

Motivation Reasons and Suggestions for Junior High school Students in English Teaching

Siwei Li*

Department of Polytechnic College of Hebei University of Science & Technology, Shijiazhuang, China

*Corresponding author: OnTheGround8686@outlook.com

Abstract. As a compulsory subject for the college entrance examination in China, English learning has always been highly valued. With the development of educational concepts and technologies, there is an increasing amount of research on English education. However, most studies are conducted from the perspectives of teachers and parents. There is relatively little direct investigation into students' learning motivation and interests. Through a questionnaire survey, this paper mainly studies the motivation of junior high school students to learn English. The questionnaire was directly distributed to middle school students for filling out. Also, students have different motivations for learning English. Most students (60%) enjoy English, but a considerable portion (around 30%) learn English just because it is a compulsory course. At the same time, many students listen to English songs and watch English TV dramas/movies. In addition, about 58% students hope that the teacher can teach more extracurricular English knowledge. Therefore, more emphasis could be placed on enhancing students' interest in learning in English teaching. Moreover, teachers can make appropriate use of extracurricular English materials, such as English pop songs or film and television works, as teaching tools to enhance students' interest in learning and teaching outcomes.

Keywords: English learning motivation, Chinese junior high school students, Questionnaire survey.

1. Introduction

English education in junior high school is a very important part of English learning. This has a huge impact on how students learn English for years to come. However, in the same classroom, junior high school students' English performance shows great differences. For this study it was of importance to investigate why this difference occurs in addition how to solve it for improving the English performance of junior high school students. This question is related to junior high school students' learning motivation, classroom teaching method. Recent theoretical developments have revealed that the influence of learning motivation on English learning in addition the influence of teaching method on English learning. Motivation is a driving force in L2 learning, determining the amount of effort learners are willing to expend [1]. In addition, motivation is an important factor determining success in foreign/second language (L2) learning [1]. In Chinese English classes, grammar translation methods (GTM) is the most frequently used teaching method. GTM with its focus on teacher-centered is effective. In addition, translation, as its major technique, into L1 with accuracy in understanding synonyms helps explain the meaning and remove the misunderstanding [2]. Nevertheless, GTM has its demerits. This kind of learning method will make English learning become rigid. Moreover, this teaching method focuses on improving learners' grammar knowledge, rather than enhancing their language proficiency. What is more, the GTM method of learning includes a lot of grammar memorization and exercises, which may discourage beginners from learning English. For beginners, the important thing is to first form an interest in addition stick to it[2].

All the above article discusses the importance of learning motivation in addition the influence of teaching methods on English learning. However, most previous studies have investigated teachers or parents, but not the junior high school students themselves. The evaluation of teaching methods often comes from feedback from teachers, without fully considering students' opinions. Meanwhile, surveys on motivation are more likely to come from adult students, and the thoughts of middle school students are often overlooked. Therefore, the motivation of middle school students in English learning, their attitudes towards English learning (difficulties and interests), as well as their feelings and

teaching suggestions towards existing teaching methods are the focus of this study. This study will conduct a survey on junior high school students through a questionnaire including 12 questions. This paper aims to directly collect the ideas of middle school students and provide suggestions for teaching.

2. Method

This questionnaire is designed by the author including the following 12 questions to investigate the whether the students like learning English, whether they find English difficult, their attitude towards the relationship between learning and interest, their learning method, and their attitude towards their English teachers' teaching method and suggestions.

Table 1. Questions in the survey.

Question 1	Do you like learning English? Or do you just study English as a normal test subject?
Question 2	Do you think English is difficult for you?
Question 3	What do you think are the difficulties in English?
Question 4	If you leave the classroom, will you still be exposed to English related content? For example, European in addition American games, music, movies, TV series.
Question 5	Do you think interest is very important for English?
Question 6	The main way you learn English is?
Question 7	The way you want your teacher to teach?
Question 8	Do you think grades are the most discouraging factor for you to learn English? Would you like to study English if you do not have exam results? Or give up learning English?
Question 9	The reason why you like learning English is?
Question 10	What problems do you think your teacher has in the course of teaching?
Question 11	What is the reason you do not like studying English?
Question 12	What changes do you think would boost your motivation to learn English?

To collect as many questionnaires as possible, the survey was distributed online. This way, the questionnaire can reach more suitable respondents. Moreover, the survey group was junior high school students from several different schools. Because the differences between schools in addition regions were not taken into consideration in this research. Eventually, the sample size of the survey is 70 people. Valid questionnaires are 60. Invalid questionnaires include questionnaires with the response time much lower than average. This response time indicates that the respondent may not have taken the question seriously and chose answers randomly. Thus, their answers are ineffective in understanding the true thoughts of middle school students and are therefore excluded.

3. Results

3.1. Students attitude towards English learning

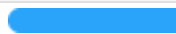

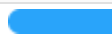
Options	Subtotal	Scale
Like	42	 60%
Dislike	2	 2.86%
As a normal test subject	26	 37.14%
Total	70	

Fig. 1 Results for the question: Do you like learning English? Or do you just study English as a normal test subject?


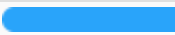

Options	Subtotal	Scale
Easy course	19	 27.14%
Medium, takes some time to master	44	 62.86%
Hard, weak subject	7	 10%
Total	70	

Fig. 2 Results for the question: Do you think English is difficult for you?


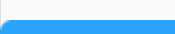
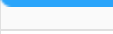

Options	Subtotal	Scale
Too many words, hard to recite.	27	 38.57%
Grammar problems, difficulty reading sentences or texts.	49	 70%
Unable to master certain test types, such as writing, poor listening ability.	29	 41.43%
It is difficult to keep learning English for a long time.	18	 25.71%
Total	70	

Fig. 3 Results for the question: What do you think are the difficulties in English?

It can be seen from Fig.1, and 2, 60% students like learning English. In addition, students who consider English as a simple or moderately difficult subject take up 90%. Moreover, Fig. 3 shows that 70% students think grammar is their difficulties in English learning, which is followed by failure in some tests (41.43%) and vocabulary (38.57%). These factors may cause students' lower grades or interest in learning English.

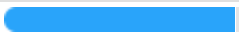

Options	Subtotal	Scale
Yes	57	 81.43%
No	13	 18.57%
Total	70	

Fig. 4 Results for the question: If you leave the classroom, will you still be exposed to English related content? For example, European in addition American games, music, movies, TV series.

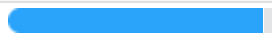

Options	Subtotal	Scale
Important	63	 90%
Insignificance	7	 10%
Total	70	

Fig. 5 Results for the question: Do you think interest is very important for English?

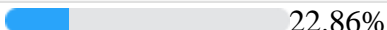
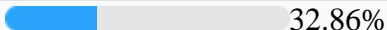
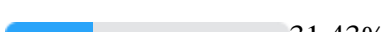
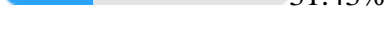
Options	Subtotal	Scale
Prepare lessons before.	16	 22.86%
Look up information or ask others.	23	 32.86%
Rely on the teacher to teach in addition practice after class.	22	 31.43%
Solve difficult problems by doing questions or looking for solutions online.	9	 12.86%
Total	70	

Fig. 6 Results for the question: The main way you learn English is?

From Fig. 4, it can be seen that most students are willing to access English-related content after class. In addition, according to Fig. 5, students believe that interest is important to learning. Moreover, Fig. 6 shows the main methods of learning English. However, no matter what method the students take, there is a lack of knowledge absorption.

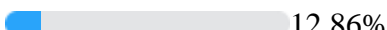
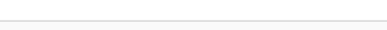


Options	Subtotal	Scale
Traditional teaching, around the test to do knowledge explanation.	9	 12.86%
Supplement extracurricular English knowledge appropriately	58	 82.86%
Students study on their own, in addition teachers give appropriate instructions	3	 4.29%
Other	0	 0%
Total	70	

Fig. 7 Results for the question: The way you want your teacher to teach?

Fig. 7 indicates that teachers should explain extracurricular knowledge in class to attract students to listen to the class more carefully. For students who have difficulties in learning English, to a certain extent, we should avoid using grades, rankings in addition other forms to urge students to study, which may magnify students' frustration in addition even fear of learning English.

3.2. Factors influencing students' motivation in learning English

Some students said that grades are the factor that discourages students from learning English. Other students think they have problems in English listening, which affect their motivation. Also, too much homework, difficult to remember words, unable to read articles, boring learning process are also factors. In contrary, factors promoting learning motivations include: good English teacher, interested in life and culture abroad, or interested in English itself. Some students take learning English as a hobby.

3.3. Attitude towards current English classroom and suggestions

Some students reported that they did not understand what their teacher said. The teacher has some problems with classroom management, such as poor class order. Teachers are too strict, in addition some teachers are not serious enough in class. Some teachers also have problems with English pronunciation. What is more, students suggest changes in the teaching method, or even the evaluation method. For example, most students in China take written tests with fixed answers. They believe other form of test like written reports, oral tests and term papers may be better. In the answers, students also presented ideas like eliminating tests and changing English teachers.

4. Discussion

Why do these students hold these opinions? The first reason lies in the single teaching method. For example, GTM teaching method is widely used in English classes in China. This method was used for the purpose of helping students to read and appreciate foreign language literature[3]. This teaching method pays more attention to the teaching effect by doing a lot of exercises and memorizing a lot of grammar. This method will affect students' interest in learning, especially the students with poor learning ability or who are not interested in English. Besides the intelligent factor, the non-intelligent factors—motivation, attitude, interests, age, methods, will and character[4]. Therefore, teachers should use more teaching methods in the class. Moreover, teachers should give guidance to students' learning methods based on their grades. Besides, schools should strengthen the training of teachers, especially the professional ability training of English teachers, which is especially obvious in economically underdeveloped areas. One of the significant issues within teaching and learning is the way of training and education teachers. That idea suggests that teachers' quality will affect the students' learning[5]. The students interviewed in this questionnaire are mainly from Ningxia and Hebei Province, which are both economically underdeveloped provinces. After receiving training, teachers should master different teaching methods. In conclusion, teachers would better turn students into the leading role and promote their initiative through multiple methods[6]. Teachers should not use the old teaching plans for teaching for years, but integrate them more closely with the ever-changing reality. It is more conducive to making students feel the close connection between the knowledge they have learned in addition to social life. It is important for a teacher to know the latest methods of teaching a foreign language[7].

The second reason is the frequent examination, the single way of evaluation and ranking. Poor grades lead to weariness in study, which is extremely unfavorable to the subsequent study. In teaching practice, we can adopt fuzzy scoring methods for some students with poor grades, such as good, excellent, excellent in addition so on.

Thirdly, teachers often neglect the motivation of students in learning English. For different students, they can have a conversation after class to guide students' English learning with their motivation. Many people learn English to keep up with the worldwide advances in areas like education technology. English is additionally necessary for graduation[8]. Both are the driving forces that make people pursue a goal and overcome obstacles because people with higher self-efficacy and motivation do their best and do not easily give up when confronted with difficulties[9]. Sometimes, it is not that students hate learning English, but that their motivation cannot be guided by the teacher. When the motivation is properly guided, it helps to promote the initiative of students in learning English. Furthermore, in teaching, teachers can group students with different problems, such as those who have problems in reciting words into one group in addition to those who have problems in English listening. After the class, the teacher assigned homework for different groups, so as to better improve the weak points of students. The focus of homework setting should not only unilaterally emphasize the improvement of students' test-taking ability, but also actively introduce cultural pragmatic knowledge, focus on consolidating students' language communication ability, and truly improve English discipline literacy[10].

5. Conclusion

This study finds that the influence on students' English is multifaceted, in addition the motivation of students to learn English is also multifaceted. Therefore, in this process, we should guide students to learn English from the perspective of students. The students who really do not want to learn English account for a very small number in the survey, most of them are because the education method is not suitable for other problems. Therefore, after combining the feedback of students, this study analyzes what changes teachers should make, which is conducive to improving students' English performance. Finally, this study does not fully consider the actual education situation in different places, in addition English teaching should be changed in the future according to the actual education situation in

different places. There are still limitations in this survey. The scope of the survey is not large enough to represent the broader problems of junior high school students in learning English. In the more economically developed provinces, teachers are able to use more teaching methods in addition students' English ability is generally higher. However, this survey only interviewed junior high school students in less developed areas in China. In the future, research in the developed areas can be conducted.

References

- [1] Tsen, Y.H. Exploring Motivation In EFL Learning: A Case Study of Elementary Students in a Rural Area. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL*. 2021
- [2] Assis. Lecturer Eman Abdulsalam AI-Khalil. The Role of Grammar-Translation Method in Enhancing EFL Learning Skills. English Dept-College of Education for Humanities Brash University-Brash-Iraq. 9th International Visible Conference on Educational Studies & Applied Linguistics. 2018
- [3] Du, Y. Grammar Translation and Its Use in Present-Day China: Challenges and Issues. *Journal of Arts & Humanities*. 2021
- [4] Kong, Y. A Brief Discussion on Motivation and Ways to Motivate Students in English Language Learning. Foreign Language Staff Room, Jining Medical College. Rizhao University City, Shandong 276826, China. *International Educational Studies*. 2009
- [5] Salviana, S., Muslem, A., Daud, B. An Investigation of English Student-Teachers Constraints during Teaching Internship Program. Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. *English Educational Journal*. 2021
- [6] Peng. S. A Study of the Differences between EFL and ESL for English Classroom Teaching in China. *IRA International Journal of Educational and Multidisciplinary Studies*. 2019
- [7] Mansurovna, B.M. Innovative Teaching Methods of English Language. *International Journal of Education, Social Science & Humanities*. Finland Academic Research Science Publishers. 2023
- [8] Gultom, S., & Oktaviani, L. The Correlation between Students' Self-Esteem and Their English Proficiency Test Result. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*. 2022
- [9] Erasanli, C.Y. The Relationship between Students' Academic Self-efficacy and Language Learning Motivation: A Study of 8th Grades. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2015
- [10] Fu, X.Y., Sun, Y.Q., Liu, Q.H., Xia, X.L., Ji, Q.Y. Exploration on the Design Strategy of English Homework in Fundamental Stage under the Background of the New Curriculum Standard and the "Double Reduction" Policy. 2023