Correlates of Some Motivational Factors on the Performance of Adult French Learners in Nigeria

Oluranti Ogunbiyi
Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Lagos State, Nigeria

Abstract: This study sought to determine the degree of prediction of some motivational factors on the performance of adult French learners. Specifically, the influence of the following motivational factors were examined: Perception of needs, job placement and attitude to French language. An ex-post-facto research design was used in the study. Three hundred and fifty-four first year adult learners from 9 adult French learning centers in Oyo, Ogun and Lagos States were selected purposively for the study. Data was collected using 3 instruments, a French language Attitudinal Scale (FLAS), a Questionnaire on Motivation for French Learning (QMFL) and a French Language Performance Test (FLPT). Essentially, the data were subjected to multiple regression analysis. From the results, it was discovered that the selected motivational variables viz; perception of needs, job placement and attitude to French language, actually have a high predictive value for adult learners' achievement in French language. Learners' attitudes to French language stand out as the most significant variable in predicting performance of adult French learners. Implications of these findings for motivating adults to learn are discussed in the study.

Key words: Motivational factors, correlate, french learning, performance, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The psychological principles of motivation and learning have been a subject of discourse at many academic fora. Many studies have been carried out in this field over the years. One common thing about these studies is that a majority of them have focused on motivation and learning of in-school children. A great deal of data generated in this field has indicated that students' learn better when they are well motivated (Gardner *et al.*, 1992; Ogunbiyi, 1998). It is important, however, that scarcely can one find any study focusing on motivation and adult learners. It is quite important to set the premise here that what actually motivates in-school children to learn are different from what may motivate adult learners. Whereas, a child may consider going to school as normal because he sees other children going to school, for adult learners this may not be quite so. Also, whereas the child is attending school largely because of intrinsic motivation, a majority of adult learners do so by instrumental or extrinsic motivation. More prominently, economic factors, status, etc. are some of the factors that would make an adult to want to learn more. It is therefore, imperative to investigate what motivates these adult learners more especially those in the non-formal education settings to learn.

Psychologists and educators have given different definitions of motivation. Woolfolk (1998) opined that motivation is the "why" of every behaviour. Motivation is concerned with the stimulation and influencing of human behaviour. It is what makes people act or behave in the way they do. The process of motivation is fundamentally about providing people the means to achieve their goals. Motivation is the internal force that arouses, regulates and sustains all the more important actions of the individual. Vinacke (1968) is of the opinion that motivation has to do with "the forces that maintain and alter the quality, intensity and direction of behaviour. He interprets behaviour as "pushed" from within versus "pulled from without" Sharing a similar view, King (1990) states that motivation is the process of initiating and directing behaviour. A motivator is, therefore, that force which impels individuals to behave the way he or she does.

Human motives are generally based on needs and needs are neither simple nor divorced from the environment. An individual produces and sustains behaviour when he finds it rewarding to do so, that is when the behaviour accomplishes an objective, which satisfies a need. Sharing the same view with King (1990) and Obashoro (1997) describes motivation as the contemporary determinants of choice persistence and vigour of goal directed behaviour. In line with the above

named educators Ogunbiyi (1998) defines motivation as "the process of arousing and sustaining learning activities".

Dada (1976) defines learning as a process whereby a response with a low probability of occurrence is shaped to a higher rate of occurrence through the judicious and timely introduction of reinforcing rewards. Learning occurs in animal as well as in human organisms. Learning can occur anywhere the organism encounters some sort of experience, provided this experience results in a relatively permanent change in the behaviour of the organism. Learning is an important process in human behaviour and it pervades all human activities.

Araromi (1987) defines learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour resulting from conditions of practice while Okoye (1983) sees learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour that is the direct result of past experience. According to Obashoro (1997) learning always refers to some systemic change in behaviour or behaviour disposition that occurs as a consequence of experience in some specified situation.

Learning she says is "essentially the process of change in mental and physical behaviour induced in a living organism by experience... the final stage of learning is habit and the result of habit is skill". Learning, therefore, is basically habit formation.

Bolarin *et al.* (1998) is of the opinion that learning is controlled by the conditions under which it takes place and that, as long as individuals are subjected to the same conditions, they will learn in the same way. They further stressed that what appears to be variation in learning ability is no more than different learning experiences.

Ezewu (1987) opined that learning is the major organizational goal of the school, the achievement of which depends largely on the learner and his home, the teachers and the general tone of the school. Effective learning depends on the nature of the school administration, the interaction between the teacher and the learners, the nature of the subject matter and its organization.

Gagne (1985) proposed a detailed classification of learning in an hierarchically arranged order. His order of learning are as follows:

- Signal learning.
- Stimulus-response learning.
- Chains and verbal sequences.
- Verbal association.
- Multiple discriminations.
- Concept learning.
- Principle learning.
- Problem-solving.

According to him, learning does not go on in the same way for all behaviours learned. Some processes are more appropriate for learning certain things. Gagne's classification is very useful to language teachers in breaking complex components into simple ones. It also helps to reinforce the students when they give appropriate responses.

While relating motivation to learning, Obanya (1974) opined that motivation is the private domain of the learner. Consequently, teachers should try to meet the needs and aspirations of their students with the best they can provide, thus channeling their motivation in directions that are satisfying to them, therefore what teachers should seek to stimulate is self-directed learning, which results from self-realizing motivation.

Research questions: This is essentially an ex-post facto study. The aim was to determine the degree of prediction of some motivational factors on the performance of adult French learners in French language. Specifically the influence of the following motivational factors were examined; perception of needs, job placement and attitude to French language. Two major research questions were addressed in the study, these are:

- To what extent would the independent variables i.e. those motivational factors when taken together predict adult learners' performance in French language?
- What is the relative contribution of each of the variables to the prediction of adult learners' performance in French?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample for the study consisted of 354 first-year Adult French Learners purposively selected from nine Adult French learning centers in Oyo and Lagos States. Some of these centers are: Alliance Franciase, Bodija-Ibadan, Alliance Franciase, Victoria-Island, Lagos and the French village, Badagry. Three main instruments were used to collect data for this study. They are:

- Questionnaire on motivation for French learning,
- French language performance test and
- French language attitudinal scale.

Each of these instruments were properly validated. The questionnaire on motivation for French learning which has been used by Obayan (1974) and Dada (1976) was again re-validated by this researcher and a reliability coefficient of 0.62 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha.

Also the performance test was validated using the pre-test and post-test method and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The French language attitudinal scale which has been used by Ezewu (1987) was also revalidated for the purpose of this study and a reliability coefficient of 0.68 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha.

After the due processes of identifying and selecting the centers, the researcher made the subjects complete the questionnaires in a classroom setting and collected same back immediately. Whereas, it was not too difficult for a majority of our sample to complete the attitude aspects of the questionnaire, the French language performance test was a little bit difficult and time consuming. This particular test was written in French language and each of the sections i.e., oral French, dictation, listening and reading comprehension was found a bit difficult by the adult learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis: Data collected from the study was analysed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. Essentially, the multiple regression analysis was the main tool employed.

Research question 1: To what extent would the independent variables taken all together predict adult learners performance in French language? This was put to test, using multiple regression analysis.

The total contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of the criterion variable is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the relationship between the three independent variables and the dependent variable. It shows that there were positive correlations between the variables. This implies that the three motivational factors i.e., perception of needs, job placement and attitude to French Language are predictive of learner,s performance in French language. This finding was in line with the findings of Ezewu (1987) that the more the motivation the better the learning.

Research questions 2: What is the relative contribution of each of the variables to the prediction of adult learner's performance in French language? This question was put to test using partial correlation statistics. The result obtained from the test are summarized in Table 2.

From Table 2 it could be observed that perception of needs (x_1) was negatively correlated with adult learners' performance in French language. This implies that it is not a good predictor of learners' performance. This was not in

Table 1: Regression summary of perception of needs, job placement and attitude to French language, explaining the performance of adult learners' in French language

Multiple R	0.23260
R Square	0.05410
Adjusted E Square	0.04051
Standard Error	2.12703

R = 0.23260, df = p<

Table 2: Relative contribution of each of the three-independent variables

Variable	B	SE (B)	Beta	T	Sig. T
Perception of Needs x_1	-0.2957	0.02177	-0.07462	-1.358	0.1753
Job Placement x_2	-0.04581	0.9506	-0.02629	-0.482	0.6302
Attitude to French language x_3	0.05683	0.01747	0.17741	3.253	0.0013

line with the finding of Dada (1976) that if certain feelings are experienced for a time, they will lead to a particular self image which will influence expectation of future performance. From the same table, it can be observed that the attitude to French language had positive predictive value of (Beta = 0.17741).

This was in line with the finding of Gardner *et al.* (1992) that attitude towards a language has to do with their perception of that language as a subject and those who are positively disposed to the language learn better. With regards to job placement (x_2), it has a Beta value of -0.02629.

The findings in this study however, runs counter to the initial assumption that the position an individual occupies on a job will determine his/her level of motivation to the learning of French Language.

Specifically the initial assumption was that the nature of an individual's job and the position an individual occupies on the job would determine the rate at which a person is motivated to learn French.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, it is important to stress that the three motivational factors, language attitude, perception of needs and job placement have predictive values for adult learners' achievement in French Language.

Furthermore, it was observed that as a single factor, language attitude has the highest contribution to the level of the prediction of the variables, followed by job placement and perception of needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since, French-speaking countries surround Nigeria, French Language should be made compulsory for all secondary school students. This will ensure a positive attitude to French language learning in Nigeria.

The government should provide schools with audio-visual materials like television, video and computers to facilitate the teaching and learning of French Language.

REFERENCES

Araromi, M.A., 1987. Effect of two methods of teaching French on motivation, attitude and achievement of some Nigerian Secondary Schools Pupils. (Unpublished) Ph.D. Thesis University of Ibadan, pp: 54-60.

Bolarin *et al.*, 1998. Principles of Behaviour Modification. (A Practical Approach). Olu-Akin Published, Ibadan pp: 94-96.

Dada, A., 1976. L'apprentissage du Francais au Nigeria: Relation entre Motivation, Contexte Pedagogique et Performance. (These pour le doctorat de llle cycle) Bordeaux Paris, pp: 32-38.

Ezewu, E.E., 1987. Social Psychological Factors in Human Learning in School. Onitsha Leadway Books Ltd., pp: 95-98.

Gagne, R., 1985. The Conditions of Learning. (4th Edn.), New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston. In: O.M. Ogunbiyi, 1998 (Unpublished) Ph.D Thesis. University of Ibadan, pp: 58-61.

Gardner, R.C. *et al.*, 1992. Integrative Motivation, induced anxiety and language learning in a controlled environment. Studies in Second Language learning acquisition. London, 14: 197-201.

King, A., 1990. Enhancing Peer Interaction and learning in the classroom through reciprocal questioning. Am. Edu. Res. J., 27: 664-672.

Obanya, P.A.I., 1974. The Nature, Direction and Extent of the Dropout Problem in the Nigerian French class. In P.A.I. Obanya (Ed.), University of Ibadan: Institute of Education, pp: 8-17.

Obashoro, O.A., 1997. An evaluation of french language programmes for adults in private institutions in Nigeria, (Unpublished) Ph.D Theses. University of Lagos, pp: 120-125.

Ogunbiyi, O.M., 1998. Some motivational Factors as Predictors of Performance in French among Nigerian Adult Learners in French learning Centers. An (Unpublished) Ph.D Thesis University of Ibadan, pp: 38-42.

Okoye, N.N., 1983. The psychology of motivation. Mimeographed. University of Ibadan: Department of Guidance and Counselling, pp: 35-40.

Vinacke, W., 1968. Foundation of Psychology. New York. An Monstrand Reinhold Company. In M.A. Araromi, 1987. Effect of two methods of teaching French on motivation, attitude and Achievement of some Nigerian Secondary School Pupils. (Unpublished) (Ph.D) Thesis. University of Ibadan, pp: 54-60.

Woolfolk, A.E., 1998. Educational Psychology. (7th Edn.), Allyn and Bacon. USA., pp: 372-375.