
Factors affecting Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance

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Abstract

Motivation and anxiety are very crucial aspects for learners in general and specifically when acquiring another "second or foreign" language. Therefore, giving great attentions to these aspects is essential to ensure progress and success. Particularly, there are different factors that may influence Omani learners' motivation and anxiety. Therefore, the present research paper investigates the factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance. The present research paper used semi-structured interview to collect the data and address the research question. The sample size consists of 10 lecturers teaching English language in Oman. Additionally, the obtained data were transcribed then read and the data were reviewed, in order to attain the general sense meaning. Next, the researcher coded and explored the interview information; this was followed by analysis on the interview results. Moreover, the responses were compared, involving the participants and the identified common themes. The findings provided an insight on the factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance among Omani learners.

Keywords— motivation, anxiety, factors, affects, learners, interview, Speaking Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation and anxiety are crucial for learners' academic success (Muro et al., 2018). Academic performance is significant because it has a significant impact on future success (Kumaraswamy, 2019). The goal of achievement motivation is to succeed or prevent failure by achieving a certain end result that is attained because of a person's traits. In truth, the educational process depends heavily on motivation. Positive motivation can operate as a compensatory factor if abilities are not high enough. However, even a high degree of aptitude cannot make up for a lack of motivation to pursue education (Guo et al., 2015). The relationship between the learner's internal activity and the goals they strive to achieve is what drives instructional activity. The learner's acceptance of the learning goals and objectives as personally significant and necessary is how motivation in learning is communicated (Rana & Mahmood, 2010).

Eysenck's notion of careful monitoring emphasizes that anxiety can also have a negative impact on academic achievement. Learners' attention mechanisms are less effective when they are anxious, and processing efficiency is more dependent on attention control. This clarifies how anxiety affects learners' cognitive and attentional processes. Accordingly, anxiety may have a negative impact on academic performance (Eysenck et al., 2007). Learning performance is affected by both affective and cognitive anxiety. If learners are given the skills to handle challenging circumstances in their academic lives, their performance will increase. If kids can manage their emotional anxiety, they will perform better (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Among graduates, motivation and anxiety are among the factors that hinder them from achieving good performance. In the context of Oman, such factors

reflect the quality of performance of Oman learners in speaking English performance.

Motivation in learning can influence what, when, and how people learn, and therefore it is important (Yu, Zhou, Zheng, Zhang, Cao, & Li, X 2019). In this regard, learners who are motivated tend to partake in activities that they feel will assist their learning, while those who are not, are usually unsystematic in showing learning effort. In language and linguistics domain, motivation has been deemed crucial. Accordingly, Namaziandost, Neisi, Nasri and Heidari-Shahreza (2019) mentioned three key factors that describe the speed of learning of second language acquisition (SLA) learner as follows: age, personality, and motivation. Among these three, motivation has been regarded as the most vital. In Masgoret and Roshandel, Ghonsooly and Ghanizadeh (2018), motivation was linked to second language achievement. It was reported in Gedik and Toker (2018) that nearly all (99%) language learners with strong motivation demonstrated the ability to attain a judicious working knowledge irrespective of their language aptitude.

Suhag et al. (2016) described a few motivating factors on learners' behavior and learning. As was already established, motivation sets out particular objectives for people to pursue and guides behavior in that direction. As a result, motivation affects the decisions made by learners. It also increases the time and effort put into predicting whether a particular learner would pursue a challenging subject with zeal or listlessly. Since motivation affects how learners begin and complete their activities, it has a significant impact on their learning and accomplishment (Liu, T.Y. and Chu, Y.L., 2010). Similar to how it speeds up cognitive processing, motivation affects how information is processed. As a result, rather than only focusing on the learning activities, learners are motivated to understand and research the subject.

The importance of anxiety in relation to academic achievement is stressed by Eysenck's idea of close monitoring. Learners' attention mechanisms are less effective when they are anxious, and processing efficiency is more dependent on attention control. This clarifies how worry affects learners' cognitive and attentional processes. Thus, anxiety might have a negative impact on academic achievement (Eysenck et al., 2007). Affective and cognitive concerns are two things that can impair a learner's performance. If learners are given the skills to handle challenging circumstances in their academic lives, their performance will increase. Learners will perform

better if they can manage their emotional anxiety (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013).

Muhammad Khan (2020) asserts that learners who believe their community speaking abilities are lacking typically worry. Babakhouya (2019) identified six potential factors, including interpersonal or personal influences, learner beliefs about language acquisition, teacher beliefs about English instruction, relationships between teachers and learners, classroom practices, and language assessments, as potential causes of language anxiety in the context of speaking English as a second language. But up until this moment, Raju & Tan's (2017) findings stood out as the most significant. The dread of failing an exam, contact aversion, and exam anxiety were the three factors that were found to be the three causes of language anxiety. These three factors served as the foundation for the development of a 33-part assessment scale for foreign language classroom anxiety. Several researchers looked at the anxiety connected to learning the English language using the same measure, and they also looked at how anxiety affected language learning in various situations (Dewaele, J.M., Petrides, K.V. and Furnham, A., 2008).

1. Research Objective

The present research paper's objective is to investigate factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance in Oman.

2. Research Question

The present research paper investigated the factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance. It tries to answer the following question:

- 1- What are the factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance?

III. METHODOLOGY

The research paper employed qualitative method. This method is appropriate for this research to investigate the factors affecting Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance in Oman. The research paper used semi-structured interview as a research instrument which is frequently used in applied linguistics studies to obtain detailed information about the phenomena (Cohen et al., 2007) and it is described as a face-to-face encounter with the goal of getting an in-depth perception (Piaw, 2016).

Moreover, the research paper employed 10 English language lecturers and all of them teach English for Omani learners. The obtained data were transcribed then read and the data were reviewed, in order to attain the general sense meaning. Next, the researcher coded and explored the interview information; his was followed by analysis on the interview results. Moreover, the responses were compared, involving the participants and the identified common themes.

IV. RESEARCH FINDING

The data obtained through the four interview questions, what are the common factors that affect Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance, What is the main source of these factors, How do these factors affect speaking English performance and what are effective solutions to overcome these factors among Omani learners is to investigate the factors affecting Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance in Oman, the lecturers shared their opinions regarding these factors and the finding showed the following:

The finding regarding first interview question showed that, learning atmosphere in the classroom, effective teaching, and effective utilization of methods by teacher, relevant techniques, tools and materials. The lecturers also mentioned that effective classroom environment, the use of unique teaching techniques during training, appropriate resources, and the ability to adapt learners to the lesson, could increase the learners' achievement. According to the interviewed lecturers, Omani EFL learners appear to have high levels of speaking anxiety. This problem, which is mainly cognitive, was manifested by their obsession towards performance and high expectations. Also, learners had fear towards negative feedback, poor linguistic knowledge. Such problems are attributed to the nature of education in Arab countries.

The finding regarding second interview question showed that, motivation to speak English language is an affective factor that negatively influences language speaking. They additionally mentioned various sources of motivation, based on what they know. Among these factors include: English as a language, classroom methods, assigned tasks, activities, family background, Parents, and the desire become part of the English-speaking communities. Based on the experience of the interviewed lecturers, among the sources of self-confidence are: experience, self-awareness, innate

factors, preparation, coaching, social support, trust, performance accomplishments, and competitive advantage. Foreign language speaking anxiety was also highlighted by the lecturers. They stated this issue as a major one as it greatly affects the development of learners' speaking skill. Anxiety refers to the sense of discomfort and this feeling causes learners to avoid speaking the target language. In this regard, fear of making mistakes has been mentioned as the most significant cause of foreign language speaking anxiety.

The finding regarding third interview question showed that, the lecturers generally emphasized the beneficial influence of motivation on English speaking skills. Indeed, success and motivation have a positive feedback loop where high motivation promotes successful learning and high motivation promotes successful learning. As indicated in Fu (2018), both researchers and teachers concur that motivation has a significant impact on the success of learning a foreign language. According to the professors who were interviewed, adult learners, especially those who lack motivation, seem to have certain difficulties when speaking English. According to them, the center of the learning process should be the learner. As a result, they suggested the use of motivating situations when learning, as it has been discovered that "motivated" learners work noticeably better. They also suggested using different teaching methods in the classroom.

The lecturers who were contacted acknowledged that anxiety has a negative impact on learners' oral presentations. One in particular highlighted the detrimental effects of worry on learners' spoken communication both within and outside of the classroom. Last but not least, being afraid of criticism is linked to worries about potential criticism from others. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to be aware of the anxiety experienced by learners and to make an effort to create a low-anxiety learning environment. Therefore, it is necessary to develop new strategies and techniques for dealing with speaking issues caused by anxiousness.

The finding regarding fourth interview question showed that, they identified the importance of speaking English to learners the majority of the time, and that the more the learners hear the teacher speak the target language, the more comfortable they get with it. However, they acknowledged the difficulties involved and emphasized the need for specific instructions to be given in the target language so that learners could easily comprehend the objectives of a lesson or a grammatical rule. The lecturers also emphasized the value of role

acting in class because it can greatly enhance learners' oral skills, especially their speaking abilities. Thus, they suggested encouraging learners to take on roles they find enjoyable. It was also advised to watch movies with English subtitles.

Based on the responses, this paper came to the conclusion that providing proper resources and speaking English could increase learners' interest levels. The efficiency of the learners can also be increased by using aspects from core disciplines while creating speaking activities. Additionally, the lecturers were convinced that by using the right activities, learners' enthusiasm in speaking English would grow. Additionally, speaking activities and English camps would motivate learners to use and practice the language, which would pique their interest in learning it better. However, the lecturers suggested implementing these exercises as part of the learners' enrichment and improvement programs. Notably, the employment of remedial attention or enrichment programs may allow learners to regain their linguistic proficiency while also enticing them to utilize the language.

V. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This research paper is important since it is still relatively uncommon to find studies on the variables influencing the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance in Oman. This research paper therefore explored the elements influencing the motivation and anxiety of the Omani learner on speaking English performance in the context of Omani learners setting and identified their strengths and shortcomings. In light of this, the research presents a number of contributions, notably to the academic field. The research article offers a thorough understanding of the variables influencing the motivation and anxiety of the Omani learner's performance when speaking English. The topic at hand was covered and addressed in this paper since previous relevant works have suggested the necessity for more empirical research.

VI. CONCLUSION

The participants indicated the need for English lecturers to adapt their roles in teaching and be flexible as to be able to play various roles, and for this reason, lecturers were facing challenges. These lecturers are seen to have the ability to get rid of the factors affecting

the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance. For practitioners of English, speaking performance requires them to gather empirical needs-assessment data in order to allow them to generate or adapt materials so that certain identified needs are fulfilled. Among the duties of English lecturers include designing modules and improve the performance of learners. Factors affecting the Omani learner's motivation and anxiety on speaking English performance in Oman were reflected by the responses provided by the paper participants. Based on the data provided by the lecturers, there is an urgent need to improve the speaking syllabus so that it satisfies the speaking needs of learners.

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