MOTIVATION RESEARCH IN THE EFL CLASSROOM OF THE UKRAINIAN ARMY OFFICERS

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Abstract. This article examines the role of existing motivational patterns in the academic pursuits of senior AFU Officers representing older age group of learners. There is evidence on the positive effects caused by various existing motivations to enhancing FL proficiency in the Ukrainian Army with instrumental incentives being predominant. The research has been aimed to analyze existing data on short-term and long-term motivators for low and upper FL proficiency groups of older learners. It might be of importance to military educational experts catering needs of Ukrainian Army officers pursuing academic and professional goals for further EFL course development.

The issue under analyses is arising from increased frequency of a decline in FL acquisition among NATO officers. It has been suggested that the British army as well as the USA Defense institutions began to view the situation as a serious problem [1]. To manage the difficulties associated with FL (foreign language) proficiency there have been launched a number of initiatives aimed to accelerate the development of foundational and higher-level expertise in strategic languages for DoD personnel by leveraging institutions of higher education [2]. Hence, language skills are being seen as an asset and the government is responsible for their wider value to society and security. From this perspective, Ukrainian government seeks to implement FL training policy as a core competence among the military, though the process is getting very slow, encumbered by a variety of challenges. Pursuing NATO policy and implementing its tasks could not but reflect on the increase in instrumental motivation among the AFU (Armed forces of Ukraine) officers. It naturally derives from the desire to obtain something practical or factual from the study of a foreign language. This also implies that there might be age differences in motivational orientations, when older students are seeking external rewards such as skills in a specialized field [3].

Regarding a significant demand in the AFU officers possessing higher level of English language proficiency (level two and three according to STANAG FL proficiency scale) there are more instrumental options to fulfill, such as taking a long-term professional course overseas and within the native country under the guidance of a NATO instructor, with the further dissemination of skills gained. Another option is to take part in workshops, seminars, read lectures abroad, make speeches at the conference meetings, summits as well as participating in negotiations without the third parties to avoid any misinterpretation. The latter might be of crucial importance for the national security, defense issues as well as defense procurement and contracting. All mentioned above pragmatic options have to be transferred from a challenge to an instrumental benefit by the instructor in a classroom setting especially among senior officers.
With *instrumental/extrinsic* motivation, the purpose of language acquisition and learning becomes more pragmatic, such as meeting the requirements for course graduation, specifically attaining higher level of FL proficiency, being posted to a new place of service, getting money bonuses based on the language ability, international duty trips, opportunity to take part in a peacekeeping or peace support mission which is frequently associated with financial benefits and career opportunities rather than personal growth.

When it comes to the Army there are various *instrumental* motivation options to immerse oneself into a natural speaking setting or interact with native speakers. Apart from duty trips mostly associated with continuity professional training as well as experiencing daily routine overseas, there are some opportunities on the spot. Particularly, the latter are associated with the visiting NATO instructors and lectures under the auspices of the “NATO” or “EU Regions Week” events, as well as various professional training courses provided by the NATO officers in Ukraine as a part of assistance programs. It is estimated by the AFU officers to be a challenge as well as an opportunity to cooperate with the native speakers. Therefore, there must be more attention to be paid to amplifying the intrinsic motivational pattern, especially for those officers who pursue continuity in their FL proficiency studies.

*Instrumental* motivation is often the characteristic of a foreign language acquisition, where there is little social integration of the learner into a community using the target language that takes place, as in the National Defense University setting or any other Higher Military Educational Institution. In contrast to the instrumental motivation there is the form of motivation referred to as *integrative* motivation related to active indulging in the cultural background of another region or country.

These approaches to evaluating the role of inner/intrinsic motivation in their academic pursuits of adult students are not exclusive. The effects of external rewards and intrinsic motivation in education have been previously investigated be Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (2001). Data received in classroom settings has been focused on various motivational patterns, particularly, setting the deadlines, delivery of evaluation, offering the rewards and how these events affect such personal concepts as perception of competence and self-determination. The research suggested that verbal rewards provided sufficiently to students can enforce intrinsic motivation [4].

Most recent studies concerning performance on reading tasks suggest that satisfaction derived from the reading task itself along with the expectancy for success are the strongest predictors of reading performance. Pedagogical implications include assigning reading tasks designed to create a sense of accomplishment to sustain students’ *intrinsic* motivation to read in English [5]. Motivation is important as well as the more motivated person is the faster personal language skills are being enforced. Though older learners being quite aware of that still require more prompt to keep learning going.

Low proficient learners at the initial stages of FL acquisition are focused on the *instrumental* incentives rather than *inner/intrinsic* motivation. One solution is to add more logical pattern to FL learning, sometimes even simplifying the language concept. For instance, outline general rules, grammar summary charts, tables, finding common reading concepts and writing clichés to distribute language complexity into simple models at the lower proficiency level and logically reveal its multiple facets within the context of further FL training. This process enables the students to understand why certain rules or procedures occur in the language of study and, consequently, encourage inquisitiveness in them. It is essential to prompt the student
in learning to develop self-confidence in identifying and correcting his/her own mistakes.

For the majority of older students it seems to be a panacea to continue their FL training at the language course in the native speaking environment abroad. They rely on socialization within the native speaking community or integration in the international classroom setting to make them learn and comprehend FL better, to improve speaking fluency and extend their vocabulary, respectively.

Research findings indicate that language learning and socialization is a lifelong process as we enter new communities of practice in which new ways of acting, communicating, and thinking are required and new codes, registers, genres or literacies are given priorities over others [6]. Of course it cannot but positively affect FL proficiency.

To target efficient language learning output it is indispensable for a student to plunge oneself into a natural speaking communicative environment while reducing the amount of artificial sociocultural communicative environment. Patricia A. Duff (2007) explains that social interaction contextualized within particular routine activities is a crucial aspect of cultivating communicative competence in one’s first or additional languages and knowledge of the values, practices, identities and stances of the target group [6].

Inner motivational factors as well as integrative motivation imply more irrational in contrast with the empirical instrumental factor. Expectancy, determined by the perceived probability of success, sense of ability, effort and valence involving the value of obtaining a goal are the crucial constituents of intrinsic/inner motivation for adult learners [7]. When it comes to high proficient EFL learners, instrumental motivation is being replaced or sidelined by inner motivation within the framework of continuity in FL acquisition.

The AFU officers at the pre-intermediate level up to upper-intermediate level of FL acquisition tend to seek for continuity in communicative language competence themselves, being absorbed with the process of intellectual activity, its variety, to avoid FL attrition and all four basic skills to be enhanced [8, 9]. At this point, the research on intrinsic motivation could be extended to the classroom. This is an important stage to outline inner/intrinsic motives, which turn an educational process into coherent and purposeful lifestyle affiliated with continuity training. FL instructors might employ various techniques and approaches to improve motivational pattern for classroom activities.

One of the most effective and frequently applied methods in the EFL classroom setting is communicative approach. In the communicative approach, the teacher’s role has changed when compared to previous traditional teaching methodologies. The teacher acts as a facilitator in the learning process, and some of the responsibilities attributed to him are: setting the communicative context to the lesson, managing learners and their creative opportunities, monitoring learning and providing constructive feedback, maintaining learner’s motivation [10, 11].

In the groups where learners experience continuity in FL acquisition there is another challenge of motivating students to refreshment and further upgrading their FL skills. One of the options is to attribute FLSP instruction to the general FL course. The intermediate and upper-intermediate groups under consideration are rather more targeted at building FLSP competence, military and defense in particular, as well as, training business English skills for civilian defense personnel. It naturally derives from the position the students occupy, responsibilities and career prospects as well as
growing need in English proficient personnel in the Defense to cooperate without the third parties such as interpreters.

Most student-officers strive for more specific vocabulary to be elicited in the classroom setting. Therefore, the general FL vocabulary is in the course priority, considering that general vocabulary has multi-area of application as well as fundamental for any vocational topic [12]. Similar to business discourse, military discourse comprises clichéd sentences and set phrases, while its lexical units are semantically attributed to particular military branches. It renders impossible to include all army specific vocabulary units in the course curricula.

In order to help learners to improve their communicative competence, there must be more attention to be paid to molding personal opinion upon crucial controversial issues related to higher language proficiency levels. Whereas instructors should foster the students in their comprehensive thinking, pondering and speculating on even minor challenging area, for instance, new research data in the realm of Defense, Warfare innovative developments, relevant information on ongoing conflicts, paradoxical facts on the Army active service around the world. Bringing military vocabulary into focus will certainly contribute to motivating students at the pre-intermediate and upper levels.

Compared to low FLSP proficiency groups where grammar competence and general English lexis are predominant fundamentals. It improves learners’ ability to inference general information and, at least, partially comprehend briefings, instructions, orders, radio communication messages in written or oral form. Though depending on the task, lack of military or business vocabulary might stipulate facts distortion or semantic incoherence within the military discourse, where focusing on details often prevails over the general comprehension.

Hence, it is one of the crucial ambitions to master FLSP vocabulary to almost all learners under study. This FLSP course focuses on leadership and fosters military personnel to pursuit a promotion higher than an average deployment rotation in support of contingency operations. The communicative group activities in abundance along with the task-based instruction relying on FLSP leads to successful goals implementing.

Although collaboration is of a great benefit to older learners we cannot underestimate positive effects of competitive classroom activities. For adult learners able to compete wisely, identify the problems and assess their weak points, reconsider learning strategies, reset their goals and, consequently, evolve in FLSP acquisition. Shani Shillingford and Nancy J. Karlin emphasize that certain motivational techniques can produce different results depending on how they are used, as well as the individual student [3].

Long-term motivators are required when practicing grammar, reading and writing skills better comprehension and immersion into the subject matter. For instance reading is performed much better when done in pairs or a group rather than in front of the whole class, accordingly there is a modern trend to train reading skills in cooperation and avoid any intimidating environment.

The given study has focused on the role of existing motivational patterns in the academic pursuits of senior AFU Officers representing older age group of learners. Thus, older adults were primarily instrumentally motivated to improve FL proficiency in the Ukrainian Army. These motivational factors included gaining a wide range of benefits in career performance, professional growth as well as integral motivation that implies overseas exposure to a natural speaking environment for further studies. However, other factors such as personal development, active participation in task-
based learning, excitement from experiencing something new, challenging and competitive tasks, interest in a subject, also served as determining factors for military learners to perform better in the classroom or decisions to enroll in continuity program of FL acquisition in Ukraine.

The outcomes of the study suggest that instrumental, integral and inner motivational patterns have to be rationally applied and amplified at each stage of EFL course study. Therefore, there must be a clear comprehension of short-term and long-term motivations to foster Army officers to continuity in gaining EFL proficiency. As a result more attention is to be paid to working out techniques as well as guidelines and legal environment for the AFU officers to be fostered into continuity in FL acquisition within the classroom setting through intrinsic motivational patterns.

References: