<Abstract>

Students' Motivation for Academic Literacy Course: The Case of the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Erasmus A. Msuya
(HUFS)

This study sought to find out the university students' motivations for enrolling for academic literacy courses at the University of Dar es Salaam. First year undergraduate students were taken as target population from which a sample of 567 students was picked. This report begins with the notion of motivation for learning a language, the it introduces the study in terms of respondents' profile after which it presents the students' option for Communication skills course, known as CL 106 (which is introductory English for Academic Literacy course), followed by their motivation and then demotivation for the course. The third section is a conclusion.

I . Introduction

The students' intentions that lie behind learning any new language (or an aspect or skill of a language) vary from simply wanting to use the language as a means for social ends, such as conversational purposes and communicative situations to needing it for developing professional skills geared toward a specific purpose. English for Academic Purposes (EAP), often identified as a sub-category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is described by Bernard Coffey (1984) as a student's need for "quick and economical use of the English language to pursue a course of academic study" (p.4). The intentions or motivation for learning a second (or even academic literacy) has been identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning the language (Crookes and Schmidt 1991). Considerable research has been done in the areas

of student attitudes and motivation. Gardner and Lambert's (1972) pioneering research categorized learner's motivation into two types: "instrumental," which stresses "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language," (p. 132) and "integrative," which stresses "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group"(p.132). Whatever the motivation type, what cannot be disputed is the fact that motivation is an important variable when examining successful language acquisition, which is why this study was done to find out students' motivation (and lack thereof) for learning academic literacy (CL 106) within English as a Foreign Language context in a Tanzanian Public University.

Ⅱ. The Study

a) The Study Respondents

In this study, a total of 567 CL 106 students of 2008/09 cohort were asked and accepted to take part out of which 44 were men and 45 women. One did not indicate their sex. Of these 445 students returned the questionnaire administered to them. Of these 231 (51.9%) were males and 201(45.1%) were females while the remaining 13 (2.9%) did not indicate their sex.

In terms of age all the student respondents were of the age ranging between 20 and 30 years. The details of their ages are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Age Profile of Student Respondents

Age Range (in Years)	Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
20 and under	16	3.6
Between 21 and 29	341	76.6
30 and above	67	15.1
Not indicated	21	4.7
Total	445	100.0

From Table 1 one can infer that most of the respondents were adolescents with age range between 20 and 29 and only 67 (15.1%) would classified as

adults. 4.7% chose to conceal their ages.

Regarding their specialties 111 (about 24.9%) were studying in departments with humanities biases (language, literature, cultural heritage and fine and performing arts) and 299 (about 67.2%) were from other departments belonging to the then Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (now College of Arts and Social Sciences). 12 students did not indicate their departments. Furthermore, the grand majority of these students (94.2%) had had Kiswahili as their medium of instruction in primary education while only a small number (4.3%) indicated to have attended English medium primary schools. The remaining (less than 1%) indicated Korean (they were foreign students).

b) The Students' Option for CL 106 Course

CL 106 is a compulsory course to all firs year students at the University of Dares Salaam. The students were first asked through an interview if they would have opted for CL 106 if it were an optional course. Their responses are as summarized in Figure 1.

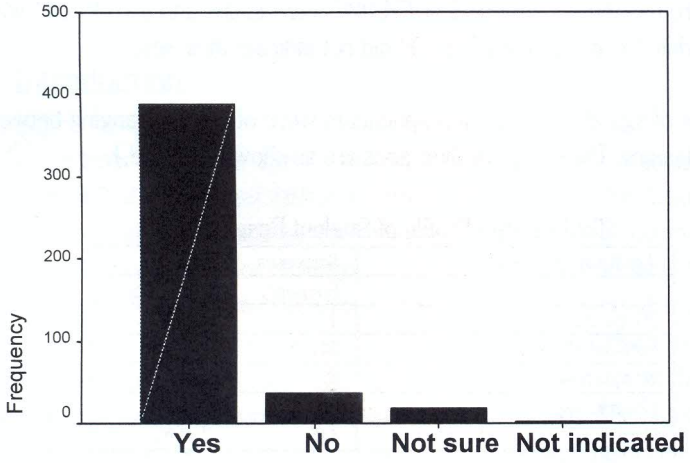


Figure 1: Students Option Regarding Opting for CL 106 Course

As revealed in Figure1, 387 (87%) students said they would, 37 (8.3%) said they would not opt for the course and 6 said they were not sure. Such a grand majority of respondents indicating their positive inclination towards the course shows that CL 106 is of high relevance to the students' academic literacy needs. A positive attitude of students towards any academic course they are taking is crucial if they are to benefit from it. Learners (particularly adults and adolescents) have strong beliefs and opinions about how their instruction should be delivered. The beliefs they have are usually based on previous learning experiences and the assumption that a particular type of instruction is the best way of learning for them. Ajzan (1988) views such beliefs as attitudes which are "a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event" p.4. Tarone and Yule (1989) emphasize the importance of taking into consideration learners' preferences determined by their beliefs about language learning, which have been shaped by their previous educational experience. Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages. Karahan (2007, p.84) adds that "positive language attitudes let learner have positive orientation towards learning English". In that sense, attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they would appear to influence students' success or failure in their learning.

Some studies have been carried elsewhere in this aspect. The study by Yorio (1986) showed that international students learning ESL in a highly communicative program at an English speaking university attributed their failure to succeed in language learning to an instructional approach that ran counter to their beliefs about the best way for them to learn. The instruction which they received was based on the communicative approach without due attention to language form, corrective feedback, or teacher centred instruction. In another survey by Tamini and Shuib (2009) of Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology students' attitude towards learning the English language, the data revealed that most of students had positive attitudes towards the social value and educational status of English. In addition, the findings showed the students' positive orientation toward the English language.

c) Students' Motivation for Opting for the Course

A further follow up question asked them to explain the reasons for their positions. The core of the question was to find out the motivation of the students for opting (or not) for the course. Motivation in any language learning in any specific topic is very important as it is about "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they exert in that respect" (Keller (1983, p.389, quoted by Brown 2000, p.160). Gardner further adds, "if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc" (Gardner, 2006, p. 243). The students' motivation for opting for CL 106 responses are as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 : Students Motivation for Opting for CL 106

S/n	Reasons	Frequency	Motivation Type
1	To improve interpersonal communication	127	Instrumental
2	To Improve reading and writing (e.g. note-taking skills)	113	Instrumental
3	To expand knowledge of English language	104	Instrumental
4	It is important for mastering other subjects/courses	49	Instrumental
5	To improve self-expression and English usage	39	Instrumental
6	To gain skills of academic reports and presentation	28	Instrumental
7	To Improve grammar and usage	27	Instrumental
8	English is used for international communication	15	Global
9	To improve confidence and fluency	14	Instrumental
10	To be equipped with job-application skills	10	Instrumental
11	It is the easiest of all courses (can uplift GPA)	7	Instrumental
12	No reason given	6	
13	It is interesting for it involves stories	2	Intrinsic
14	To gain study and library use skills	2	Instrumental
15	To improve extensive reading habit	1	Instrumental
16	For market access	1	Instrumental
17	To gain an art of argumentation	1	Instrumental
	Total	546	

Table 2 shows that a total of 546 responses were given regarding this question. This includes 6 respondents who gave no reason for their opting for

the course. One thing that stands out above all is the frequency of instrumental motivation, which occurs 15 times in the list of 17 reasons enlisted (94% of all reasons). This shows that students enrol into communication skills course for its instrumental value in helping them gain command in various communicative purposes. A learner is said to be instrumentally motivated when he/she wants to learn a language "to pass an examination, to use it in one's job, to use it in holiday in the country, as a change from watching television, because the educational system requires it" (Wilkins, 1972, p.184).

The most famous reason among the instrumental motives is for general interpersonal communication (with the highest frequency of 127 responses (81.4% of all the responses). Under the same category are the third reason "To expand knowledge of English language, with 104 respondents; the fifth reason, "Improves self-expression and English usage (49 respondents); and the seventh, "To Improve grammar and usage (27 responses). General interpersonal communication is the main thrust of language learners' communicative competence (ref. Hymes, 1972) as it is from this competence that all other specific 'literacies' emerge and are developed. The notion of language for general interpersonal communication is not a new one. Haynes (2007) cites and explains Jim Cummins' (1997) distinction between social and academic language acquisition. Haynes contends that Cummins' Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people. English language learners employ BIC skills when they are on the playground, in the lunch room, on the school bus, at parties, playing sports and talking on the telephone. Such interactions are usually context embedded as they occur in a meaningful social context. In that sense, the students' indication of the motive for Communication skills course being for first and foremost interpersonal communications speaks of two things: First, it is students' cry for help in the sense that the six years of secondary education in which English is the medium of teaching and learning and during which English has been a compulsory subject for at least the first four years has not been successful in promoting their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills which, according to Cummins (Ibid), is not cognitively demanding. Second, it is an assertion on the

part of students that to embark into specialized language literacies, one has to have a point of departure (in this context, general language proficiency).

The second category of instrumentally motivated students consists of those who indicated specific academic literacy skills, which have been regrouped and re-summarized in Figure 2.

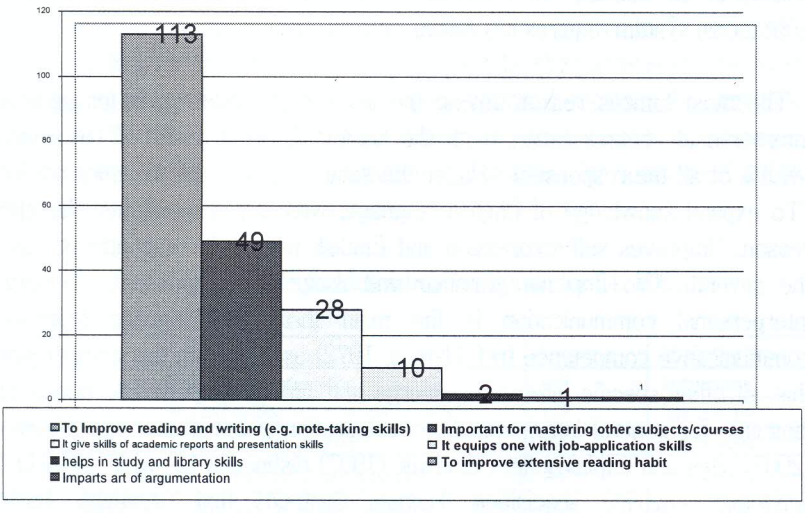


Figure 2 Students' Academic Literacy Reasons for Opting CL 106

Figure 2 reveals that the students' strongest instrumental motive that is tied to academic literacy is to improve reading and writing, citing examples of note-making and note-taking. The two skills are traditionally categorized under literacy language skills (as contrasted with listening and speaking, which are oral skills). The fact that there were 113 students (94%) in this category of 120 students serve as an indicator that the students know what their true needs are and that what they have indicated is what Vygosty (1978) has referred to as Zone of Proximal development (ZPD)[1]. This is also tied up with the third

1 The **zone of proximal development** often abbreviated ZPD, is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help.

ranking motives which are about the course being important in mastering other subjects (28 respondents). Writing within academic setting is said to be crucial as it generally involves an awareness of the readership and an understanding of the expectations of the discourse community (Karimkhanlui, 2005). Similarly, showing the importance of reading skill within the framework of EAP, Pulverness (undated) posits that EAP students need to be able to read selectively for a specific purpose, to evaluate what they read, and to make use of it in some practical further application, for example, recording or transferring information, making notes to incorporate in a piece of writing, and using the information to support an argument.

Other motives given that are related to the skills of writing are the second-ranking one which is about equipping learners with ability to manage and handle all other courses and the third reason being CL 106 equips the students with academic report writing and presentation skills. In other words, the third motive is a tool for attaining motive number two. Other four reasons given, which are not as strongly shared by respondents as the first three, are job-application skills (10), study and library skills (2) and the least favoured ones are developing argumentation skills and library skills.

Generally, Communication Skills Course is opted for by students largely for instrumental purposes. Studies done elsewhere share similar findings. In the survey mentioned earlier by Tamini and Shuib (2009) at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology it was revealed that the subjects had greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian and academic reasons. Another example is one by Vijchulata and Lee (1985) of the students' motivation for learning English in University of Putra Malaysia (UPM). The findings revealed that UPM students were both integratively and instrumentally oriented towards learning the English language. Similarly, a study by Sarjit (1993) who explored the language needs of consultants at an unnamed company involving 26 consultants, 4 directors and one instructor and found that instrumental motivation was the main reason for learning the language followed by personal motivation.

The other motivations given by respondents are global, indicating that "English is used for international communication" and intrinsic, stating that the students would like to take the course "because it is interesting for it involves stories". Each of these motives was given by one respondent only. However, integrative/intrinsic motivation is very important in attaining the desired proficiency in EAP. Benson (1991), for example, surveyed over 300 freshmen to assess their motivation towards learning English. The results of the latter demonstrated the importance of integrative and personal goals as factors in motivation among Japanese college students as he stated, "integrative and personal reasons for learning English were preferred over instrumental ones" (Benson,1991, p. 34).

c) Students' Negative Motivation towards CL 106

Sometimes motivation can also be negative (also referred to as demotivation) and is in this regard related to negative attitude. Some of the respondents in this study indicated that they would not have opted for CL 106 if it had been an optional course. When asked to give the reasons for their position regarding the course they gave reasons totalling 13, with the total frequency of 40. Their responses are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' Reasons for Not Opting for Communication Skills Course

S/n	Reasons	Frequency	Inclination
1	It is complicated and more difficult for those not studying language	5	Self evaluation
2	Already overburdened	5	Self evaluation
3	I would take it if there were no exams	1	Self evaluation
4	Fear of disco for no passing it because it is quite difficult	1	Self evaluation
5	Problem of English language is too big	1	Self evaluation
6	It consumes a lot of time	1	Self evaluation
7	Ineffective method used in delivery the course and irrelevant content	3	Course evaluation
8	The course content is the same as that of linguistics e.g. too much focus on Grammar	8	Course evaluation
9	CL is unnecessary as it can be self-studied and mostly repeats what is taught in secondary education	3	Course evaluation
10	No seriousness in teaching this course and some lecturers complicate it more	4	Course evaluation

11	No strong justification for studying CL as a course since we are competent in English	3	Course evaluation
12	Teachers are not well understood because of big number of students	2	Course evaluation
13	I would use the time to take another course	1	Course evaluation
14	No sufficient books	2	
	Total	40	

The inclination of their responses is such that they were either evaluating themselves in relation to the course (6 responses (46.2%)) or evaluating the course itself (7 responses, (53.8% of total responses)). However, in terms of the total number of students, course evaluation had more (23 students) than those evaluating themselves in relation to the course (17 students).

Those students who evaluated the course itself focussed on the content as being too biased towards linguistics, especially grammar (8 respondents (34.7%) and therefore not addressing their practical academic literacy needs. Related to that is the reason by 3 students (13%) that the content of the course is repetitive of what was taught in secondary education English and can therefore be self-studied. These responses, few as they were, show that some students find the course content irrelevant and would therefore not have opted it and two actually said, "We take it only because it is compulsory."

Another set of responses among those who evaluated the course was inclined toward the pedagogical aspects of the course specifically on teachers that some were not serious enough in teaching the course (citing unrelated story telling) and some lecturers tended to complicate it more (citing the demanding nature, frequency and difficulty level of seminar tasks). This was shared by 4 students (17.3%) and the other group of 3 (13%) saw themselves competent enough in English to not needing the course. Other pedagogical reasons given included the big number of students making it impossible for teachers to be understood clearly (2), use of time to take another course (1) and shortage of books (1).

The reasons that were given that inclined towards respondents' self evaluation in relation to the course were also various. Two had the highest

frequency of 10 (5 each), the first being those whose courses were not language-related found it complicated and difficult (which ties it up with the reasons given under content that Communication Skills is too biased towards linguistics). The second one was that the respondents felt already having enough burdens of the courses they had to take. This means what they felt would be opted out to reduce burden would be Communication Skills. These two reasons are congruent with the reasons given under course content as being difficult and not of practical use. Other reasons under this category that were by individual students were that they would take it as a course if there were no examination; they would take it if it were not for fear of being discontinued if they failed it, and finally, it is too time-consuming. This second set of reasons is essentially about anxiety with academic choices. Anxiety as an affective state is defined as an uncomfortable emotional state in which one perceives danger, feels powerless, and experiences tension in the face an expected danger (Blau, 1955). Gardner (1985) cites language anxiety as an affective state seriously impeding achievement in a language. It is also viewed as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). The students therefore fell into category of learners with test anxiety, which is an apprehension towards academic evaluation or a fear of failing tests and examinations. This type of anxiety concerns apprehension towards academic evaluation which is based on a fear of failure (Horwitz and Young, 1991).

There were 6 and 20 students who gave no reasons for their not opting for the course and for their not being sure about opting for the course or not, respectively. This group seem to behave contrary to reasons for embarking into any language programme at all. According to Harmer (1991), some of the reasons to learn English as a foreign (or even language for academic purposes, bracketed addition is the researcher's) language are school curricula, need of advancement in professional life, living in a target community permanently or temporarily, interest in different cultures, and some other specific purposes.

Ⅲ. Conclusion

What this study has established is that majority (over 90%) of students are motivated to learn English for academic literacy. The dominant motivation types have been instrumental, and this is the way one would expect given the essence of English for Academic Purposes. The reasons students give for joining the course focus on the here-and-now utilitarian value of the language in handling their academic tasks; The few students who felt they would not have opted for the course were more evaluating themselves and the teaching methodology than with indicating that they were proficient enough to not needing the course.

References

Ajzan, I. (1988). Attitudes, Personality and Behaviour. Chicago: Dorsey Press.

Al-Haq, F., and Smadi, O. (1996). Spread of English and westernization in Saudi Arabia. World Englishes, Vol.15, No.3, pp. 307-317.

Benson, M. J. (1991). Attitudes and Motivation towards English: A Survey of Japanese

Brown, H. (2000). Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. New Jersey: Prentice

Coffey, B. (1984). ESP-English for Specific Purposes. Language Teaching, Vol.17, No.1, pp. 2-16.

Crookes, G., and Schmidt, R. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the Research Agenda. Language Learning, Vol.41, No.4, pp. 469-512.

Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic Interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. Working Papers on Bilingualism, No. 19, 121-129.

Gardner, R. (2006). The Socio-educational Model of Second Language Acquisition: A Research Paradigm. EUROSLA Yearbook, Vol. 6, pp.237-260.

Gardner, R., & Lambert, W. (1972). Attitudes and Motivations in Second Language Learning. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Harmer, J. (1991). The Practice of English Language Teaching (New edition). London: Longman.

Haynes, J. (2007). Explaining BICS and CALP. *www.everythingESL.net*. Accessed 13th October, 2009.

Horwitz, E. K. & Young, D.J. (Eds.). (1991). Language anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. Modern Language Journal, Vol.70, No.2, pp. 125-132.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In J.B. Pride and J. Holmes, eds. Sociolinguistics. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Karahan, F. (2007). Language Attitudes of Turkish Students towards the English language and its use in Turkish Context. Journal of Arts and Sciences , Vol.7, pp.73-87.

Karahan, F. (2007). Language Attitudes of Turkish Students towards the English Language and its Use in Turkish Context. Journal of Arts and Sciences , Vol.7, pp. 73-87.

Karimkhanlui, G. (2005). EAP and Communicative Use of Language. Online Journal for Teachers : *http://esp-world.info*

Pulverness, A. (Undated).Squaring the Circle: Teaching EAP to Large Mixed Groups: Norwich Institute for Language Education. *http://www.melta.org.my/ET/2002/wp01.htm* (accessed on 15.10.2009)

Sarjit Kaur (1993). Analysis of the English Language Needs of Consultants at NCVC. M.A Thesis, University of South Australia.

Tamini, A. and M. Shuib (2009). Motivation And Attitudes Towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates . GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies Vol. 9,2 ISSN: 1675-8021 (date of access:10th ct.2009)

Tamini, A. and M. Shuib (2009). Motivation and Attitudes Towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates . GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies Vol. 9,2 ISSN: 1675-8021 (date of access:10th ct.2009)

Tarone, E. and G.Yule, (1989). The Focus on the Language Learner. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vijchulata, B., and Lee, G (1985). A survey of students' motivation for learning English. *RELC Journal*, Vol.22, No.1, pp 34-48.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind and society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilkins, D. (1972). Linguistics in Language Teaching. Cambridge: CPU.

Yorio, C. (1986). Consumerism in Second Language Learning and Teaching. Canadian Modern Language Review, Vol.43, No.3, pp. 668-687.

▶ Erasmus A. Msuya
소 속: 한국외국어대학교
연락처: 010-7218-8515

투 고 일 : 2010.04.26
심 사 일 : 2010.05.10
게재확정일 : 2010.06. 10