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Observable Signals of Motivation in Teaching-learning Process

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Abstract

The current study focuses on the identification of the observable signals of motivation as perceived by the language teachers in the teaching-learning process. This phenomenon is worth studying as it can open new dimensions for conducting research on motivation and engagement in the field of applied linguistics. It can be very helpful for teachers in assessing their students' motivation. Data was collected for this phenomenological study through questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussion. The sample consisted of twenty-six English language teachers. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The observable signals of motivation were categorized in the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains. The results identified that 'asking probing questions', 'eye contact', 'asking for extra resources', 'loving and respecting teachers', 'coming on time', 'completing classroom tasks quickly', 'enjoying group activities', and 'suggesting topics to teachers' comprised the observable signals of motivation. The majority of the teachers agreed on observing most of these signals. Teachers can use these signals to assess the motivation of their learners and future researchers can use the findings of this research for conducting further research.

Keywords: engagement, motivation, observable signals of motivation, phenomenology, teachers' perception

Introduction

The current study focuses on the identification of the observable signals of motivation or engagement as perceived by language teachers during their daily classroom interaction with language learners. Motivation and engagement are the defining factors in language learning and it is a well-established and well-researched fact (Ames, [1992](#); Bandura, [1997](#); Dweck & Leggett, [1988](#); Pintrich & De Groot, [1990](#); Ryan & Deci, [2000](#)). All language teachers aspire to have motivated learners in their classes which makes language teaching enjoyable and accomplishing. The teachers try their best to motivate their learners through the use of different teaching techniques and English language teaching material (Azim et

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al. 2018). Motivation is a psychological construct and the reasons and causes of motivation are also multidimensional. It needs rigorous testing or the use of psychological analytical batteries to determine motivation and its causes in a particular language learner. In this study, the researcher explored the teachers' perceptions regarding the observable signals of motivation among language learners, irrespective of the causes that lie in the mind of the learners.

Language teachers often talk about their learners as motivated or unmotivated based on their assessment of the learners' observable signals of motivation. Their observations and ideas about their learners are further validated by the academic achievement of the learners at the end of the teaching-learning period. Learners who are perceived as motivated by the teachers show high academic achievement in their language assessment as compared to the less motivated learners. So, the teachers' ability to observe and interpret the observable signals of motivation is an interesting phenomenon worth studying for the improvement of the teaching-learning process during language teaching. Hence, this study can be beneficial for language teachers, students, course planners, and all other stakeholders in the teaching-learning process. The current research attempts to identify the observable signals of motivation mutually agreed upon by the language teachers.

The research focused on delineating, the observable signals which make teachers decide about the learners' motivation for learning a language. Most language teachers do not have the theoretical knowledge about the psychological construct of 'motivation'. They keep in view only two factors about the motivational level of their language learners. The first is the overall behavior of the learners in the class (it includes many factors which are the focus of this study) and the second is the learning achievement of the learners in summative assessments; mostly, these two observations reciprocate each other.

This phenomenon is a concept which needs the validity and reliability associated with any measuring instrument. This article is the first step in which observable signals were identified through the use of the qualitative research method. Specifically, the phenomenological method was used because different tools of data collection can be used in this method and it is useful in studying a particular phenomenon. Questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion were used as tools for data collection. Data was analyzed using the technique of emerging themes and by preparing a list of observable signals of motivation manifested by the participants in the collected data. The agreed upon and unique observable signals were recorded as the outcome of the current study.

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to identify the observable signals of motivation among learners through the teachers' perceptions. These observable signals were denoted as motivation or the newly coined term of 'engagement'. This section discusses motivation, engagement, and their observable signals for their comparison and contrast.

Motivation

Motivation is a term which is used widely when teachers and learners discuss the success or failure of language learning. Most teachers and learners have an understanding of what this term means. This seemingly vivid understanding, however, contrasts sharply with the concept of motivation as a technical term in the literature of psychology and applied linguistics. This frequently used term has a meaning that can span to cover a wide variety of concepts that may vary considerably. It seems, as suggested by Dornyei (2014), that motivation is a 'rather obsolete umbrella term' which includes several variables 'that have little to do with each other.' Although there are different aspects of motivation, and only some on which the researchers agree. The most basic aspect of all is the reason 'why people behave as they do?' Indeed, motivation is the cause for selecting a particular direction and it determines the magnitude of the human effort to proceed along that direction. It is the preference of one action over the other. In simple words, motivation leads people to undertake a particular task. It also determines their persistence with the task undertaken and how hard will they try to accomplish the task.

If we consider that motivation lies at the base of the human behavior, then the latter is influenced by a range of internal and external factors. External factors include rewards, incentives, threats, pressures, and punishments. Internal factors include the love of power, money, the people around us, the world around us, peace, and freedom. Our motivation can be rooted in our faith, our family, our profession, and other material objects. It is not that only one kind of motivation guides our behavior; rather, there are complex webs that result in a particular kind of behavior. This study is only interested in the agreed upon observable signals of motivation which is expounded as 'engagement' in educational psychology. It is a new term coined to study the observable signals of motivation within a particular task.

Engagement

Monitoring and responding positively to the learners' signals of motivation during the teaching-learning process is very important because it leads to

engagement which results in learning achievement (Ames, [1992](#); Bandura, [1997](#); Dweck & Leggett, [1988](#); Pintrich & De Groot, [1990](#); Ryan & Deci, [2000](#); Berry, [2020](#)). The monitoring of students' motivation is a challenging task to undertake. It is because motivation is private, subjective, and difficult-to-directly-observe. It is also very important because it leads to learning and resultantly to a high level of achievement (Ladd & Dinella, [2009](#); Skinner, et al. [2009](#); Huang, et al., [2019](#)). Measuring learners' motivation has become even more difficult due to the overcrowded classrooms (Middleton, [1995](#)).

Fortunately, it is comparatively easier to estimate engagement in the teaching-learning process. So, the concept of engagement is very important to study (Stenlund, [1995](#)). It is a 'relatively public, objective and easy-to-observe classroom event' (Fredricks, et al. [2004](#); Skinner, et al. [2009](#)). Teachers can easily observe the attention, effort, and persistence of students in classrooms as compared to giving up on a learning activity. Previous studies have confirmed that teachers are able to judge their students' self-reported engagement reliably (Skinner, et al. [2009](#)).

Research in the recent past has laid great emphasis on the relationship of engagement with the academic achievement of the learners (Liem & Martin, [2012](#); Martin, [2007](#), [2009](#); Martin, et al. [2001a](#), [2001b](#); [2003](#); Pintrich, [2003](#); Schunk, [1990](#)). Hence, it becomes imperative to study engagement as a concept in detail, so that its measurement, observation and monitoring by the teachers can be discussed. There are a number of definitions of engagement but some researchers defined engagement in terms of belongingness, attendance, and participation in the class (Willms, [2003](#)). Others defined it as a psychological process of investment, attention, effort, and interest in learning (Marks, [2000](#)), still others related it to psychological motivation. The National Research Council ([2004](#)) suggested that engagement and motivation are synonymous. Many researchers also use these terms interchangeably.

Engagement can be described in terms of its types: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks, [2004](#)). Although these types or components are presented separately in previous research but in this research, they are combined because of the many overlapping areas. The concept of engagement is closely associated with the observable signals of motivation which the current research is concerned with. Emotional engagement brings up the learners' affective reactions in a teaching-learning situation. These include interest, boredom, sadness, happiness, and anxiety (Connell & Wellborn, [1991](#); Skinner & Belmont, [1993](#)). Researchers try to assess emotional engagement by measuring the emotional reactions of the learners towards their teacher and

institute (Lee & Smith, [1995](#); Stipek, [2002](#)).

Finn ([1993](#)) conceptualized it as identification with the institute and further explained it as ‘belonging’ and ‘value’. The same concepts are found in the literature available on motivation and they are more elaborated as compared to the field of engagement. There’s no doubt that this field is a recent development and it will take some time to develop and elaborate its concepts. Emotional engagement cannot be elaborated simply in terms of the signals that can be identified in the teaching-learning situations. Being happy or sad can be observed by the teacher but even this needs further elaboration through physical gestures such as smile on the face, eye contact, relaxed sitting posture, note taking, and quick response to the teacher’s elicitations. It also involves the relationship with peers and teachers and can be observed in behaviors such as interest in collaborative work, enjoying pair and group activities, the readiness to help a fellow student, and the readiness to help the teachers (such as clearing the board, collecting and distributing notebooks).

Cognitive engagement stresses investment in learning. The literature on learning and instruction explains this type of engagement as ‘self-regulation’ or ‘being strategic’. It is defined as a psychological investment in learning, which is the urge to do more than required and a preference for challenging tasks (Connell & Wellborn, [1991](#); Newmann, [1992](#)). Cognitive engagement is more like the concept of intrinsic motivation in the literature, although how it is projected in a classroom situation needs elaboration. The concepts of ‘hard work’, ‘mental effort’ and ‘flexibility’ need to be explained in terms of more observable signals such as taking difficult topics to work on, learning from mistakes, showing a positive attitude towards failure, finishing assignments on time, extending the scope of an assignment with the teachers’ permission, doing planned work, and asking the teachers about the source material to read. Cognitive engagement of the learners is less observable as it is more concerned with the study of the mind, although some aspects mentioned above can be taken into consideration as observable signals.

Behavioral engagement is usually the first aspect to be discussed, as it has the utmost importance for the current study. It can be defined in three ways: positive conduct, involvement in learning and academic tasks, and extra / co-curricular activities. Positive conduct covers the behaviors related to the general rules and regulations of the institute and the classroom such as regular attendance, tardiness, not talking during the lecture, submitting the work on time, and wearing proper uniform (Finn, [1993](#); Finn, et al. [1995](#); Finn & Rock, [1997](#)). The involvement in learning and academic tasks covers many important aspects of the teaching-learning process such as asking meaningful and probing questions, paying

attention, concentration in the studies, positive contribution to the class discussion, task completion, projecting energy in the class, making suggestions for lessons and activities, and persistence with the classroom activities (Birch & Ladd, [1997](#); Finn et al. [1995](#); Skinner & Belmont, [1993](#)). Active participation in extra or co-curricular activities includes participation in debate competition, speech competition, poetry recitation, drama, athletics, and other such activities (Finn, [1993](#)). For the research in hand, this is the most appealing aspect of engagement because it talks about the behavioral aspect which mostly provides the observable signals to the teachers during the teaching-learning process which are easy to notice. However, other aspects can also be observed.

Engagement is discussed in the literature in a way that it only talks about generalized terms and bigger concepts that need elaboration and detailing. These concepts are sound but the understanding of these concepts varies from teacher to teacher and this fact makes them vague and confusing. The research in hand is an effort to identify the actual observable signals of motivation that can be observed and agreed upon by the teachers.

At this point, it is important to consider how the previous researchers carried out their research in the field by assessing the methods or tools they used to measure these three kinds of engagement. The researchers used different tools to research multiple aspects of behavioral engagement. The researchers have focused either on one specific aspect or simultaneously on all the three aspects of behavioral engagement, i.e., conduct, persistence, and participation. They used teacher ratings and self-report surveys to measure the different aspects of behavioral engagement. Some of them developed separate scales to measure its different aspects (Finn, et al [1991](#); Ladd, et al. [1999](#)). Others covered all aspects using a single scale. The Rochester School Assessment Package (Wellborn & Connell, [1987](#)) was used by many researchers interested in studying behavioral engagement. It consists of questionnaire items. So, surveys, observational techniques, and teacher rating on specific questions are the key tools previously used to assess behavioral engagement. All these tools and techniques were proposed by the various researchers. This research is an effort to include teachers in the process of the assessment of learners' motivation through observable signals. All the techniques used in this research are intended for school and classroom engagement irrespective of the subject being taught, since this research is focused on the language teaching-learning process in the classroom.

Emotional engagement is mostly measured through self-report surveys. These surveys measure a variety of emotions related to school, its work, and its people.

They usually measure how happy, sad, interested, bored, frustrated, and angry students are. Some previous researchers focused on the relationship of the learners with their class fellows and teachers. Others focused on how learners value their studies and how do they identify themselves with their schools. These are all overlapping aspects and are inevitably interconnected. Again, all these tools and approaches do not talk about how teachers can assess these aspects on their own and which aspects, if not all, can be assessed by the teachers teaching the learners on a daily basis.

The assessment of cognitive engagement in the literature is extremely limited. Indeed, the concepts of ‘investment in learning’ and ‘strategic planning’ resemble intrinsic motivation and the research in the field of motivation is more rigorous and extensive. Investment in learning encompasses flexibility in problem solving, autonomous learning, taking challenging tasks, and the ways of countering perceived failure. These are mostly assessed using survey research, observation of classes and other tests developed specifically for them. This aspect of engagement is not very different from motivation itself and its observable signals are also very limited, although there are few signals that can be observed and assessed by the teachers.

The current review of the available literature on motivation and engagement has established the fact that very little work has been carried out in both the fields that can be helpful to identify and establish some of their observable signals. Literature discusses them especially the ones related to engagement only in vague and umbrella terms. The need to identify these observable signals of motivation or engagement is indeed paramount because they can provide a quick assessment to the teacher regarding the language learner in focus, so that strategies can be adopted to help the learners to gain motivation in order to learn the language being taught. It will be highly beneficial for all the stakeholders of the teaching-learning process. There is a dire need to develop a tool of assessment that is led by the teachers themselves. This is only possible if some observable signals of motivation are identified and established.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to engage the language teachers in the process of identifying the observable signals of motivation during language teaching and learning. Literature on the topic of motivation suggests that little work has been done previously to identify the observable signals of motivation in the teaching-learning situation/process. There is a considerable amount of work done in the field for the assessment of motivation through psychological tests and survey forms. In

this regard, many previous researches focused on the relationship of motivation with academic achievement and aimed to find out the reasons and causes of motivation. It is a complex phenomenon and research is still going on to determine the nature, causes and effects of the different aspects of motivation. So far, no tool for assessing motivation has been developed which is based on the perceptions of teachers. Teachers are always the subjects or respondents of such type of research. On the contrary, the current research is based on the language teachers' perceptions of the observable signals of motivation. They have certain elements or aspects in mind which help them to assess the motivation of the learners. Often, this assessment is supported by the academic achievement of the learners which makes this kind of study more important and relevant. Language teachers have different perceptions which they look for in their learners to assess their motivational level. The research in hand is an attempt to identify the perceptions of the language teachers regarding the observable signals of motivation. For this kind of research, the qualitative paradigm is best suited because the qualitative data helps to explore a wide range of perceptions.

Qualitative Paradigm: A Phenomenological Study

The paradigm of qualitative research has its specialized types or variants such as ethnography, case study, narrative analysis, critical theory and phenomenology. Slightly different methodological and philosophical heritages distinguish these variants. Each variant has its own unique approach and preferred techniques but still remains under the umbrella of qualitative research. Each variant is a specialized version of qualitative research that may have a more subtle design, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. These variants need to be critically evaluated and consequently adopted, adapted, or modified according to the research requirements. This research is a phenomenological study. This approach was developed in Sweden in the 1970s and it incorporates a range of data collection methods including interviews, focus group discussions, observations, written responses, drawings, and artifacts. These tools of data collection allow the participants to respond to an open-ended elicitation that can provide in-depth perceptions of their stance (Bowden, [2005](#)).

Phenomenological approach focuses on the collective understanding of the group. It considers a range of perceptions present in the population under study. On the basis of these features, the researchers have chosen this qualitative research type for the current investigation.

Research Questions

There is only one research question in this research which underlies all questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. It is stated as follows:

1. What are the observable signals of motivation perceived by the language teachers during the teaching-learning process?

Setting

The current research was conducted in the cities of Lahore and Pattoki based on convenience because the collection of data from these cities was easier for the researchers. The selected institutes included Government College Pattoki, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Lahore and Riphah International University. Academic settings were chosen because teachers could be available conveniently.

Population and Sampling

All English language teachers of Lahore and Pattoki were part of the population. The sample included 15 teachers who were asked to respond to the questionnaire which they did willingly. Five teachers were interviewed for 7 to 10 minutes each. They volunteered for the interviews. Six teachers participated in the focus group discussion, voluntarily. The sampling method used was random sampling. The participants' age and experience were also varied. The age group and the level of the learners taught by the participants were also diverse. Many participants were teaching the language learners of more than one level.

The teachers who had an experience of more than five years of teaching the English language were selected. Teachers of English literature, linguistics, and applied linguistics were not considered in the current research. It was because the research focused on the perceptions of the 'language teachers' regarding the observable signals of motivation in the teaching-learning process. So, only those teachers who taught general English proficiency courses at the aforementioned three institutions were included in the sample.

Research Design

The following three qualitative data collection tools were used to conduct this research.

1. Data was collected through questionnaire from 15 participants. There were only three questions in the questionnaire to which the participants needed to respond. These open-ended questions asked the teachers to share their concept of

motivation, enlist the observable signals of motivation which they look for in their learners as they assess their high motivational level, and also enlist the observable signals of motivation in their unmotivated or less motivated learners so that a comparison can be drawn.

2. Interviews were conducted of five teachers using the structured questions along with situational probing. In these interviews, their concept of motivated and unmotivated learners was explored along with their perceived signals of motivation. This tool proved to be more effective as the data collected through it was comprehensive and extensive.
3. To further validate the data a focus group discussion of 6 teachers was conducted. They were asked to propose and discuss the various observable signals of motivation which they used in their language teaching classes to assess the motivational level of the learners.

The data was collected through self-administration. The teachers were happy and enthusiastic to participate in this research because they considered the observable signals of motivation as an important issue. All teachers willingly participated as volunteers. Also, their identities remained anonymous and only their ideas were noted.

Data Analyzing Strategy

Table 1

Questionnaire, Interview, and Focus Group Coding System

Category	Description	Code
Behavioral	Attendance, note-taking, smiling face, good attention span, focus eyes, bring books, follow class routines, after class clarification from the teacher, attentive listening, asking probing questions, energetic.	B
Emotional	Respect of teachers and class fellows, help teachers and class fellows, enjoy pair and group activities, ready to share assignments, happy, volunteer classwork, positive opinion about teachers, class fellows and study.	E
Cognitive	Neat work, planned work, picking challenging tasks, discussion with teachers, extra work, initiate topics, suggest topics, take feedback positively.	C

Three major categories mentioned in the discussion about engagement were defined. These categories included behavioral signals, emotional signals, and

cognitive signals. Each category was coded as mentioned in Table 3.1. The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed by coding the observable signals mentioned by the participants under the respective category. Repeatedly appearing signals were noted for their frequency. The same procedure was followed for the data collected through the interviews and focus group discussion. Interviews and focus group discussion were recorded and transcribed by the researchers.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data collected through the questionnaire were not that rigorous in terms of factors mentioned under observable signals of motivation. Only 10 participants responded well and mentioned a good number of the observable signals of motivation. The questions of the questionnaire were very simple and straightforward.

- 1) What is your understanding of motivation?
- 2) Which observable signals make you think that your learners are motivated?

Enlist the signals.

- 3) Which observable signals make you think that your learners are unmotivated? Enlist the signals.

The first question was asked to assess the understanding of the participants regarding the concept of motivation, that is, how they perceived motivation and how much they valued it in the teaching-learning process. The participants unanimously agreed about the importance of motivation in the language learning process. This question was included to create an academic environment for the participants to discuss the observable signals in the next questions. So, further analysis of the responses to this question was not sought.

Question 2 was the main focus of this research and its responses were analyzed in detail. All observable signals of motivation shared by the participants were taken into consideration and a comprehensive list of these signals was prepared.

Question 3 was intended to investigate further observable signals which were missing in question number 2. Most participants mentioned the same observable signals as under question number 2 such as facial expression, body language, and eye contact, whereas some of them mentioned the opposite such as no facial expression, limited or no eye contact. So, the majority of the signals mentioned in the responses to Question 2 were repeated in responses to Question 3. However, if there was a unique signal mentioned in reply to Question 3, it was included in the list of the observable signals.

The responses of the participants manifested that different teachers have

different approaches and preferences for assessing the motivation of their learners. A few participants responded in generic terms such as interest, body language, performance, and participation, while others noted minute things such as eye contact, arrival on time, bringing books, and helping teachers.

The data collected through the interviews comprised the same list of the observable signals of motivation because the questions were also the same. In interviews, only the last two questions were asked and the focus remained on the second question.

Some follow up questions were asked to make the interviewees probe for more observable signals. Questions were asked to narrow down the generic terms used by the respondents in order to identify the observable signals and that helped a lot in making an exhaustive list of such signals.

Focus group discussion was also very helpful and provided useful data in terms of the observable signals of motivation. The researchers were non-participant observers in the focus group and noted the observable signals discussed by the participants. They discussed almost all observable signals mentioned in the interviews and in the responses to the questionnaire. This triangulation in the collection of data through different tools made the data valid. Every tool confirmed the data collected through every other tool.

The findings of the research are shared under the headings of the behavioral observable signals, emotional observable signals, and cognitive observable signals.

Behavioral Observable Signals of Motivation

These signals are related to the behavioral aspects of the language learners.

The vast majority of the observable signals belonged to this group. Eye contact was the most mentioned signal in the data and almost all the participants mentioned it. There is a list of observable signals identified by the majority of the participants which includes around hundred percent attendance, arrival on time, smiling face, completing classroom tasks quickly, completing home assignments rigorously, facial expression of interest, nodding, bringing textbooks, bringing notebooks, bringing pens or pencils, personal hygiene, listening and following instructions, energetic, attentive, taking notes, positive hand movement, careful listening, asking probing questions, asking questions to clarify, raising hand to participate, and asking questions as volunteers.

There are some observable signals identified only by some participants. These include studying material in advance, trying to access more material, completing

the given tasks keenly, and participating in co-curricular activities such as debates, speeches and writing competitions. There are some signals which were mentioned by a handful of participants only such as wearing proper uniform, learning through total physical response, confident while performing, volunteer themselves for role plays, loud reading and other activities, a good sense of humor, enjoy learning, and curiosity for knowledge. These behavioral observable signals identified by the participants of the study are mentioned here in the terms used by the majority because one signal was mentioned in many ways by the participants, such as 'smiling face' and 'passing a smile', 'attend the classes regularly' and 'hundred percent attendances', 'comes regular' and 'regular attendance'. These signals not only verify the signals depicted in the previous research (Finn, [1993](#); Finn, et al. [1995](#); Finn & Rock, [1997](#); Birch & Ladd, [1997](#); Skinner & Belmont, [1993](#)) but also extend the generic terms used by the previous researchers as well.

Emotional Observable Signals

These signals are related to the relationship of the language learners with their class fellows and teachers. They also encompass the overall attitude of the learners regarding language learning. There was a consensus among the participants regarding the observable signals of motivation to a great extent. The most agreed upon observable signal was 'helping class fellows in classroom activities'. Many participants identified several signals including love and respect their teachers, enjoy pair activities, enjoy group activities, become friendly, help teachers in collecting and distributing notebooks, ready to share their work, praise teachers, feel happy in the class, and active and productive participation in the class. These signals explain what has been already suggested by the previous research in umbrella terms (Connell & Wellborn, [1991](#); Skinner & Belmont, [1993](#); Lee & Smith, [1995](#); Stipek, [2002](#)).

Cognitive Observable Signals

These signals are related to the learners' investment in learning, self-regulation, and being strategic. There are some common observable signals identified by the majority of the participants which include suggesting topics to the teachers, asking for extra resources like books and websites, and ready to take challenging tasks. There are other observable signals identified by some participants such as neat books and notebooks, time table of the study, ask and value feedback, take mistakes positively, submit extra work, work independently, and develop good plans to accomplish tasks. Some observable signals identified only by a handful of participants include ask about their progress and bring new and interesting topics to the class. These signals also affirm the findings of the previous research and

propose new avenues as well (Connell & Wellborn, [1991](#); Newmann, [1992](#); Svalberg, [2018](#); Oga-Baldwin, [2019](#)).

These observable signals can help to develop an alternative tool for the language teachers through which they can confidently measure the motivation of their learners. These observable signals should be verified by carrying out quantitative research with a large sample size in different sociocultural contexts. The results of the proposed research should be compared with the results of the established measuring tools of motivation before its recognition as an authentic tool as recommended in the next section.

Recommendations

The findings of the current research can be very helpful for all the stakeholders of the teaching-learning process as it gives confidence to the teachers in assessing the motivation of their students. Teachers should keenly observe these signals in the students of their particular classes to assess their effectiveness in motivating their learners. The effect of the materials used in teaching can also be assessed through the observation of these signals to determine their motivational value. Teachers should be trained to observe and respond to these signals in order to improve themselves. Training can help the teachers to motivate their students better.

There can be many dimensions for future research. This research is generic and it does not consider demographic variables. So, it strives to identify a reservoir of the observable signals of motivation. Future research can focus on the following aspects:

1. Studying the differences in the observable signals forecasted by young and adult learners.
2. Studying the differences in the observable signals of male and female learners.
3. Studying the perceptions of the female teachers as compared to the male teachers.
4. Studying the perceptions of the novice teachers as compared to the experienced teachers.
5. The qualitative findings of the current research can be validated and the signals identified can be rated for their importance through a quantitative study based on a larger group of teachers.
6. After identifying the most important observable signals through a quantitative research, a checklist or tool can be developed to measure the motivation of the learners which can be tested against the more established ways of testing class or individual motivation.

7. Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive observable signals can be studied separately.
8. Studying the cultural variations in the observable signals.
9. Studying the regional variations in the observable signals.

Conclusion

The current research explored the observable signals of motivation based on the perceptions of language teachers. The maximum number of observable signals fall into the category of behavioral signals. Among the most widely quoted observable behavioral signals are eye contact, arrival on time, and nodding. The second most frequent category is that of emotional observable signals. Most observed signals include suggesting topics to teachers, asking for extra resources like books and websites, and ready to take challenging tasks. The last category is that of cognitive observable signals which contains the minimum number of signals. The most reported signals in this category are neat books and notebooks, time table of the study, ask and value feedback, take mistakes positively, submit extra work, work independently, and develop good plans to accomplish tasks. Teachers need to be trained to observe the signals in this category. This area of research has a wide scope for further investigation.

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