

USING PICTURES AS MOTIVATING FACTORS IN SPEAKING LESSONS

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Abstract

In the world of globalization era, the importance of English can not be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere and serves as a lingua franca. As a result, the demand for speakers using English effectively is necessary in every country. Of all four key language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking, as a productive skill, seems intuitively the most important of all the four language skills because it can distinctly show the correctness and language errors that a language learner makes.

Using visual aids is considered to be an effective tool to motivate language learners. According to Bowen (1982:1), "...learning is a complex process and visual aids are a great help in stimulating the learning of a foreign language."

This paper, in the hope of shedding a light on improving students' motivation and quality of the speaking lesson, has three principal objectives. First, it presents the theories related to motivation and highlights the importance of motivation in language learning in general and in teaching and learning speaking skill in particular. Then, the research emphasizes the usage of pictures as a motivating factor in speaking lesson. Lastly, it gives out suggested methodologies and activities using pictures to motivate students speak up in speaking class. Some pedagogical implications of the study are discussed for learning and teaching speaking to second or foreign language learners. Hopefully, other teachers find this interesting and helpful to their situations.

Key words: pictures, motivation, speaking skill, methodology

1. Introduction

It is commonly accepted that English has now been considered and used as an international language which facilitates communication between people from all over the world. To meet the requirement of global world, it is necessary for each individual to master and use English fluently. That is the reason why English has been taught almost everywhere in Vietnam from schools, colleges to universities and mostly become a compulsory subject. Four English practicing skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) are very significant and set the basis for the ability of communication. However, nowadays, how to speak English well is still problematic for many English learners, especially students of the colleges and universities.

Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/ foreign language learning. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent.

Using visual aids in general and pictures in particular to teach speaking skill for the students is one pedagogical issue which attracts the attention of not only educator but also many learners and people concerned. Thus it is worth investigating the roles of pictures in speaking lesson as it might affect their motivation and the way they learn.

2. Literature review of related theories

In this part, some remarkable concepts will be cited for comparison and general views of motivation and the matter of using pictures as motivating factors in speaking lesson.

2.1 Definition of motivation

Motivation is considered as an integral part in the achievement of any goal. It is an important factor that has a positive influence in any educational learning process especially in learning second language. However, it is not easy to define motivation and different researchers approach motivation in different ways.

According to Gardner (1982), motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements: effort, desire and affect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language, and affect means the learner's emotional reactions related to language study.

Meanwhile Harmer (1991) explains motivation as the "internal drive" that pushes somebody to do something. If people think that goal is worth doing and attractive, then they would try to achieve it; this is called "the action driven by motivation". In addition, Parsons, R. D., Hinson, S. and Sardo-Brown, D. (2001) define motivation as an important component or factor in the learning process. Learning and motivation have the same importance in order to achieve something. Learning makes us gain new knowledge and skills and motivation pushes us or encourage us to go through the learning process. Motivation is also "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

From all the concepts above, it can be seen that different researchers approach motivation in different ways. However, there is still one thing in common that motivation combines effort and desire plus favorable and occurs as a result of combination of internal and external influences.

2.2 Classifications of motivation

Motivation can be classified in various ways due to different perspectives among psycholinguistics.

2.2.1 Short – term and long – term goal

According to Harmer (1991), the word 'goal' is used to categorize the motivation in second language learning into two types:

While **short-term goal** means when students wish to succeed in doing something in the near future, for example, students who want to pass their examination or to get good grade or high scores; **long-term goal** refers to a wish of students or learners who want to get a better job in the future or to be able to communicate with people who use the language that they study or the target language.

2.2.2 Integrative and instrumental motivation

Krashen (1985:22) mentioned the following factors which are rather related to motivation that will attempt to relate the second language ability to these two functions.

Integrative motivation: According to Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1974:98), “An integrative orientation involves an interest in learning an L2 because of a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group.” This motivation occurs when learners wish to identify with the culture of the L2 group. Ellis (1994:513) pointed out that those learners with integrative motivation are more active in the class and are less likely to drop out.

Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is characterized as the “learner’s desire to learn the language for various purposes of study or career promotion” (Wright, A., & Haleem, S. (1991:276). Ellis (1994:75) mentioned “some functional reasons” such as to pass an examination, to get a better job, or to get a place at university. These reasons motivated students to learn L2 because it is considered to open up an educational and economic opportunities for them.

2.2.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation

Another distinction of motivation is that of “intrinsic motivation” versus “extrinsic motivation”

Intrinsic motivation is an inner desire of the student to fulfill a positive learning outcome. Intrinsic motivation itself is goal related, it is an independent of any kind of external value.

Extrinsic motivation derives from an anticipation of rewards such as: praise, awards, prizes, evaluation and fear for punishment. Externally motivated students do the activity in order to obtain some reward or to avoid some punishment external to the activity itself.

As it has been discussed earlier that the types of motivation vary from context to context (Ellis, 1997). In some cases, both integrative and instrumental motivations are also grouped under the branch of ~~intrinsic~~ **extrinsic** (Harmer, 1991:4). Despite of different ways of classifying motivation, researchers reach the common agreement that motivation is an important factor in L2 learning and all types are essential in fulfilling the purpose of learning. Therefore, it is necessary to combine different types of motivation as “motivation varies from person to person depending on learning context and task” (Ellis, 1997). Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long term goals and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement. On the other hand, high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one’s language aptitude and learning conditions.

2.3 The Importance of motivation in learning speaking

Motivation has an important role in success and failure in learning a second language especially speaking lesson. Motivated students are likely to learn more and even more quickly than students who are less motivated. In a particular learning situation, students who are less motivated are likely to lose their attention, misbehave and cause discipline problems. On the contrary, students who are more highly motivated will participate actively and pay more attention to a certain learning task or activity.

2.3.1 Factors that affect motivation in second language learning

Four factors that can affect the learners’ motivation in learning L2, especially learning speaking process, according to Harmer (1991) are the following :

Physical condition which means the atmosphere in class.

Method of teaching which refers to the way that students are taught must affect their motivation.

The teachers as the most powerful variable of motivation and demotivation, can become a major part in demotivating the learners.

Success refers to the appropriate level of challenge designed by the teachers. As Harmer

pointed out, to give high challenge activities may have a negative effect on motivation. Students can also equally be demotivated by too low level of challenge.

3. Using pictures as motivating factors in speaking lesson.

3.1 Definition of picture

Cobuild (1987) defined a picture as “a visual representation or image painted, drawn, photographed, or otherwise rendered on a flat surface.” It is obvious that the most outstanding feature of a picture is its visibility to learners; teachers can use it for a lot of pedagogical purposes. There are some vivid examples of common types of pictures such as: visible pictures printed in textbook; cut from magazines or newspapers; drawn on cards or boards, shown in slides in PowerPoint programs.

3.1.1 Different kinds of pictures

Pictures can be categorized according to the size and design. Each type has its own characteristics which teachers should consider carefully when adopting them as a teaching tool in ESL or EFL classes.

Wall pictures

A wall picture refers to “a large illustration of a scene or events”, said Bowen (1982).

Sequence pictures

According to Bowen, this type of pictures presents a single subject that will “reveal one story or theme, like a strip of cartoon, in a connected set of illustration”.

Flash cards

Picture flash cards are pictures drawn on cards which are “held up” rapidly by the teacher (Bowen, 1982).

3.2 Using picture to motivate students in speaking class

Using pictures will make a number of benefits in teaching a second language. Firstly, pictures can promote learners’ interest in learning foreign language. Secondly, Byrne (1990) maintains that pictures can stimulate students’ discussion and interpretation of the topic. Thirdly, students’ imaginativeness can be inspired thanks to pictures and other visual aids. Moore (1982) assumed: “Visual aids, especially pictures and colorful posters can add much to the attractiveness and atmosphere of a classroom”. Furthermore, Wright (1989) states that pictures can motivate students to take part in speaking activities.

4. Methods to use pictures in speaking lesson

How to use pictures and when to use them depends a lot on the teachers (their ability, their flexibility and their purposes as well). In this study, there are two main kinds of picture practice mentioned such as: Mechanical practice and communicative practice. To begin with, it is necessary for readers to differentiate these two types of using pictures. According to Andrew Wright in *Picture for Language Learning* (1989):

4.1 Mechanical practice

In mechanical practice the teacher wants students to concentrate primarily on imitating the sound of the language and less concerned with meaning. In other way, with mechanical practice, the students concentrate chiefly on grammatical or phonological accuracy. Pictures can be used to motivate the learner and to remind him or her what to say. In any case, *the teacher usually knows exactly what the student should say.*

4.1.1. Repetition

In this activity, the teacher points at the picture and ask students to repeat what they have said.

For example: Teacher points at a picture of two boys who have been fighting and says: “*They have been fighting*”.

Students repeated in chorus.

In this case, students can make familiar with *present perfect continuous tense* and the expression of that tense.

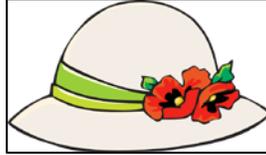
4.1.2. Recombination

Recombination includes: question and answer, substitutions and transformations. Pictures motivate and cue responses non-verbally. The teacher often provides a sentence pattern to guide the students.

Example 1:

Yesterday they bought a

cat
hat
T.V



The teacher can use a composite picture to ask variety of questions about it, usually concentrating on a teaching point.

For example: (Teacher wants to teach near future, she points to a girl who is obviously about to find a handbag in the picture and asks: “*What is the girl going to do*”?)

Student: *The girl is going to find a handbag.*

4.1.3. Pronunciation

Pictures can be used to illustrate certain sounds. Pictures can be stuck on cards and the sound can be given under the picture.

4.1.4. Using folding paper for mechanical practice

In these activities, paper can be folded, torn, cut and glued. The teacher demonstrates the paper devices and gives the example of the language. The students can then handle the device themselves using the language appropriately as the teacher used it. I would like to introduce here some interesting examples using folding paper:

The face: (teacher wants to teach vocabulary of face parts)



The twins: (Teacher wants to contrast facial features)



Holly likes swimming: (Teacher wants to illustrate “likes” and “dislikes”)



Fortune-teller: (Future tense with “will”)



4.2. Communicative practice

In communicative practice the students make use of the patterns chosen by teacher, but they and the teacher give the value of meaning to what they are saying. *The teacher does not know exactly what the students want to say.*

4.2.1. Describing

In most of the activities, the student is challenged to describe something so well that another student can identify it by pointing, drawing, commenting, etc.

Examples using describing activity:

Describe a picture: Each student is given a picture by the teacher. He or she writes a description of the picture. The teacher collects all the pictures and displays them. The descriptions then are collected and redistributed to the students so that each student gets another student’s description. Each student must then find the picture to match his or her description.

Describe and draw: Students can work in pairs. One student has a picture or a plan, but keeps it secret with the partner. Then, he or she tries to describe so that their partner can make an accurate drawing of it.

Saying anything you know:

The class is shown a picture of scene or series of individual pictures. The students say anything they can about it. This is an opportunity for them to call out any word that they know and practicing describing, interpreting and associating things in pictures.



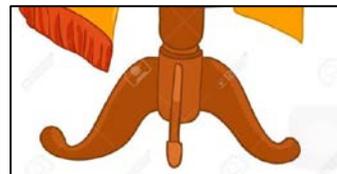
4.2.2. Identifying

In this type of activity, the student is challenged to identify and name the picture or part of a picture which is difficult to recognize. Here are some examples:

Unusual views: The teacher shows an unusual view of an object or a detail and asks students to identify it.

T: What’s this?/ What’re these?

S: It’s a table.



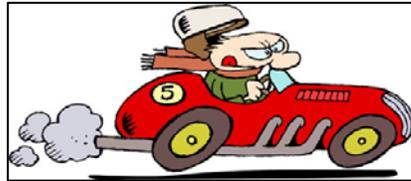
Picture details: The teacher shows part of a picture and asks the students to identify it. The teacher can do it by covering over a big picture so that small part can be seen, or by cutting a small piece of a picture out of a large picture. Students have to guess what is beneath.

4.2.3. Matching

In these activities, students are challenged to find a relationship between two bits of information.

Imaginative matching: Two pictures are chosen randomly and the students are challenged to find a connection between them.

E.g.: Car and Trumpet



Student A: They are both made of metal

Student B: The man was playing the trumpet while they were driving.

Find the difference: Students must spot out the differences between two pictures and find the way to describe and speak it out.



4.2.4. Grouping

In these activities, students must find a relationship between more than two bits of information.

Grouping pictures: Students are given a number of pictures and asked to arrange them in groups.

Picture jigsaws: A number of pictures are required, each of which should be glued onto card and then cut into pieces. Each student should be given one piece of the picture, describing it and trying together to put all the pieces to make a complete picture.

Odd one out: Four pictures are shown and the students are asked to say which one does not belong with the others and state the reason why.



Student: The bicycle is odd one out.

Teacher: Why?

Student: Because bicycle riding uses physical movement while other vehicles use fuel.

4.2.5. Sequencing

The students can be challenged to put various bits of information into a sequence. This sequence may be objective, for example, the stages in a process (ploughing, planting, fertilizing, etc.); recipes; industrial processes; what to do in case of a road accident; what to do when someone faints, etc. Alternatively, the sequencing can be subjective, as in storytelling.

Gapped text

The students complete the text with gaps in it by referring to the picture.

Jumbled sentences

Individual or pairwork. Jumbled sentences are given to the students. They write them out in the correct order, guided by a sequence of pictures.

Missing part

Students are given a story with the beginning, the middle or the end missing. The students write out the given text and add in the missing part, based on one or more pictures. After that, they can tell a story in front of class.

4.2.6. Ordering

In this activity, students are asked to place a number of pictures in order of quality. Their judgement of the qualities of the pictures can be objective or subjective.

The best fruit

A wall picture or a number of separate pictures of fruits are shown to the students. The students are asked to say which fruit should be the best to take on a school trip (objective) or to put the fruits in their own order of preference (subjective)



The best holiday

The students are shown a number of pictures representing different types of holiday. They are asked to say which one they would prefer and which they wouldn't like.

4.2.7. Memorizing

Challenging people's memories and ability to memorize is the basis for a number of well-known games. The ability to remember is a key factor in successful language learning. The activities in this section contribute not only to the remembering of words but, more significantly, to general techniques for improving memory.

Remembering a scene

The student looks at the wall picture carefully and then stands with his or her back to it. He or she then tries to describe the picture from memory. The class can see the picture and are allowed to ask questions. The activity can also be done by asking the students if they can remember what is behind them in the classroom or what it is possible to see from the front door of the school.

Remembering a sequence

The teacher tells a story illustrated by a number of picture cards which are shown to the class and then propped up, for example, on the board self. The teacher then turns the pictures to face the board. On the back of each picture card there is a number. Students, working in pairs, try to remember the story, making written notes related to the each number. Then the class reconstructs the story orally, discussing and then agreeing on a final version. The teacher then turns the pictures to face the class and rereads the original story so that it can be compared with the class's version.

In addition, we also would like to suggest some sources of pictures that can help teachers of English when they prepare for their speaking lessons:

The following books can be used as pictures references:

- Longman. (1976). *Wall Pictures for Language Practice*.
- McGarath, I., & Arnord, E. J. (1981). *Picture Pack, Stories for Oral Work*.
- Plumb, J., Farris, D., & Heinemann, H. (1970). *Contact English Wall Pictures*.
- Wright, A. (1993). *1000 Pictures for Teacher to Copy*: Nelson.

Newspapers or magazines can also good resources for teachers to take pictures.

In addition, teachers can find suitable pictures in the Internet which are suitable for their purpose of teaching. With pictures taken from the Internet, teachers can work on their computers to have some changes with them like resizing, changing colors and inserting texts with them.

5. Conclusion

In short, with all the suggestions in this part, we hope to provide ourselves and other teachers of English some useful activities using pictures and some available sources in which they can use as references when preparing for speaking lessons.

As shown in this study, the use of pictures can be effective in promoting students' interest and motivation in speaking activities in English class. In this study, we have discussed both the general knowledge of motivation and pictures and give a number of pedagogical implications for teaching speaking skill using pictures. We do believe that these activities using pictures will create an exciting learning environment where students will be motivated to engage in speaking activities in English class. However, needless to say, in all cases the most important factor is the teacher. The fact that all the useful activities above will become really useful or not depends a lot on the teacher's ability and flexibility in using them. Teachers' skills can be shown by how they choose the suitable activity, why they choose them

and when they use them. Before selecting any activity for speaking lesson, teachers should ask themselves: why we choose that activity, when we can use it and whether or not our students will get involved in our activity.

Besides, while Internet, books, newspapers and magazines are very potential resources for teachers to explore, teachers should also prepare themselves the ability to draw or illustrate pictures in case they forget to bring pictures or something may happen with their preparation. In many situations, the drawings created by teachers on the board take a lot interest from students. The book “*1000 Pictures for Teacher to Copy*” of Andrew Wright (1993) is considered a good resource to deal with this problem.

In conclusion, despite a lot of limitation, we do believe that our study will be a helpful resource to English teachers who are asking themselves how to face with students’ lack of participation and interest in their speaking lessons. All the activities mentioned above are what our colleagues and we have used in our lesson and some more from the book “*Pictures in language learning*” of Andrew Wright (1989). We do hope to get more feedbacks and interesting activities in further research.

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