep in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances, to understand English pop music, and to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups. However, the students expressed their neutral opinion when viewing British and Americans are as kind and friendly people due to their lack of contact with native speakers. In addition, when being asked about their opinion in learning English, especially listening comprehension to know about the life of English speaking nations, to get to know native English speakers, and to know various cultures and peoples, the students showed their neutral opinions, i.e. neither agree nor disagree on such statements. The reason is that they do not have a chance to communicate with English native speakers in school, and their knowledge of English speaking cultures is limited as well. Therefore, integrative motivation may be not an important drive for the first-year English major students when learning listening comprehension in particular.

2.5.2 Instrumental motivation

Based on the results presented in table 3, the process of examining the frequency distribution and mean scores of the instrumental motivation items indicates that questions

13 - *I need it for my future career* (Mean = 4.50), 15 - *it will someday be useful in getting a job* (Mean = 4.63) with the mean scores over 4.0, and questions 14 - *it will make me a more knowledgeable person* (mean = 3.93), 22 - *I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV or radio* (mean = 3.86) with the mean scores nearly 4.0 prove that the students have very high motivation. Especially, with the overall mean score of 3.55, it can come to the conclusion that first-year English majors at HUI have high instrumental motivation towards learning listening comprehension. Nevertheless, question Q21 (*an educated person is supposed to be able to listen to and speak English*) has the lowest mean score of 2.53 among all the instrumental motivation statements. The question 15(*it will someday be useful in getting a job*) has the highest mean score of 4.63. The second highest mean score belongs to the question 13 (*I need it for my future career*). Questions 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, and 25 with mean scores over 3.0 show the students' other practical purposes of learning listening comprehension. The majority of them agree with such statements. With question 20, 17 (56.67%) of 30 students express their neutral opinion, in other words, they neither agree nor disagree, that '*Language learning often makes me happy*'.

2.5.3 Integrative versus instrumental motivation

When comparing the overall mean score of all the items in integrative motivation (Mean = 3.35) with the mean score of all the items in instrumental motivation (Mean = 3.55), it can be seen that the students possess such a certain amount of being instrumentally motivated; however, they still have a high level of integrative motivation toward learning listening comprehension.

PART C: CONCLUSION

In this part, the study presents some major findings from the questionnaire, conclusion, implications for English teachers, educators and syllabus designers, and suggestions for further study.

3.1 Major findings

The results of the study showed that the first-year English major students at Ho Chi Minh University of Industry participating in the study had various goals of learning listening comprehension. Among the reasons of learning listening comprehension listed in the questionnaire, the most common goals they set when learning listening comprehension are: it will someday be useful in getting a job (Mean = 4.63); I need it for my future career (Mean = 4.50); to be more at ease with other people who speak English (Mean = 4.36), to meet and converse with more and varied people (Mean = 4.03); it will make me a more knowledgeable person (mean = 3.93); I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV or radio (mean = 3.86); to understand English pop music (Mean = 3.76); to keep in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances (Mean = 3.63).

Moreover, they possessed a higher degree of instrumental motivation (Mean = 3.55) than the integrative one (Mean = 3.35). The first-year English major students did not know whether they have instrumental or integrative orientations, but might just unconsciously select practical reasons of learning listening comprehension listed in the questionnaire. In general, they have realized the importance of English language, especially listening comprehension for their jobs in the future time.

Also, based on the responses in the questionnaire, one of the factors demotivating the first-year English students in learning listening comprehension is that they did not have much knowledge of English art and literature. Therefore, they learn listening comprehension not because of better understanding and appreciating English art and literature. Another problem is that they did not realize the importance of being able to listen to and speak English (question 21: an educated person is supposed to be able to listen to and speak English).

3.2 Conclusion

To sum up, the findings of the study present that the first-year English major students at HUI were more instrumentally than integratively motivated. Findings from the quantitative data of the study demonstrate that some instrumental and integrative goals (or motivation): for future job development, being more at ease with other people who speak English, meeting and conversing with more and varied people encourage more and more students to learn English, especially listening comprehension.

3.3 Implications

The study gives some implications from the above-discussed findings:

English teachers, especially those teaching listening comprehension should be active to recognize students' instrumental motivation. Then, teachers focus students on practical listening skills so that they can improve their English skills, especially their communicative skills that are essential for their future jobs.

Teachers, educators and syllabus designers should suggest listening textbooks which focus on practical, real communicative situations based on the students' need of meeting and conversing with more and varied people.

Developing students' interest in English art, culture and literature by providing more attractive and motivating listening texts about culture, lifestyle, geography, literature of English-speaking countries through visual, audio, and written forms, creating presentations in which students can be active and confident to share their knowledge of English culture, art and literature in English listening class.

Encouraging students to participate in English –speaking clubs, communicate with native speakers to practice listening and speaking skills.

3.4 Suggestions for further study

Due to time limitation, the study only presented the first-year English major students' integrative and instrumental motivation in learning listening comprehension, and did not focused much on factors demotivating or affecting students' motivation in learning listening comprehension. For further study, much work will be done on factors affecting students' motivation in English language learning, especially listening comprehension so

that both English teachers and language learners will fully understand all the aspects of motivation, including demotivating factors or what affects motivation in learning listening comprehension.