

Abstract

Nowadays, English language plays an important role in communication in the world. More and more non-English media countries use some form of English in their education systems. The Taiwanese government has begun encouraging its citizens to learn English although English proficiency of the Taiwanese still needs a lot of improvement. Though the unemployment rate in Taiwan is high, people hope to raise their competitiveness by preference in English. Learning English is not just something young students do but also adults.

The National Open University was established ten years ago to provide adult learners opportunities to receive continuing education. "Learning society" has become a slogan in Taiwan. The purpose of this present study is to find out how different age ranges affect the motivation of Taiwanese adult learners in English language learning by using questionnaires and interviews.

There are four age groups in this research: 23-35, 36-50, 51-65 and 65 onwards.

Motivation can be categorized into *self-recognition*, *practical need*, *socialization* and *hobbies* all from intrinsic and extrinsic points of view. Self-recognition and hobbies fall into the area of intrinsic motivation, whereas practical need and socialization

belong to extrinsic motivation.

Based on the research finding from the questionnaires and interview, English learning motivation of learners in the age range 23-35 which included the four categories indicate about. The 35-50 and 51-65 age range adult learners' motivation to learn English tend more towards the practical need aspect. Finally, elder learners' motivations for learning English seems to emphasizes the learning English as a hobby.

To conclude, the findings of this study, indicate that different age groups have different motivation and different needs in learning English.

