An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Ghanaian Trainee Teachers' Motivation to Major in the English Language: Implications for Classroom Pedagogy

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to investigate the motivation with which all the 18 final year English-major students of a College of Education in the Western North Region of Ghana made the 'choice' to major in the English language. This qualitative study employed a semi-structured one-on-one interview and focus group discussions as the data collection instruments. The data collected were subjected to a thematic analysis. The outcome of the study reveals that the learners admit that motivation plays a crucial role in their choice to major in the English language. Seven thematic areas were identified as the motivation for the choice. These are; self-esteem and fulfillment, communicative functionality, global competitiveness, technology, home and family factors, academic relevance, and the teacher factor. It is revealed that the stakeholders of education, such as teachers, curriculum planners and designers, developers of teaching and learning materials, principals, and school managers, should be aware of the motivation of the students for 'choosing' to major in a particular course [such as English] to design programs, curriculum, teaching and learning activities and materials that would best sustain and enhance the interest of the learner in the program.

INTRODUCTION

Filgona et al (2020) argue that the presence of a student in a classroom or a particular course does not guarantee that they want to learn. To them, there is more to learning than a mere presence in a particular course or classroom. One of such significant requirements for effective learning is motivation. Dang, Le, and Ha (2021) contend that motivation plays a critical and significant role in the learning of a second or foreign language. In fact, Hussain and Farrid (2020) contend that motivation is the first and foremost condition for learning L2. Singh and Singh (2021) also emphasize that motivation increases students' learning, and, the lack of it could, similarly, decrease their learning and academic achievement. In congruence, Pintrich (2003) believes that there is a close relationship between motivation and language learning outcomes, such that the motivation of the learner determines the effectiveness and result of educational activities. In support of Pintrich's argument, Hussain and Farid (2020) specifically admit that "in the domain of second/foreign language (L2) motivation, there is a strong correlation between L2 motivation and language learning success". Similarly, Jamil and Khan (2021) assert that motivation affects the willingness and attitude of the students towards the learning of the language. Therefore, the researchers argue that it is important for the teacher, curriculum planners, principals, school managers, and other stakeholders to identify the purpose or motivation for which a learner would love to pursue and specialize in a non-native language so that they can create the necessary enabling learning environment, design curriculum contents, teaching activities, materials, and methodologies that foster and enhance learner motivation for them to achieve positive learning

outcomes in such an obviously onerous endeavor of pursuing and majoring in a non-native language (Alizadeh, 2016).

Reviewing available literature on the concept of motivation, the researchers have identified that, consistent with Hussain and Farid (2020), different scholars have defined motivation in different ways. For instance, Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany, and Okoronka (2020) define motivation as that complex part of "human psychology and behavior that influence how individuals choose to invest their time, how much energy they exert in any given task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they persist in the task". Earlier, Guay et al. (2010, p. 712) had put the definition of motivation more succinctly and simply that it is the "the reasons underlying behavior". According to Filgona et al. (2020), motivation is "what causes a person to want to know, act, understand, believe or gain particular skills". It is important to add that motivation can be internal/intrinsic or external/ extrinsic, where intrinsic connotes the internal convictions or reasons for which an individual undertakes a task and the extrinsic connotes external or social/environmental factors, outside of the individual, which pushes the individual to pursue and reach a particular goal.

According to Khan and Takkac (2021), acquiring or learning a non-native/second, or foreign language is not an easy thing, hence, deserves a great deal of motivation. They (Khan and Takkac) opine that, without motivation, it is difficult to go for or pursue and specialize in English as a second language. In fact, Hussain and Farrid (2020) advise that…ESL/EFL learners should not opt for English as their major until they are … motivated towards it because it is the first and foremost condition for learning L2 which makes the process smooth no matter how laborious, long, and tedious it is.

In the context of Ghana, the English language is taught and studied as a core subject at the pre-tertiary level, that is, from Basic to Senior High School. This is because the English language is a second and official language in Ghana. It is, therefore, the language of the media, trade/ commerce, business, tourism, health, parliament, court, and education. Literally, one needs some appreciable proficiency and competence in English to become communicatively functional in most sectors of the Ghanaian economy. It is, therefore, expedient that English is taught as a subject in schools from the upper primary level to the tertiary. English is used as a language of instruction in the classroom. Essentially, learners are compulsorily exposed to English at the Basic level. At this level, a learner is not given the opportunity to decide whether to study it or not. It is literally 'imposed' on the learner.

However, the situation is different at the tertiary level. Tertiary students have the opportunity to choose whatever course or program they wish to study and specialize. Even though classroom instruction and activities are conducted in the English language, the tertiary student does not study the English language as a compulsory subject as pertains to the pre-tertiary level. Regardless of the arguments in the existing literature that studying a second or foreign is difficult and unattractive (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015), some students still make the 'choice' to study and 'major' in the English language at the tertiary level (Albodakh & Cinkara, 2017; Nuridin, 2019). Jamil and Khan (2021) argue that motivation is directly connected to the word "choice". In fact, Bakar (2014) says, "motivation reflects in students' choices of learning". On the premise of the relevance of motivation in students' choices and learning, as established in the earlier scholarly studies, the current study aims at investigating the factors that motivate the Ghanaian tertiary student, specifically, the College of Education student, to make the "choice" to pursue and major in English language and the implications of the motivation to classroom pedagogy. The study is guided by two questions; (1) What is the motivation of the College of Education student to make the 'choice' to major in the English language? (2) What are the implications of learner motivation for classroom language pedagogy?

In a related study, Hussain and Farid (2020), in a quantitative approach, engaged 200 EFL/ESL students of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan respectively. The study revealed that all the learners felt more intrinsically motivated to learn the second/foreign language than they were extrinsic. It was realized that extrinsic motivation for the learners was limited. The outcome of the study revealed that there was no conducive language learning environment, well-equipped classroom, financial rewards, or well-trained teachers to take the English

courses hence students only depended on their inner motivation to pursue the language course. Similarly, in their study, Wang et al (2015) established that learners who lacked motivation were more likely to face challenges and difficulties in learning the language. Their study, therefore, recommended that the essence of motivation must be inculcated in the learners by the teachers and administrators since motivation is essential to language learning. However, one is only able to, adequately, inculcate the motivation in the learner if the source/cause of motivation is known. This study would reveal the motivational factors of the language learner in the Ghanaian context and examine the implications it has or should have on language pedagogy.

METHODS

Approach and Design

Similar to Lim (2021), the study adopts the qualitative research method and the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design for their ability to comprehensively capture the complexities of the experiences of participants. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is inherently a qualitative method of research (Lim, 2021). According to Noon (2018), the IPA focusses on a small group of participants, sees them as 'experts' in a particular experience or phenomenon, and aims to offer a comprehensive description of the particular phenomenon or experiences of the participants. He calls the participants "experiential experts" (pg. 75). The general practice in IPA is that the narratives or experiences shared by the participants are given a close look or observation, after which the general patterns or themes that emerge from the narratives are extracted and examined.

Setting and Participants

The study is set in a College of Education (CoE) situated in the Western North region of Ghana. The practice in the college, and many other colleges, is that all first-year students study general courses. However, when they enter the second year, they (the learners) are asked to select their specialisms. While some of the students choose to specialize in Mathematics, Social studies, Religious and Moral Education, History, Geography, Early Grade education, and primary education, others specialize in Languages, that is, English, French, Twi, and Fante. This 'new' practice comes with the

introduction of the new Bachelor of Education curricula in the CoE since 2018. Hitherto, the colleges offered diploma programs, hence, the learners did not have the opportunity to specialize in specific courses in the manner it is done now. The study engages the current final year students of the College as they are the pioneers of the specialism exercise. Out of the 350 fourth-year students, only 18, representing 5.14%, 'chose' to major in the English language. The study engages all the 18 English-major students to understand their motivation for choosing English and not any other course like the majority 95%. Clarke (2010) and Cresswell (2013) argue that the number of participants that should be recruited for an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study may range from three to fifteen and four to ten respectively. Consistent with the literature, the current study considers engaging all the 18 English-major students ideal and sufficient enough to provide a good amount of data for the study.

Instrument

The major data collection instrument for the study is a semi-structured interview. The interviews were conducted in two forms-focus group discussion and individual interviews. The participants were clustered into three groups of six members each and engaged in an open-ended focus group conversation. The focus group discussion allowed the researchers to involve all the 18 English-major students within a limited time frame and allowed all the students to share their thoughts, motivation, and experiences. After the focus group interview, seven of the participants were selected, through a random sampling technique, to assist in a one-on-one interview session. The individual interview is supposed to be a follow-up on the focus group discussion to complement, confirm or deny some of the revelations that were made in the former. Each focus group discussion lasted 60 minutes and the individual interview lasted between 25-30 minutes. The data gathered from the two engagements were recorded predominantly through note-taking and audiotape.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through a thematic analysis from an inductive perspective. Dikilitas and Bostancıoglu (2019) opine that a thematic analysis conducted from the inductive perspective ensures that the researchers hold no preconceptions

hitherto to the thematization process and, therefore, ensures that the researchers do not impose their biases and prejudices on the data which could lead to a compromised or manipulated conclusion. The common patterns, stories, or themes that emerged from the data were highlighted, coded, and clustered. As typical of a thematic analysis, Lim's (2021) three processes of theme identification were adopted. First, the transcribed interview texts were subjected to multiple readings by the researchers. Second, annotating, highlighting and coding were done. And third, the common patterns that emerged from the data were grouped as themes. Arroll (2015) recommends that, for an IPA, where a relatively small number of participants are usually engaged, an idea that is emphasized by at least three of the participants could be taken as a theme. Consistent with Arroll, the current study extracted ideas shared by a minimum of four participants as a theme. These themes, with supporting evidence from excerpts of the interview, are presented in the results and discussion section of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview helped the researchers to solicit and gather a lot of reliable, valuable, and in-depth information from the participants. The participants had the 'flexible' opportunity, inherent in a semi-structured interview system, to give an honest, open, and comprehensive description of their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for choosing to specialize in the English Language in the college. The data were organized and subjected to a thematic analysis.

Research Question 1: What is the motivation of the College of Education student to make the 'choice' to major in the English language?

This section is categorized into seven (7) sub-sections, with each sub-section devoted to expounding each of the seven themes identified in the data, with support from evidence, in the form of relevant excerpts and transcriptions from the interview. The discussions are presented and situated in the findings of existing literature and research.

Self-esteem and fulfillment

Jamil and Khan (2021) argue that intrinsic motivation is a significant part of the reasons for which a learner would love to study the English language. Students have their own internal, self-

intuited fulfillment for studying a particular course. The data reveals that most of the participants, intrinsically, have 'positive feelings' towards the study of English and, actually, consider the study of English 'inherently enjoyable'. In fact, English is regarded as a superior language to the local languages in Ghana. It is the official language. Hence, to the learner, studying and majoring in the English language inherently implies studying a 'superior' language. The participants asserted that the feeling of studying a 'superior' language is fulfilling and satisfying. For the participants, the fact that they are seen and referred to as "English students" by their colleagues, who study/specialize in other courses, makes them feel fulfilled and enhances their self-confidence and esteem. Some participants insinuated, Anytime I am referred to as an "English student", my self-esteem and confidence boost up. Our colleagues see us as superior in many respects and often treat us as some special students.

Understandably, English is the language of Ghana's colonial master the British. Since English is the language of the British, specializing in English feels like specializing in the language of the 'master'. Intrinsically, there is pride when a 'servant' or the 'colonized' can associate with the 'master' by being trained to speak the latter's language. In the data, the participants make it clear that the feeling of 'superiority' for studying English is a motivation for specializing in it. This finding is consistent with Mensah (2016) who argues that people would love to associate with superiority, hence, may want to study or pursue tasks that are considered relatively complex or superior. A participant remarked, The fact that I am studying the white man's language, majoring in it, and having the ability to appreciate foreign culture, thinking, conceptions and practices make me feel satisfied.

Communicative functionality

It is no doubt that communication is a very important aspect of human life. Daily, one has to communicate their needs, wants, wishes, aspirations, conditions, feelings, and opinions predominantly through language. Therefore, being competent or skilled in the appropriate use of language is key to human survival. Consistent with the study of Kumah (2018) who argue that knowledge and competence in the appropriate use

of the appropriate language in a given context is critical to life, the current study identified that English-major students consider English as the most relevant and universally accepted language in the country, hence, the need to specialize in it. In the Ghanaian context, where the English language is the official language, learning, knowing, and using English has become a necessity. In Ghana, English is the language of Business, Education, Commerce/ Trade, Tourism, Health, Parliament, and the Media. Hence, a mastery of the English language implies that one would be able to communicate and function in many significant sectors of the Ghanaian economy. The participants of the study reveal that the relevance of the English language in the Ghanaian context is a motivation to them for choosing to specialize in it. A participant emphasized "I want to become useful in any sector I find myself later in life. Even though I am training to become a teacher, my dream is to work in the aviation industry and knowledge and expertise in the English language will be very helpful in the field".

Obviously, the participant indicates that English is the language of aviation in Ghana, hence, knowledge in it will make him better placed in the sector. Another participant also indicated that, If you can't speak or understand English very well, you may die in the hospital. The names of medicines and practices in the hospital are usually transcribed and carried out in English respectively. My grandmother died because she was not able to understand the dosage and usage of particular medicine (which was written in English). I therefore, consider it instructive to study and master the English language.

Global competitiveness

English is the language of the globe/world (Nyarkoh, 2016). Most parts of the world study or use the English language as an L1, a second language, or a foreign language. It is argued that over 60% of the world uses English (Nyarkoh, 2016). This shows that English is a globally relevant language. It is used predominantly to engage in international transactions and conduct bilateral contracts among countries. Studying and mastering such a language positions one for the global space. The participants indicated that they are motivated to specialize in English because they wish to become globally competitive. While some

of them indicated that they would teach English, others emphasized they would engage in international business, hence, a specialization in English would help them become functional and communicate effectively in the world. A participant recounts, "Becoming globally relevant is my motivation for majoring in the English language. My dream is to become an international businessman who travels and transacts businesses in different countries. With such a vision, I know the English language will become an asset".

While the participant above needs English to transact his prospective global businesses, another participant indicated that he would love to immigrate to the UK, where her father lives. Hence, specializing in English will help her to survive in such an international context. Specifically, she commented, "I will travel to the UK to live with my dad when I graduate from college. English is the dominant language there and so there is the need for me to major in it so that I can live comfortably in such context".

Technology

According to Musah (2015), English is one of the major languages of technology. A good understanding of English means one would be able to fairly appreciate the technological space. Several elements in the tech space are configured in English. For example, computer instructions, games, software, applications, and communication via technological devices are English bias. Therefore, anyone who wishes to explore the technology space needs to have some fair appreciation of the English language to be able to do that effectively and efficiently. It is not surprising to find in the data that some of the participants are majoring in English with the motivation of understanding the tech space, and probably, becoming technological. A participant said that "As for me, I feel motivated to major in the English language because technology is taking over the world and English is important in that space. I know I can become tech-savvy if I understand English very well. Technology use is all about following instructions and many of these instructions are written in English".

Another participant added that "English is the major language of communication via technology. I spend most of my time on social media, especially Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, and the dominant

language of communication on these platforms is English".

From the comments above, two fundamental issues are observed. First, the tech space is a business or professional environment where people can make a living. From the first commentary, it is clear the participant is studying English to be able to read and understand instructions and, probably, use it for some serious enterprise. Second, the tech space is where people stay connected with family and friends. It is used to establish social networks through social media, which has become a major component of technology use. The major language of social media, in the Ghanaian context, is English. It is therefore instructive that, anyone who wishes to become relevant technologically understands English fairly well (Andri, 2018).

Home and Family factors

Indeed, the home has a good influence on an individual. In fact, Butler (2014), specifically, states that "Parents, as a noteworthy social-relevant element impacting kids' inspiration and the accomplishment, have gotten considerable consideration in general education". How an individual perceives the world is, significantly, shaped and influenced by their backgrounds. Similarly, an individual's attitude or behavior towards the world is informed by the homes they come from. The data reveal that some of the participants are motivated to pursue the English language as a program of study due to the beliefs and practices in their homes. A participant asserted, "Growing up, my parents always communicated with me in English. Hence, I grew up, naturally, loving and having a flair for the language. Love for English is my biggest motivation for majoring in it. I'm just pursuing what I love".

From the excerpt above, it is clear that the language practice prevalent in the participant's home has motivated her to specialize in English. The participant feels English is her first love, therefore, specializing in it comes to her naturally. Another participant from a similar background puts across that, "In my home if one is not able to speak good English, he/she becomes a laughing stock. Even sometimes, English competitions are held among family members, and the one who comes last is punished with difficult household chores. Growing up from such a background, I am inspired

to major in English so that I will become the best English speaker in the family, and beyond".

Academic relevance

English is the language of instruction in the Ghanaian classroom. The language policy of Ghana indicates that students from grade 4 to the tertiary must be instructed in the English language (Fenyi et al, 2021). In conducting classroom activities and assessments, English is used. Textbooks, reading materials, and other teaching and learning materials are generally configured in the English language. The typical Ghanaian student must, therefore, have a fair knowledge of English to survive in the educational system. Academic success is largely achieved if one has mastery over the English language. To write a test and pass well, one needs good comprehension and writing skills and general competence in the English language (Mensah, 2016). The participants insinuated that their motivation to major in English is partly influenced by their quest to succeed in academia. To them, they will need English to write their assignments, understand and respond to test items in the examination hall, comprehend the textbooks and reading materials for the various courses, and even engage in extra curricula activities on campus, and sometimes, off it.

A participant emphasized that "My motivation for specializing in English is that I want to succeed in my academics. I want to be able to read test items very well so that I can respond appropriately to them. I want to also write well. Therefore, competence in English is non-negotiable for me". Another participant with similar motivation opined, "In Ghana here, without competence in English, it is difficult to survive in academia. English is used to do almost everything in the school setting. Therefore, majoring in English will help me become a master of the language and that could help me perform greatly in other aspects of school life as well".

Teacher factor

Teachers generally serve as mentors and role models to students. Aside the home (parents), teachers also, sometimes, influence and shape the perception and attitude of the students (John, 2019). It was realized in the data that, some of the participants feel motivated to major in the English language due to some experiences they have had with some of their teachers. A participant explained,

"I made the decision to pursue and specialize in the English language some decade ago when I was in basic school. I was motivated by my English madam who believed and convinced me that English experts are one of the most sought-after professionals in the Ghanaian context. At the time I was leaving the school, he had left the obvious disincentive teaching profession to become a PRO in a multinational company".

Another participant who had a different encounter with his teacher shared his experience on why he is motivated to specialize in English. "I attended an international school owned by some expatriates. Anytime these expatriates came to the school, it was the English teacher who was selected to follow them around and show/teach them the Ghanaian culture and practices. He also served as the mediator between the expatriates and the local chiefs. Through that, he was sent abroad and has since not returned".

It is clear, from all the data and excerpts above that, the students are motivated in different ways to major in the English language. In sum, this section has provided a response to research question one. It has revealed the different motivations for which learners are pursuing and majoring in the English language. In the data, seven (7) motivation factors are revealed. These factors are thematized and discussed in the section and each theme is supported with relevant excerpts and transcriptions from the interview sessions. The next section provides a response to research question two.

Research Question 2: What are the implications of learner motivation for classroom language pedagogy?

According to Filgona et al (2020), identifying and knowing the motivation for which students choose and decide on a particular course or task should be one of the sole objectives of the classroom teacher and other educational stakeholders. The reason being that, when the students' motivation is identified, learning programs, activities, materials, and teaching methodologies can be designed and implemented in a manner that will sustain the interest of the learner and ensure successful learning outcomes. What research question 1 has done is to expose or reveal the motivation for which college students choose to specialize in the English language (over some other courses). Understanding the motivation of the

students should have implications or impacts on the classroom practices of the language teachers. Therefore, as a sequel to the first research question, the participants were also engaged on what they believe their language teachers and other stakeholders should be doing in the classroom such that their motivation would be sustained or enhanced throughout their pursuance of the English major program.

One of such implications revealed in the data is technology integration. Technology integration is the practice of conducting teaching and learning activities through a blended or a hybrid system where a part of the lesson is delivered via technology and part is delivered face-to-face, or the lesson is completely delivered virtually (Fenyi et al, 2021). In the earlier session, the data revealed that one of the motivations for students majoring in the English language is that English is the language of technology. In the modern technological world, where the use of technology is indispensable, reading and understanding texts in English has become important. It is therefore important for language teachers to make sufficient use of technological devices in the language classroom so that learners can easily establish the sync between English and technology. Similarly, it is ideal that curriculum planners and designers can integrate or make provisions for technology use in the language program. One of the respondents insinuated, "I think our language lecturers should start sending us assignments through WhatsApp, Twitter, Email, etc. This will help us navigate technology better and make it a normal part of our language life".

Another implication is that ESP and EAP should be given some more attention in the language curriculum of the College of Education. The structure of the language curriculum of the Colleges is such that learners are trained to know and understand how to teach language in the basic schools. Therefore, the curriculum is inundated with courses on teaching methodologies and a few courses on content knowledge in English. There seems to be an acutely limited emphasis on English for Specific Purpose (ESP) and English for Academic Purpose (EAP) respectively. Part of the motivation for which learners choose to major in English, as revealed in the response to research question one, is that some learners need English to survive in the academic space, because English is

the language of instruction in the school system, hence, they crave for some more emphasis on EAP. Again, some other learners are also majoring in the English language so that they can perform effective communicative functions in their prospective dream professions, hence, the need for some emphasis on ESP. A participant explained, "I think the language curriculum planners should have EAP and ESP in their minds as they design the curriculum. English is used for various activities such as academic activities and professional activities in the country and I think, in the design of the curriculum, such varying activities should be factored".

Another pedagogical implication of students' motivation for majoring in the English language is teacher behavior. Obviously, students see teachers as mentors and role models. How teachers behave (towards the course they teach) shapes and influence the perception and behaviors of students towards the course (Dennis, 2019). If the motivation of students would be enhanced and sustained towards the study of English, the attitude of the language teachers should be more positive. It was revealed in the earlier session that some participants felt motivated to pursue English as a result of their experiences with their language teachers. This implies that learners' experiences with language teachers should be positive if their motivation would be sustained. Being positive could include creating a learner-friendly classroom environment, inspiring students, effectively assessing learners and giving them prompt feedback, making learners aware of the career prospects and opportunities for English specialists, among others.

A participant opined, "Our language lecturers should frequently be opening our eyes to positive aspects of majoring in English. We (students) feel more motivated to pursue a particular course when we are aware of the future prospects and the general good it has. Also, learner-friendly and conducive classroom environment should be created for us to feel comfortable in the language classroom".

The last implication for language pedagogy is that language teachers should, fundamentally, adopt the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to the teaching of language in the classroom (Debnath, 2018). For most of the participants, they are more interested in the ability to develop communication competencies or skills in the English language, and not just the grammatical

rules. Therefore, the decision to major in the English language is to help them develop their communicative skills to be able to function effectively in their professions, in the home, and via technology. This implies that the language teacher, having been exposed to the motivation for which students choose to major in English, is better placed to know which teaching approach to adopt to help the learners achieve the goal for which they are studying English. From the data, it is clear that adopting the communicative language teaching approach is ideal for meeting the goals of the students. According to CLT, the ultimate aim of language education is to develop learners a 'communicative competence' or the ability to communicate effectively in the target language (Andam, 2017). The general assumption is that it is not enough to know the grammatical rules of the target language. In that, having competence in the grammar of the target language does not necessarily equate to being proficient in it. Beyond 'competence', there is a need for 'performance' in the language. The teacher in a CLT classroom environment ensures that teaching is, predominantly, interactive and centers on the learners.

A participant had this to say, "I am able to read and understand the grammatical rules of English. My problem, however, is how to effectively package the language and communicate my thoughts, opinions, feelings, ideas, and convictions. As someone who is being trained to become a teacher, I would depend on my 'communicative competence' to teach my students effectively. This is what I believe our language lesson should focus on".

This section has attempted a response to research question two. It has espoused the implications or effects of learner motivation on classroom language pedagogy. Knowing the relevance of motivation to learning achievements and outcomes, language pedagogy needs to be designed and implemented in a manner that suits, sustains, and enhances learner motivation in the course. The section has examined some of the plans and activities that must, from the perspective of the learners, be put in place to ensure positive learning outcomes. Four implications were identified in the data and have been discussed, supported with evidence and transcriptions from the interview.

CONCLUSION

According to Filgona et al (2020), "Students' motivation is a critical part of success in education and later life, but it has often been overlooked by educators". The current qualitative study has investigated the motivation for which all the 18 final year English-major students of a College of Education in the Western North region of Ghana made the "choice" to specialize in the English language when there were other available courses to choose from. Earlier researchers such as Dang et al (2021), Hussain & Farrid (2020), and Singh & Singh (2021) have established that motivation is very critical in second language learning. There is a general admission that learning, and most, especially, specializing or majoring in a non-native language is quite an onerous endeavor, hence, a good amount of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is needed to sustain and enhance one's interest and passion in pursuing it. Similarly, it is established that motivation, to a large extent, influences and determines learning outcomes. It is on such crucial premises that the researchers, in their considered view, found an empirical and in-depth descriptive investigation into the motivation for students' second language learning expedient and timely. Beyond the identification and discussion of learner motivation, the study also looked at how such motivation should have implications for language pedagogy. After some careful examination of the data, as espoused in the 'findings and discussion' session, three major conclusions are drawn.

1. Consistent with existing literature such as Singh & Singh (2021) and Jamil & Khan (2021), the College of Education student in Ghana believes that motivation plays a significant role in their 'choice' to major in the English language. It is imperative to acknowledge that motivation has a bearing on learning outcomes and achievements, hence, in the quest to ensure that learners obtain utmost success in education, one of the important elements to pay attention to is learner motivation.

2. Different learners have different motivations for majoring in the English language. In the study, seven different motivations were identified. These include self-esteem and fulfillment, communicative functionality, global competitiveness, technology, home and family factors, academic relevance, and the teacher factor.

3. The motivation of the learner should have implications for classroom pedagogy. In that, stakeholders of education, such as teachers, curriculum planners and designers, developers of teaching and learning materials, principals, and school managers, should be aware of the motivation of the students for 'choosing' to major in a particular course [such as English] to design programs, curriculum, teaching and learning activities and materials that would best sustain and enhance the interest of the learner in the program.

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