

The Impact of Students' Passion for English Language on their Mastry Despite Unfavorable Classroom Conditions

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to look at how passionate students are about the English language and how this related to their mastery or success and proficiency level of the language. Passion generally provides a basis for establishing a positive relationship with the English language. This research involved 10 Iraqi high school students learning to speak English as a second/foreign language. These students were given a test which had four different scales, each with specific sets of questions to measure their degree of passion. The students indicated they were all having positive experiences with their English language learning. The students indicated that their ability to communicate using English is related to their motivation to communicate using the English language. This is the first study to examine the impact of having a strong passion for the English language on the process of learning another language and ultimately, the results demonstrate that a high degree of passion can lead to both increased willingness and ability to communicate using the language, as well as an increase in overall quality of life specifically when passion is experienced in a harmonious manner.

KEYWORDS: passion, English language, classroom unfavourable conditions, willingness.

1. Introduction

Negative outcomes, mainly stress and anxiety, have been the focus of most research relating to learning a second language, including the learning of English. Very little theoretical work has examined a positive view of mastering a second language and the benefits derived from doing so. However, it can be clearly noted that engaging in learning another language has a positive outcome; in essence, having a passionate desire for mastering the target language will contribute significantly to the learner's overall development despite any difficulties or obstacles in their environment..

2. Passion and Learening

According to Vallerand et al (2003), "passion" refers to the strong desire to engage in an activity or support a value that influences your life in many ways. Researchers have investigated the different ways people experience passion for their hobbies and the results of that experience within a framework referred to as the Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand et al., 2003). In keeping with that model, Vallerand and colleagues distinguish between two types of passions: harmonious and obsessive. While both types of passions lead to positive outcomes for people, they

differ in terms of how they are experienced by those individuals; therefore, whether one type of passion will be dominant for an individual depends upon how that individual internalizes it into his/her own identity. In addition to being due to the individual's ability to do so, research on harmonious passion shows that it is a result of the person having autonomously internalized the activity into their identity and therefore will result in positive (adaptive) outcomes for them.

Therefore, people who are passionate harmoniously engage in the activity because they do so without restriction (which means they have full control over what is happening) and they perceive the activity as having great relevance to their values and other things about who they are and what they do; they feel positive emotions, have high levels of engagement (i.e., flow), and experience high levels of energy (Vallerand, 2015). On the other hand, individuals who are obsessively passionate about something have an internalized connection to the activity but nevertheless express their external or internal motivation to pursue the activity through either an incredible sense of pressure or through very high levels of anxiety, thus failing to achieve the flow or concentration necessary to be fully engaged in the activity itself. As a result, those who are obsessively passionate often remind themselves that what makes them happy about the activity they love to participate in (the activity that they have passion for) causes them to experience negativity (i.e., things like guilt or shame) because it causes them (or the people around them) to not have time for other areas of their life in which they would like to spend time (in a reasonable manner).

We have looked for studies examining how harmonious passion can result in positive outcomes in education, with Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2011), Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; and Ruiz-Alfonso and León, 2016 being just a few of the studies indicating that harmonious passion positively correlates with education.

With regard to the connection between teacher passion and teaching quality, there has been little research done to decide which teacher behaviours may encourage children to have passion for their studies. Fredricks et al. (2010) investigated how passion is expressed in an academic setting; they observed that students who exhibited the highest level of passion for their academics were students who believed their teachers supported them and were concerned for their well being. Students exhibited more passion for those activities that were aligned with their interests. Similarly, Coleman and Guo (2013) noticed that middle school students who were passionate about learning view their environment as being supportive of their autonomy, and Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) found that students who view their teachers as providing autonomy-supportive rather than controlling behaviours were more passionate about their studies.

Finally, there was a very recent research study published this year by Ruiz-Alfonso and León (2017) showing that teachers, particularly math teachers, who tell their students about how their course material is useful for the real world will help promote that student's harmonious passion towards their work as well as help them to develop a passion for learning. To our knowledge, this is the first empirical research on examining the correlation of harmonious passion with student performance in mastering language. As stated previously, there is limited research on this subject, therefore, further exploration into what teaching methods may assist in developing harmonious passion in students is warranted..

3. Class Poor Environment

According to Levin & Nolan (2014), classroom environment refers to the physical, social, and emotional context in which teaching and learning take place. Classroom environment encompasses many elements, including the layout of the classroom structure, relationships between students and teachers, classroom climate, and instructional competencies of the teacher. According to Bullard (2006) classroom environment is a complex interaction or interface between all physical, social, and instructional components that affect student's ability to engage with, be motivated to, and achieve desired learning outcomes. Teacher actions, the nature of interactions between students, and the culture of the school ultimately create the classroom environment for students. From a global standpoint, classroom environment considers the various types of educational environments and instructional approaches that occur throughout the world by taking into account the cultural, social, economic, and historical contexts that shape classroom dynamics and overall student learning outcomes.

Teacher-directed methods, strict adherence to academic standards, and the use of standardized tests characterize the classroom environments of European Countries. The average number of students in a typical European classroom is between 20 and 30. However, teachers in the United States of America are using increasingly diverse practices, emphasizing differentiated instructional approaches (one size does not fit all) and developing individualized learning plans (lessons tailored specifically to each student's needs). In addition to this new instructional format, the use of technology in the classroom and the use of project based instructional activities is becoming more prevalent and class sizes in the United States typically tend to be larger than those found in Europe (Cobin, 2015).

In Asian educational settings, classrooms commonly adhere to the principles of rote memory as well as discipline/respect associated with authority. However, educators are beginning to implement more participatory approaches that actively involve students in learning activities. Common components

of all classrooms include teachers, learners, curriculum, and resources utilized to deliver instruction. There are approximately one and half billion children enrolled in primary/secondary (grade level) education across the globe, including all continents except Antarctica (Bollin & Kurtz, 2019). Globally, the average number of students per classroom is 28; however, this can vary from class to school to class, with some having less than 10 children, while others may have as many as 50 or more! With these challenges, progress within the classroom setting has continued at an accelerated pace, with positive developments such as increased enrollment rates and improved access to highly qualified teachers.

Many different researchers have defined the classroom environment differently; for example, Baek and Choi (2002) found that students' mental images of the classroom environment are directly related to their academic success in Korea. To measure these perceptions they used the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) and showed that there is a direct relationship between good class environments and higher academic achievement. Similarly, Kuang (2019) found that students who viewed their class environment as open were likely to score higher in very specific areas of knowledge and self-efficacy associated with their civic responsibilities. Additionally, good relationships between students and teachers and being involved in other activities predicted an open classroom climate. The findings from both Baek and Choi (2002) and Kuang (2019) confirm that both individual character traits and organisational characteristics are important factors that contribute to the establishment of democratic classrooms in the Asian context.

Chepkonga (2017) examined how the classroom environment affects how children learn about socio-science (or social studies) in public pre-primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya. His research found that children in smaller classrooms (20-25 students) had a more positive experience within the classroom than those who were in larger classrooms (30-35 students). Additionally, the study found that the physical characteristics of the classroom, including classroom design and layout (including arrangement of seating), classroom lighting (including amount of light), and temperature within the classroom, all have a significant based on how children learn. Specifically, children who believe that the environment in their classroom is supportive to them learning, engaging to them learning, and beneficial to them learning will have higher levels of academic achievement than children who have a less-positive or less-supportive view of their classroom. In another research study, Githini (2016) examined the relationship between the classroom climate of a high-school biology class and the students' goal structure related to learning in the classroom. According to the investigative work undertaken, overall, a student develops a range of skills and competencies

through experiences and experimentation within a classroom — namely through supportive teacher behaviour, cooperation with classmates in learning and developing mastery (of skills) based on developing and utilising them. Those students whose classroom climate was perceived to be more supportive and focused on developing mastery tended to be more driven to develop mastery goals and performing to a higher level academically than those not experiencing this form of climate..

4. Statistical analysis of Students Answers

Students	The answers				results	Ratio
	Section A	Section B	Section C	Section D		
1	19	19	19	18	75	4.6
2	11	16	16	18	61	3.8
3	18	15	19	16	68	4.2
4	16	16	13	17	62	3.8
5	19	16	17	19	71	4.4
6	18	16	17	19	70	4.3
7	19	17	17	18	71	4.4
8	17	18	19	15	69	4.3
9	16	17	20	20	73	4.5
10	19	19	19	20	77	4.8

Table (1) answers' analysis

This is a statistical analysis for the scale results that is given to ten students in the second intermediate class in Al-Rabab Secondary School.

The scale assesses how passionate someone is about learning English, and it comprises four different categories (or sections), each broken down into four separate items (or questions). Section A looks at the student's interest in learning English and how much they enjoy it. Section B looks at the student's level of effort and engagement with learning English. Section C looks at the student's personal value of both; English and the English language. Finally, Section D looks at the student's emotional connection to English and the English language.

There is a 5 point scale for each question in the different sections. The possible responses to a question are: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

Strongly Disagree has a score of 1, Disagree has a score of 2, Neutral has a score of 3, Agree has a score of 4, Strongly Agree has a score of 5.

We can find the students' passion towards the English language after dividing their answers (the total number of answers) by the number of sections (which is sixteen). So, for example, if the scale

produces a ratio of 4.8 (which is almost at a 5 – the highest passion), that means the student is very passionate about the English language..

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to determine the effects of student enthusiasm to learn English and how it will influence their ability to master the language, even with less than optimal classroom settings. The findings from this study indicate that student enthusiasm has a significant effect on motivating students to learn English, even when they are faced with difficult circumstances like bad classroom settings and limited or inadequate learning opportunities. Based on the results of this study, as well as prior research that shows a relationship between student enthusiasm and other desired outcomes, it is recommended that teachers become aware of and actively promote their students' enthusiasm for learning English. This study also contributes to the notion that students who display a strong desire and excitement to learn English will also show a high degree of determination and engagement in their learning and a willingness to be successful regardless of the situation.

Research has shown that passion as well as motivational motivation affects your ability/ capabilities to learn and acquire an academic skill. Classroom conditions can certainly affect learning; however, a learner's Passion could help compensate for any detriment caused by the above mentioned conditions when it comes to acquiring Language skills. Additionally, a scale on which the students were asked on a behavioural basis to rate their Passion in relation to their Progress (English Language Moving forward to the next level). This research was inclusive of both Professor and Student.

Overall, it is clear that developing student interest and motivation is necessary to achieve expertise in the English language. All teachers and school systems should foster student interest while making changes in the classroom so as to have a more positive and supportive environment in which to learn English.

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Appendix:

English Language Passion Scale (ELPS)

Instructions for testees:

Read each statement carefully and choose how much you agree with it.

Use this scale:

1= strongly disagree

2= disagree

3= neutral

4= agree

5= strongly disagree

Section A: Effort and Engagement

1. I try to practise English outside the classroom.
2. I willingly spend extra time improving my English skills.
3. I do not give up easily when English tasks are challenging.
4. I feel motivated to participate in English class activities.

Section B: Interest and Enjoyment

5. I enjoy learning English even when it is difficult.
6. I feel excited when I learn new English words or expressions.
7. English is one of my favourite subjects to study.
8. I like listening to English songs, movies, or videos.

Section C: Personal Values

9. English is important for my future goals.
10. I feel proud when I can communicate well in English.
11. Learning English makes me feel more confident.
12. I would continue learning English even if it were not required.

Section D: Emotional Connections

13. I feel happy when I use English successfully.
14. I feel curious about English-speaking cultures.
15. I imagine myself using English in real life situations.
16. English feels meaningful to me, not just a school subject.