The Effects of Online Teaching on EFL Students' Learning Motivation

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Abstract: This study investigates the positive and negative effects of online teaching on EFL students' learning motivation. There are 26 English majors in a Chinese university participant in this study. Data were collected from multiple sources: semi-structured interview and direct observation. The result shows that in the course aspect, it has a positive effect. In the teacher aspect, it has both negative and positive effects. But in the learning group aspect, it has a negative effect, because of losing of students' interaction.

1 Introduction

As we all know that motivation is one important factor leading to the success or failure of foreign language learning. Learning motivation not only affects the achievement and progress of English learners, but also is the driving factor for learners to maintain strong learning momentum in the long-term learning process. More and more researchers pay attention to the influence of motivation on learners. Positive motivation can even make up for the lack of linguistic competence and the limitations of learning conditions. Motivation is usually divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation mainly refers to learners' interest in the language they have learned and the culture they represent; extrinsic motivation refers to extrinsic rewards, such as rewards, certificates, etc. Different motivation has different investment in learning.

Due to the influence of the COVID-19 throughout the nation and the global societies, most schools had to choose online teaching for their students for avoiding the contacts with each other. And this situation may be a challenge for EFL students' learning. Online teaching means that students will learn at home, and there will be a totally different situation from school teaching. This situation may cause the different emotions of students. In the English teaching classroom, teachers usually use a lot of ways to concentrate students' attention, and design a lot of interactive activities for students, but it is difficult to do all these things during the online teaching. There must be lots of differences between online teaching and traditional teaching. And all these differences may influence the motivation of EFL learners. This study will investigate the positive and negative effects of online teaching on EFL students' learning motivation. And try to give some suggestions on keeping EFL students' motivation during online teaching.

As the other universities, the universities of participants in this study also had to choose online teaching for their students. The online teaching refers to that all the students stay at home, taking the live courses on time by using the computer. And students should submit their assignments on the internet.

In order to investigate the positive and negative effects of online teaching on English majors' learning motivation, and make suggestions on keeping their learning motivation during online teaching. There are three questions in this study, they are as follow:

(1) What are the differences between online teaching and traditional teaching?

(2)What are the positive effects of online teaching on English majors' learning motivation?

(3)What are the negative effects of online teaching on English majors' learning motivation?

2 Literature Review: Dornyei's Three-level Framework of L2 Motivation

On the basis of previous studies, Dornyei, a Hungarian scholar, put forward a more comprehensive theoretical framework of learning motivation. The theoretical framework is aimed at foreign language learning, which includes all motivation components into three levels: language level, learner level and learning situation level. Domyei's three-level motivation theory shows that foreign language learning motivation is not only related to learners, but also to learning objects (target language), as well as learning situations. For the first time, he combined motivation research with school education closely, thus providing theoretical support for foreign language teachers to stimulate students' learning motivation

The language level includes various factors related to the target language, such as the cultural, political and economic conditions of the target language society and the practical value of the language. At the learner level, there are many factors related to the individual learner, and they are divided into two parts: achievement needs and self-confidence. Self-confidence is composed of language anxiety, self-evaluation of foreign language ability, result attribution and self-efficacy. Learning situation level includes the effects of courses, teachers and learning group. Courses' factor refers to the syllabus, curriculum, teaching materials, learning methods and teaching organization. Teachers' factor mainly refers to teachers' personality, teachers' teaching style and students' attention. Learning group is related to the learning atmosphere, motivation and effort direction of the learning group.

3 Research Method

3.1 Participants

There are 26 students majoring in English from a Chinese university participate in this study. All of them are in the same class, which means that they attend the same traditional causes before and now they attend the same online courses. And they already have three months' online learning. They have the same teachers. The English level of this class is mixed, a little of them are advanced and low level, most of them are the intermediate level (according to their final exam result of last semester). There are 4 males and 22 females. None of them have the experiences of studying online.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

In order to distinguish the effects of online teaching on students' motivation, this study try to find out the differences between online teaching and traditional teaching firstly. Then, this study will analysis the effects on students' learning motivation according to Dornyei's three-level framework of L2 motivation. The changing of online teaching from the traditional teaching is the changing of learning situation. There are also three aspect of learning situation, they are course, teachers and learning group. This study will use questionnaire, direct observation and interview to collect the data.

The researcher firstly randomly chooses 4 students from this class and makes a semi-structured interview with each of them individually. In order to collect students' perception of online teaching. Then, the researcher observed two live courses online to distinguish if students' participant in the live course actively and how they participant in the courses.

3.2.1 Semi-structured interview

There are six students (named from A to F) chosen randomly by the researcher from all the 26 students. The interview questions were designed in advanced to collect students' perceptions of online teaching from courses, teachers, learning group and self-feeling aspects. And, these six interviews were developed individually by the phone. During the interview, the researcher will write down some of students' answers. And with the permission, all the interviews were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. In case of losing some parts of students' answers.

3.2.2 Direct observation

In order to identify the real situation of online teaching, the researcher observed two live courses. One class was on Monday morning and the other is on Wednesday afternoon. The researcher tries to observe the students' activities and their participants in the courses. At the same time, teachers' performance also needs to be observed, because it

can influence the students' motivation. The more the students participate in the class the more motivation they have. The researcher will use an observation scale to write down the times of students answer and put forward questions and the times of they interact with teachers and the other classmates. There also will be an observation scale to write down teachers' activities.

3.2.3 Analysis procedure

The researcher firstly transcribes the audio-recorded tape and analysis the answer of each question, and make a comparison between each student towards the same question. The analysis of the interview was done soon after each interview, because the researcher can remember the details such as facial expressions and emotions of each students, which will help the understanding of students' answers. Then, the observation scales of teachers and students were analyzed. Among both of these two methods, the researcher firstly concluded the differences between online teaching and traditional teaching, then found out the reasons of the changes of students' motivation and divided them into positive and negative aspects.

4 Results and Discussions

4.1 The Differences between Online Teaching and Traditional Teaching

The changes of online teaching are the changes of teaching and learning environments. The way of traditional teaching is face-to-face teaching and they can touch and talk with each other in the class. During the online teaching, they also can see each other but it is not face-to-face but by the helping of internet. They cannot touch and talk with each other. Which means it's hard for teachers to concentrate students' attention, and the students cannot interact with the classmates. This research will analysis the differences from three aspect, they are courses, teachers, students' interactions.

As for the courses, there is no big differences originally. Because the curriculum was designed before they entered this university. So, the aim of each year was determined before. And the amount of learning content was same as last semester. But from the interview question: "Do you think the schedule of studying is same as last semester? And why?", we can see that the teacher has a different schedule from the last semester. All of these four students agreed that the speed of teaching is lower than last semester. Some of them said this is because the problem of internet. The teachers and students usually had to waste some time in adjusting the internet before a lesson. Some of them said it is because the teacher used much time to make sure that all of the students can understand the knowledges. Among all the answers, we can see that, during the live courses, the schedule had to slow down than ever before.

As for the teacher aspect, it's a challenge for teachers to concentrate students' attention and make sure their understanding towards the new knowledges. During the traditional teaching, the teachers can look at students' notebook to identify if they are listening carefully. But it's difficult in the live courses. From the interview question: "Can teachers warn you when you lost your attention?", we can see that all of the six students have the experience of losing attention, they will play games or eat foods while having the live lesson. And the teachers usually cannot find out what they are doing. All in all, the teachers were hard to concentrate students' attention. But from the interview questions: "Is your teacher having a higher emotion in the class?" and "What media will you use during the live class?", we can know that teachers still have a higher emotion and they can use the media like flash and video to attract students' attention.

As for the students' interaction, there are nearly no interactions between students. From the observation scale, we also can see that the time of teachers' talk is more than the students' talk. And it was hard to having group activities during the live courses. From the interview question: "Do you have chance to communicate with your classmates? And how often can you communicate with them in a week?", we can know that they have little chance to talk with each other. There will be two times group work in a week. After class, they also did not communicate with each other. The learning group have little positive effects on learners' motivation.

4.2 The Positive Effects on Students' Motivation

From the interview questions, we can know that the students are willing to continue having the online courses and they will have more freedom than the traditional teaching. Student B said that he had more time to consider teachers' questions. Student D said she was afraid of the teachers' criticism before and

she would have more pressure during the face to face courses. But she felt better during the online courses, she could pay more attention on the learning contents.

The schedule had slow down and it provide more time for students to learn one point. And they would feel at ease and they would have less pressure than before. They will have a higher motivation than before from the course aspect. From the teachers' aspect, students can feel about their higher emotion and this will motivate students either.

4.3 The Negative Effects on Students' Motivation

The learning environment is not suit for learning. There would be no learning atmosphere around the students. Though, teachers used all kinds of media methods to attract students' attention, it still cannot make a good atmosphere for students. Because they are sitting in a comfortable environment and they can eat foods during the class. They have a totally different learning situation than before. And they also cannot influence by their classmates, because they are not sitting together.

And from the teacher aspect, there still have some negative effects on students' motivation. From the interview questions, we can see that teachers nearly had no comments on students' performance. When the students cannot receive the positive encouragements, they may have less motivation than before. This is not good for students' motivation.

5 Conclusion

There actually are some differences between online teaching and traditional teaching. After interviewing the students from the course, teachers and learning group aspects, we can know that learning group aspect is the major parts of diminishing students'

motivation. The changes of courses can increase students' learning motivation. And whether the changes of teachers can increase students' motivation, it is depending on students' level. If the students are lower level, they will have more motivation than before, because they are freer than before. If the students are intermediate or advanced level, they may have lesser motivation than before, because they received lesser praise.

Teachers can pay attention to the comments on students and try to give the proper praise or criticize to the students. It will help students to increase their learning motivation. And the emotion of teachers also is very important for students' motivation, because they can actually be moved by teachers' emotion. And the most important thing is the group activities. Teachers should increase the interactions between students during the online teaching. It can provide a good atmosphere for students, which is benefit for increasing learning motivation.

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