ABSTRACT

Several scholars in different countries have adopted the concept of immersion as a tool to understand the process of second and foreign language learning in bilingual education. However, there is yet to be a study that contextualizes this concept in Indian bilingual educational setting. Therefore, the overriding purpose of this study was to determine how individual difference variable factors affect students’ motivational intensity and English proficiency among early, middle and late immersion undergraduate students in India. To accomplish that goal, it became necessary to reach some prerequisite goals. Firstly, the types of immersion in Indian level of educational system and the various kinds of individual difference factors which influence learners’ motivational intensity and English proficiency was contextualized and identified in the literature review. Related to that effort, it is important to also establish the differences among the three groups of immersion students with respect to their English proficiency and then understand how different individual difference factors affect learners’ motivational intensity and English proficiency. It was important to develop a model on how these factors affect motivational intensity and English proficiency and how these motivational variables interact and influence one another through a questionnaire and interview of teachers and students. Once these fundamental steps were achieved, the research was able to move forward by eliciting data through a mixed method. In the questionnaire which is available in both English and Kannada language, students were asked to indicate their past language medium of instruction which is used to classify them to early, middle and late immersion undergraduate students. All the respondents in each immersion group were asked to rate their English proficiency and responded to statements which were used to determine their motivational intensity, language anxiety, interest in cultural materials, willingness to communicate, self efficacy, intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, attitude towards English language education and how these factors relate with one another among each immersion group. In addition, the questionnaires were used to investigate the role of gender among the three immersion groups. Lastly, selective focus group of learners and teachers were asked questions that would provide answer needed to justify some of the findings emanated from the quantitative analysis. Through the use of the survey instrument developed for this
study, data were collected which addressed the research questions posed in the first chapter of this thesis. Some of the major findings showed that early immersion students have highest level of self-confidence in English usage, interest in English cultural materials and they are the group of students mostly motivated and encouraged by their parents to learn English while late immersion students possess highest level of language anxiety and they are most highly instrumental motivated group. All these major findings were used as indicators to substantiate the highest level of English proficiency reported among early immersion students. The findings suggested some pedagogical recommendations for undergraduate students, teachers, parents and policy makers. Possible directions for future studies were also discussed