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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MOTIVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON ESL LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the types of motivation in ESL students who were learning English in community colleges. The study examined what kind has more impact on ESL learners: integrative motivation or instrumental motivation. The study also explored motivation as a leadership skill of ESL instructors and the attitude ESL learners possessed toward the language. It explored the relationship between time spent learning the new language and ESL motivation. A total of 200 ESL students from two community colleges were included in this study. A t-test was used as a quantitative tool to analyze the responses of ESL students who consented to take the survey online using a link from MonkeySurvey.com. The FLLMQ is the questionnaire used in the study; findings suggest a significant statistical relationship between one specific type of integrative motivation and between the attitude of ESL learners. Additionally, findings found significant statistical relationship between the years spent learning English and between ESL learners' level of motivation. Future studies are recommended to examine other characteristics that can affect motivation like gender, origin, and age in Houston, Texas.

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Introduction:-

Overview According to the Center of Immigration Studies, there are 67.3 million residents who speak a second language other than English at home in the United States, the number of schoolage bilingual children doubled in numbers between 1980 and 2010, and in 2010 it reached 21%. Statistics show that the largest share of the ESL population which speaks a foreign language other than English in 2018 were California (45%), Texas (36%), New Mexico (34%), New Jersey (32%), New York, and Nevada (each 31%), Florida (30%), Arizona and Hawaii (each 28%), and Massachusetts (24%) (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). Immigrants, as a result, need to find an adequate educational source for their children is a basic need in the country. These ESL students try to find the best way to learn the language for many different reasons they need to accomplish. According to the American Immigration Council, immigrants who reach the U.S. send their kids to schools to learn a new language and graduate from high school. Texas is one of the states that witnessed an influx of immigrants who migrated from Mexico to the nearest American border. Houston is the city that engulfs immigrants looking for better life opportunities and better education for their children. They need their high schoolers to continue their education after graduation and learn the country's new language, so their best option is to send them to colleges in the Houston area. English second language (ESL) students and parents try to find the colleges that best fit their kids' needs. These colleges are qualified with unique programs that take care of MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 12 the youth till they are

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fully prepared to finish their education or transfer to other colleges or universities. Gardner and Lambert (1972) initiated and pursued research on language learning and motivation with their colleagues and students. A significant number of studies were conducted on motivation and the empirical research that relates motivation to any foreign language. Second language motivation is described as the degree or the level to which an individual can strive to learn a new language. The question behind motivation is whether it is based on an instrumental kind of motivation or an integrative kind of motivation. The study is interested in checking if motivation is related to the years spent learning a new language. Additionally, Gardner (2013) says that aptitude and ability cannot be only responsible for the variability that accounts for a specific and unique type of motivation. The motivation appropriate and sufficient to learn a foreign language is second language (L2) motivation, as expressed by Gardner's composite construct integrative motive (Gardner, 2013). The study is based on a quantitative approach that uses a t-test to measure the numbers extracted from a survey conducted in a two-year college. This study compared integrative and instrumental motivation to find which has more impact on ESL learners; the study also examined whether time spent learning English for more than 2 years is related to motivation. A questionnaire of 45 questions was conducted in two Houston community colleges. College students enrolled in an intensive English program were invited to take the online survey through their phones, tablets, or desktops. The survey was sent through a software platform called SurveyMonkey.com

Problem Statement

Studies focusing on a core problem in the last decade is the number of incoming immigrants dropping out of school even before coming to the States. Another case problem is teachers' perceptions of ELL education; certain studies focus on the unsympathetic attitudes of teachers towards ELL students; some teachers label these students as those who should not be here in the country. Unfortunately, those types of teachers make ESL students feel unwelcome. This attitude would generate a bitter feeling toward the language. In addition to this unwelcome MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 15 attitude, many teachers do not use encouragement words or motivational techniques; thus, these students give up on learning and decide to drop out of school. It is essential to possess empathy and understand the struggles of ELL students. Being unable to comprehend instructions in school often leads to strong negative emotions. Teachers can use and develop meaningful and effective educational approaches and modifications for ELLs by confronting these attitudes, ideas, and obstacles. This outcome is significant considering the enormous potential that teachers must become inspiring adults in the lives of these immigrant adolescents. Teachers' attitudes towards ELL students can sometimes be viewed as a hindrance, and next, there is the misdiagnosis of ELL students as learning disabled and the lack of professional development. A sizeable gap in achievement exists between those who need special language instruction because they can be underachievers and those ESL students who are new to the language. There is the problem of non-certified teachers who take the role of second language teachers in schools. No Child Left Behind, NCLB, emphasizes that it is crucial to close this gap, measure the progress of English language learners and improve instructional programs for limited English proficient children. This improvement can be achieved by acquiring and upgrading curricula and related instructional materials and providing adequate training that aligns with state and local standards and school personnel participating in community-based organizations to improve the instruction and assessment of limited English proficient children (NCLB, 2001). It is essential to strive for empathy and understand the struggles of ELL students when they cannot comprehend the language of instruction in school, which often leads to strong MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 16 negative emotions. Teachers can create meaningful and effective educational approaches and modifications for ELLs by confronting these attitudes, ideas, and obstacles. When English Language Learners ELL students make their transition into U.S. schools, teachers can substantially impact their academic achievement and personal development. The rationale behind this study is to investigate the relationship between the two kinds of motivation and ESL learners' attitudes and levels of motivation. The researcher Zoltán Dörnyei (2011) stated that according to his personal experience, 99% of language learners who want to learn English as a foreign language and who show motivation would be able to gain an excellent reasonable knowledge of it as a minimum, regardless of their language aptitude. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2011) states, "Given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language, if he is exposed to the language data" (p. 175). English is considered the primary language of communication in the U.S., and immigrants who come to the country send their children to schools to learn the language and be part of American society. Learning a new language is not considered an easy task for those children, especially those who still communicate in their native language at home. Students encounter several challenges and problems developing their speaking skills, preventing clear communication when required. Many of these students decide to drop out before graduation.

Research Method:-

Statistical Test A t-test was used to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables in this study. That is, between types of motivation as the independent variable and MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 76 students' attitudes and level of motivation as the dependent variable. This statistical tool was also used to test the relationship between time spent learning the language and motivation. According to Spatz (2019), t-tests determine differences between two samples that can be independent or paired. These samples should originate from normally distributed populations and have equal variances. Spatz (2019) added that a t-test still works well when assumptions are violated. To conduct the test for this study, a questionnaire was used through an online platform called MonkeySurvey.com. A questionnaire serves as one of the most common research instruments, usually for primary data collection. A questionnaire can be used in both quantitative and qualitative types of research. A questionnaire was used to measure the participants' responses and answers were analyzed on an excel sheet that used the data feature on the excel software sheet. The questionnaire was based on Professor Gonzales's questions in his study about the reliability and validity of a 6-factor model of the Foreign Language Learning Motivation (Gonzales, 2006). The questionnaire consisted of 40 items plus some demographic questions on a Likert scale of 4 multiple choices. Some of them start with "agree" to "disagree," There was an option of none of the above if the participant did not wish to answer the question or believed that no option fits the question. The maximum time spent on the questionnaire was three to ten minutes, not more. The average time spent was eight minutes. While qualitative research is concerned with collecting narrative data, quantitative research focused on collecting numerical data. Therefore, this quantitative study suggested using questionnaires and the analysis of the answers. The subjects' general background and comments MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 77 were calculated and presented in percentages. A four-point Likert scale was used to measure subjects' learning motivation levels and types. One instrument was utilized to collect data, an online questionnaire that students could access using the link on their phones, tablets, or desktops to take the survey. The maximum time spent on the survey would be ten minutes. Students are considered the only form of assessment for this data collection. The answers to the questionnaire were presented in numerical numbers. Quantitative data analyses were used to observe the countable qualities of the study. The quantitative results of the analysis would be observed after using an Excel program to analyze the questionnaire. The questionnaire showed two percentages of students' replies to integrative vs. instrumental motivation. "The questionnaire is the affective factor of motivation has been determined to be a significant cause of variability in language learning success" (Gardner, 2010, p. 26). This study was based on a test method of research, which involved observing two variables to establish a statistically corresponding relationship between them. This quantitative research aimed to identify the type of motivation and years of learning the language and their effect on ESL learners. It was interesting to know to what extent a change in one variable would also change the other variable. This research method is considered descriptive in revealing the statistical relationship between two variables.

Findings

Research Question One The first question research in this quantitative study was designed to explore the motivation styles of community college students and their relation to achievement by using the MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 93 Gonzales (2006) assessment tool, the FLLMQ questionnaire. This questionnaire has 45 Likert scale items in the online engine of SurveyMonkey.com. All the numbers were then transferred into an excel sheet to conduct a t-test and find if the p-value could reject the null hypothesis or could not reject the null hypothesis. The research question was as follows: 1. Are ESL students integratively or instrumentally motivated to learn English at a college level? The following null hypothesis was formulated, along with another alternative hypothesis. Ho: There is no statistical relation between any type of motivation and ESL Learners. Ha: There is a statistical relation between instrumental motivation and ESL learners. The means were calculated to compare the two motivation variables, then the overall means of each variable were calculated. The t-test proved to have a statistically significant relation between instrumental motivation and ESL learners' attitudes toward the language. The pvalue was able to reject the null hypothesis. However, the study was not able to prove the alternative hypothesis. Research Question Two Question number two in this quantitative study was designed to explore a relationship between the number of years, motivation, and ESL learners. To answer this question, a comparison was made between highly motivated students and students who were least motivated to learn English after their second year in college. These questions were compared using the Gonzalez (2006) assessment tool, which is the FLLMQ questionnaire. This questionnaire had 40 Likert scale items in the online engine of SurveyMonkey.com in addition to demographic MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 94 questions. The numbers were all analyzed using a t-test on an excel sheet to check whether the pvalue rejects or cannot reject the null hypothesis. The research question was as follows: what is the relationship between motivation and years spent learning a new language? The following null hypothesis was formulated, along

with another alternative hypothesis. Ho: There is no statistical relationship between the number of years, motivation, and ESL Learners. Ha: There is a statistical relationship between the number of years, motivation, and ESL learners. As outlined in Chapter Four, the t-test analysis results revealed a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable of student attitudes, motivation, and time spent learning a new language. The p-value calculated for students who were more motivated after their second year of learning English was less than the p-value of 0.05 that was utilized throughout the study. Table 5 (see Appendix B1) shows the following result of the independent ttest ($t [38] = 10.66, p = 0.0000$). This result coincided with a previous study showing that highly motivated students had a higher mean score in the level of motivation toward learning a new language than the least motivated students. Second-year students had a higher motivation toward learning English in both types of motivation, instrumental and integrative (Nguyen, 2019). Motivation as a Leadership Skill Teachers should understand that high motivation levels will make students persist in learning a new language. They will also be more willing to expend more effort and time acquiring the required skills to help them master the new language. Motivation as a leadership MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 95 skill can evoke students to enjoy learning a foreign language. Moreover, revealing the ability to learn a new language without the accompanying motivation may not lead to high levels of achievement in school and foreign language learning success (Gonzales, 2015). Foreign language teachers must project enthusiasm, motivation, and inspiration in performing their jobs in the best shape. Foreign language learners would be more motivated to learn when students would view their foreign language teacher as an inspirational, passionate, and motivational one who loves and enjoys what they do in class. Aside from having a good command of the language, caring and devoted teachers who show concern not only for the intellectual growth of their students but also for their well-being, to a large extent, may further motivate the students to learn well the subject matter. Finally, foreign language teachers must create and develop a varied number of motivational teaching strategies on how to evoke students' interest in learning the foreign language. These motivational teaching strategies can be subjected to validation for further research on how to sustain the burning desire of the students in learning foreign languages (Gonzales, 2015). In his research on motivation, Gardner stated that motivation is the essential element for an individual's success in learning a new language. It is the key for a student to accept a new culture and be open to new evaluations and challenges that sometimes, if not for motivation, can be frustrating and tiring. Research has indicated that if an individual is highly motivated to learn another language, has an open and accepting approach to other cultural groups and a strong emotional interest in the target language group, and has a positive evaluation of the learning situation, then we might describe that person as being integratively motivated to learn the language. would probably also MOTIVATION AND ESL LEARNING 96 find that the person is very successful in learning and using the language (Gardner, 2005, pp. 20, 21). A committed teacher with a 16 good language facility, relevant teaching materials, an exciting curriculum, and a friendly classroom atmosphere may promote higher motivation. In his socio-educational model,

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