

Encouraging Sudanese Schoolboys to Learn English Effectively

– A Case Study of Learning EFL in Eddueim Locality's Schools

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Abstract

This study is aiming at investigating the impact of encouragement on Sudanese learners when learning EFL. The main question of the present study is asking about the influence of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudanese setting. Population of this study are English teachers and students in Eddueim Locality's schools in Sudan. Questionnaire was used as a main tool for this study. A brief review of literature on the previous research on the effect of encouragement on a foreign language learning was made. The researcher uses SPSS to analyze the collected data. The data is analyzed and recommendations made. According to the findings of the study, encouragement has great influence on language learning.

Keywords: encouragement, motivation, demotivation, locality

1. Introduction

Encouragement in this study refers to the effective strategies that used by the teachers to develop students' skills in English language. Encouraging students to learn and perform at higher levels is a challenge for many teachers. Teachers who encourage learning produce individuals who are better educated and more prepared for the future. To encourage a student to learn, teachers must put in extra time and effort both in and out of the classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Encouragement and Second/Foreign Language Learning*

Most of the studies that investigated the impact of encouragement have found a relatively strong correlation between encouragement and language learning success and achievement (Oxford and Nyikos, 1993: 11-22).

Many studies and experiments in language have shown that success in L2/FL learning is effected strongly by personal factors such as age, attitude, encouragement and motivation, anxiety and cognitive style (Brown 2000; Dorneyi and Schmidt, 2002; and Light). Encouragement related to these individual features has been considered as a significant factor to language learning (Cook, 2001; Dorneyi and Schmidt, 2002). Many researcher agree that encouragement facilitates learning (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Gardner, 2002, Norton, 2001). In addition, Cook (2001) emphasized the role of motivation for successful learning and pointed out that; if there is no intrinsic motivation among student. Then, the teacher should create such motivation by understanding learners variability and choosing appropriate teaching materials and curricula.

Second language acquisition theory leaves no doubt about the crucial importance of a further affective variable, motivation, which is actually a cluster of factors that energize behavior and give it direction (Hilgard, Atkinson and Atkinson, 1979). Chomsky (1988: 81) points out the importance of activating learners' motivation. Motivation is one of the most important requisite for learning. Dorneyi et al. (2001: 9) state that motivation is concerned with those factors which energize behavior and give it direction.

Research on motivation in the second language learning has been heavily influenced by the work of Gardner (Gardner, 1993: 157-194) and his associates. One of the most extensive studies on motivation in SLA was conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1972). The work conducted by Gardner in the area of motivation was largely influenced by Mowrer (1950), cited in Freeman and Long, (1994), whose focus was on first language acquisition. Mowrer proposed that a child's success when learning a first language could be attributed to the desire to gain identity within the family and then within the language community. Using this as the basis for his

own research, Gardner went on to investigate motivation as an influencing factor in L2 acquisition. Before examining the effect of motivation on second language learning, it should be realized that it is one variable which combined with other factors, influences a learner's success. The second phase of Gardner's model introduces the four individual differences which are believed to be the most influential in L2/FL acquisition. These include the variables of intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety (Giles and Coupland, 1991).

Gardner describes core L2 learning motivation as a construct consists of three characteristics: the attitudes towards learning a language (affect), the desire to learn the language (want), and motivational intensity (effort). According to Gardner, a highly motivated learner will want to learn the language, and strive to learn the language.

Furthermore, Motivation is defined by Ellis et al. (1984: as cited in Conttia, 2007: 116) as "*those factors that energize behavior and give it direction*". Many types of motivation have been identified, but Gardner and Lambert's (1972) seminal distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation is still widely considered. They suggested that language learning motivation can be divided into two basic types instrumental and integrative:

Instrumental motivation is defined as the desire to learn a language for specific purpose, such as an employment (Kimura et al, 1990: 49), i.e. it is related to practical considerations (get a job/pass an exam) which stimulate the learner's activity.

Integrative motivation, on the other hand, is defined as the desire to integrate oneself with the target culture (ibid: 48). It is characterized by the learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. Integrative motivation has been found to correlate with achievement.

In a study conducted by Berwick and Ross (1989), a group of 90 first-year Japanese university students study ESP course were examined to determine their degree and form of motivation. The students were found to possess instrumental motivation, with the underlying reason for studying English being the entrance exam requirements for university. Before starting the English class, the students were tested for motivation, which was found to be low. However, on completion of 150 hours of class period, the student In her study of 102 Shiraz University Science students, Hassanpur (1999) found that integratively-motivated students employ more memory and cognitive strategies than instrumentally-motivated ones ts' level of motivation had improved.

In her study of 102 Shiraz University Science students, Hassanpur (1999) found that integratively-motivated students employ more memory and cognitive strategies than instrumentally-motivated ones.

2.2 Previous Studies

Chang and Huang (1999) examined the use of language learning strategies by 46 Taiwanese Undergraduate and graduate students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the United States. In this survey, motivation proved to correlate significantly with the choice of language learning strategies. The findings showed that instrumentally-motivated learners employed more memory and affective strategies, while students with integrative motivation used higher range of cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies.

Sedaghat (2001) studied the effects of attitude, motivation, and proficiency level on the use of listening comprehension strategies by 109 Iranian female EFL learners. Regarding the factor of motivation, the only area of difference found to be significant was the social domain. Integratively-oriented language learners used more social strategies than instrumentally-oriented learners.

In her study, Sophia R. (2011) investigated the relationship between technological institute EFL students past demotivation factors and their English language proficiency. She found that learning difficulties explained the most variance in the prediction of EFL learners English language proficiency while language specific anxiety was found to be the second most significant predictor variable.

A study by Humaida I. (2012) examined motivation to learn English language among Sudanese university students (40 male students in Islamic university). He found that motivation scores were higher among students and there was no correlation between motivation and age. The study concluded that although the students were equally motivated to perform a task, the source of their motivation to learn EFL may differ.

In their study, Bidin S. et al (2009) describe the relationship between students' motivation and attitude and their English language performance. The subjects were part two students in UiTM in the Northern Region of Malaysia. The result of the study revealed that the students were more extrinsically than intrinsically motivated when

learning English language. A statistical correlation was found between attitude and achievement.

Prapai J. et al (2012) examines how and to what extents critical thinking-based EFL lessons encouraged Thai EFL students' language learning and their engagement in their fundamental English course at the tertiary level.

The findings show critical thinking-oriented EFL lessons to a large extent encouraged the students' EFL learning.

In his study, Mart C. (2012) found out that encouraging young learners to learn English language through stories at an early age provide them an opportunity to widen their horizon and stimulate their early enthusiasm and enhance their awareness of the rich use of English language.

3. The Study

3.1 Problem of the Study

Most of the English teachers do not encourage their students when teaching English language. So, EFL students need encouragements in order to learn EFL effectively.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aiming at encouraging EFL students, Sudanese students as example, to learn English effectively.

3.3 Main question of the Study

What is the impact of encouragement on learning English in Sudanese schools?

3.4 Hypothesis of the Study

Sudanese schoolboys were not encouraged enough to learn English language.

3.5 Significance of the Study

Findings of this study can help EFL students and teachers of English language to learn and teach English language effectively.

3.6 Tools of Data Collection

The researcher uses questionnaire as a main instrument to collect data in this study. It consists of 16 items arranged in 5-Likert Scale format arranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Cronbach Alpha is used to measure the questionnaire reliability. It was ranged between 79-81 which means that the questionnaire has a high degree of reliability.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the validity of the instrument of the study. The values of Pearson correlation coefficient are statistically significant at level (0.01) which shows the validity of their consistency with the statements.

3.7 Population of the Study

The population of this study are English teachers and students in Eddueim Locality's primary schools in Sudan. 62 English teachers were asked to fill the questionnaire.

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data collected by the questionnaire.

4. Testing the Question of the Study

What is the influence of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudan?

To identify the impact of encouragement to learn EFL in Sudan. Frequencies and percentages, averages, standard deviations and ranks of the responses of samples of the study were calculated for the statements of the impact of encouragement on learning English in Sudanese setting. The results were illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. The responses of the study sample for the Statements of the impact of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudan in descending order according to the average approval

No	Statement	Approving degree						Rhetoric mean	Standard deviation	S t a g e
		Frequ. %	Strongly Agree	agree	Not sure	disagree	Strongly disagree			
8	Encouragement is a key factor for	Frequ. 47 75.8	14 22.6	-	1 1.6	-	4.73	0.548	1	

	success in language learning									
2	Encouragement helps students to develop their spoken language	Frequ	43	19	-	-	-	4.69	0.465	2
		%	69.4	30.6	-	-	-			
4	Self-confidence helps learners to speak English fluently	Frequ	41	17	2	2	-	4.56	0.716	3
		%	66.1	27.4	3.2	3.2	-			
1	The lack of learner's motivation in language can be one of causes of their lack in using it	Frequ	36	22	2	2	-	4.48	0.718	4
		%	58.1	35.5	3.2	3.2	-			
15	The social environment may play a vital role in mastering English	Frequ	36	20	3	3	-	4.44	802	5
		%	58.1	32.3	4.8	4.8	-			
3	Shyness is one of the causes of students' weaknesses in speaking	Frequ	33	23	2	4	-	4.37	0.834	6
		%	53.2	37.1	3.2	6.5	-			

Table 2.

No	Statement	Frequency		Approving degree				Rhetoric mean	Standard deviation	Stage
		%	Strongly Agree	agree	Not Sure	disagree	Strongly disagree			
16	The parental perspective towards learning English help their children to success in that process	Frequencies	29	22	8	2	1	4.23	0.913	7
		%	46.8	35.5	12.9	3.2	1.6			
14	Lack of student-centered approach by teachers is a hindrance towards better fluency in English	Frequencies	23	30	7	2	-	4.19	0.765	8
		%	37.1	48.4	11.3	3.2	-			
5	Lack of interaction between teachers and students leads to weak performance	Frequencies	27	25	4	5	1	4.16	0.978	9
		%	43.5	40.3	6.5	8.1	1.6			
6	Encouragement is a key factor for success in language	Frequencies	22	31	5	4	-	4.15	827	10
		%	35.5	50.0	8.1	6.5	-			
7	Lack of teachers' encouragement to students can be one cause of students' weaknesses in acquiring vocabulary	Frequencies	19	36	3	4	-	4.13	0.778	11
		%	30.6	58.1	4.8	6.5	-			
11	Both kinds of motivation are	Frequencies	18	24	13	6	1	3.84	1.011	12

	important language learners	for	%	29.0	38.7	21.0	9.7	1.6			
12	Learners of EFL in schools have instrumental Motivation	Eddueim	Frequencies	11	22	27	2	-	3.68	0.805	13
			%	17.7	35.5	43.2	3.2	-			
9	Integrative motivation is the most important kind for language learning		Frequencies	12	24	15	11	-	3.60	0.999	14
			%	19.4	38.7	24.2	17.7	-			
10	Instrumental motivation is the most important type for language.		Frequencies	2	30	16	14	-	3.32	0.864	15
			%	3.2	48.4	25.8	22.6	-			
13	Learners of English in schools have an integrative motivation	of in	Frequencies	3	8	30	14	7	2.77	0.982	16
			%	4.8	12.9	48.4	22.6	11.3			

It is clear from the results that there is variation in the approval of the subjects of the study on the impact of encouragement to learn EFL in Sudan. The averages ranged Table 2. The responses of the study sample for the statement of the impact of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudan in descending order according to the average approval between the two categories the first and the third categories of Likert-Scale which ranged from strongly agree to unsure (2.77 to 4.73). These means show the agreements of the subjects of the study samples on the impact of *encouragement* on learning EFL in Sudan. Obviously, the results show that the subjects of the study strongly agree on seven statements (8, 2, 4, 1, 15, 3, and 16) from the effects of motivation on learning EFL in Sudan. These statements were arranged in descending order as follows:

1- Statement (8) "Encouragement is a key factor for success in language learning" ranked first in terms of the approval of the subjects of the study samples by strongly agree with the average (4.73 out of 5).

2- Statement (2) which is "Encouragement helps students to develop their spoken language skills" came in second position in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree with the average (4.69 out of 5).

3- Statement (4) is "Self-confident helps learners to speak English fluently" ranked third in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree with the average (4.56 out of 5).

4-Statement (1) which is "The lack of learner's encouragement in the language can be one of causes of their lack in using it" ranked fourth in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree with average (4.48 out of 5).

5- Statement (15), stated "The social environment may play a vital role in mastering English" came fifth in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree with average (4.44 out of 5).

6- Statement no 3 is "Shyness is one of the causes of students' weaknesses in speaking" ranked in sixth position in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree with average (4.37 out of 5).

7- Statement number (16) "The parental perspective towards learning English helps their children to success in that process" ranked first in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by strongly agree the average (4.23 out of 5).

Obviously, the findings show that the subjects of the study agree on seven statements concerning the effects of motivation to learn EFL in Sudan. These are statements number (14, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 9). They are arranged in descending order according to the approval of the samples under study as follows:

1- Statement no. (14) is "The lack of student-centered approach by teachers can be a hindrance towards better fluency in English" ranked first in terms of the approval by the members of the study sample average 4.19 out of 5.

2- Statement no. (5) is "Lack of interaction between teachers and students leads to a weak performance." ranked second in terms of the approval by the members of the sample average (4.16 out of 5).

3- Statement no. (6) is "The absence of interaction between students and their peers may affect negatively on their speaking skills" ranked third in terms of the approval of members of the study sample by the average (4.15 out of 5).

4- Statement no. (7) is "Lack of teachers' encouragement to students can be one cause of students' weakness in acquiring vocabulary" ranked fourth in terms of the approval of members of the study sample. Its average is (4.13 out of 5).

5- Statement number (11) is "Both kinds of motivation are important for language learners" ranked in a fifth position in terms of the approval by the subjects of the study with the average (3.84 out of 5).

6- Statement number (12) which stated "Learners of EFL in Eddueim schools have an instrumental motivation" came in six position in terms of the approval by the subjects of the study samples with the average (3.68 out of 5).

7- Statement number (9) is "Integrative motivation is the most important kind for language learning" ranked seventh in terms of the approval of members of the study sample with the average (3.60 out of 5).

The findings of the study indicated that the subjects of the study were not sure about two statements of the effects of encouragement on EFL in Sudan. These are statement number (10 and 13) which order in a descending way according to uncertainty of the subjects of the study as follows:

1- Statement number (10) is "Instrumental motivation is the most important type for language learning" came in the first position in terms of the uncertainty of the subjects of the study samples with the average 3.32 out of 5.

2- Statement number (13) is "Learners of English in Eddueim schools have an integrative motivation" rank second in terms of uncertainty of the subjects of the study with the average (2.77 out of 5).

Summary: note that there was no disagreement in any degree on the statements of the effects of encouragement on learning EFL. These agreements of the subjects of the study indicate that encouragement has great influence on learning English. In addition, these findings support the hypothesis of the study that "encouragement is important factor for success in language learning".

5. Findings of the Study

What is the influence of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudanese setting?

The subjects of the study were strongly agree on seven statements of the influence of encouragement to learn English as a foreign language in Sudan, these are:

- 1- Encouragement is a key factor for success in language learning.
- 2- Encouragement helps students to develop their spoken language skills.
- 3- Self-confidence helps learners to speak English fluently.
- 4- Absence of learner's motivation in English language can be one of the reasons for their inability to use it.
- 5- The social environment may play a vital role in mastering English.
- 6- Shyness is one of the causes of students' weaknesses in speaking.
- 7- The parental perspective towards learning English help their children to success in that process.

The subjects of the study were agree on seven statements from the effects of encouragement on learning EFL in Sudan, these are:

- 1- The lack of student-centered approach by teachers can be a hindrance towards better fluency in English.
- 2- Lack of interaction between teachers and students leads to a weak performance.
- 3- The absence of interaction between students and their peers may affect negatively on their speaking skills.
- 4- Lack of teachers' encouragement to students can be one cause of students' weakness in acquiring vocabulary.
- 5- Both kinds of motivation are important for language learners.
- 6- Learners of EFL in Eddueim schools have an instrumental motivation.
- 7- Integrative motivation is the most important kind for language learning.

The subjects of the study were not sure about two statements concerning the effect of encouragement and

motivation on learning EFL in Sudan, these are:

1. Instrumental motivation is the most important type for language learning.
2. Learners of English language in Eddueim schools have an instrumental motivation.

6. Summary

In the analysis of the influence of encouragement variable, the findings supported that better performance was observed in encouraged students. In addition, encouragement has great effects on language learning.

7. Conclusion

This research aimed at examining encouragement to learn English among school students at Eddueim Locality in central Sudan.

The research's questions asked whether EFL learning was effected by encouragement. According to the results of the study encouragement exerts great effects on learning English as a foreign language in Sudanese schools. Clearly, the findings of this study supported the previous studies. It concluded that the performance of foreign language was better when students were encouraged.

8. Recommendations

- a. It is very important to encourage students to learn English language effectively.
- b. Hard work should be done to support and encourage students of English and develop their internal motivation to learn the language.
- c. Teachers should change their teaching methods from time to time and uses different teaching techniques.
- d. English language teachers in different stages should encourage their students when learning English language.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Name (optional) **Sex:** Male () Female ()

This questionnaire helps in the research to evaluate " *Encouragement Variable*" in learning EFL at Eddueim Locality's schools in Sudan. Can you, please, give your input by answering the following questions to contribute to this study. Choose **A**, **B**, **C**, **D** or **E**. Answer according to how far you agree with each of them and write it in the box .

A: strongly agree **B:** agree **C:** not sure **D:** disagree **E:** strongly disagree

- 1- Lack of learners' encouragement in English language can be one of the reasons for their inability to use it
- 2- Encouragement helps students to develop their spoken language skills.
- 3- Shyness is one of the causes of students' weaknesses in speaking.
- 4- Self-confidence helps learners to speak English fluently.
- 5- Lack of interaction between teachers and students leads to a weak performance.
- 6- The absence of interaction between students and their peers may affect negatively on their speaking skills.
- 7- Lack of teachers' encouragement to students can be one cause of students' weakness in acquiring vocabulary.
- 8- Encouragement is a key factor for success in language learning
- 9- Integrative motivation is the most important kind for language learning.

- 10- Instrumental motivation is the most important type for language learning.
- 11- Both kinds of motivation are important for language learners.
- 12- Learners of EFL in Eddueim schools have an instrumental motivation.
- 13- Learners of English in Eddueim schools have an integrative motivation
- 14- The lack of student-centered approach by teachers can be a hindrance towards better fluency in English.
- 15- The social environment may play a vital role in mastering English.
- 16- The parental perspective towards learning English help their children to success in that process.

Thank you.