



The Role of Motivation in Students' Language Learning Performance

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Abstract

This article analyzes the vital role of motivation in the students' performance while learning a language, considering that it affects their interaction, participation, and the right use of strategies. Motivation is boosted by personal aims, Self-confidence, and interests, and also external factors such as the relationship between teachers and students and the classroom settings in general. This article, therefore, focus on the importance of diversified strategies to boost motivation through such methods as appropriate content and interactive teaching methods with a supportive atmosphere. Sustaining motivation is a very crucial activity in which teachers are involved; therefore, this paper is a call for cooperative efforts by all educators, administrators, parents, and students. The implications in this paper include; teacher training, relevant curriculum design, supportive educational policies, parents' involvement, student engagement, identification of those who are motivated by rewards, cross-cultural issues, professional development, multimedia use and cooperation by other stakeholders. All these steps are believed to offer a broad view as well as encouragement in language learning which will eventually highlight the shared responsibility among all parties concerned.

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1. Introduction

Motivation is one of the most influential factors in today's world of successful language learning. It does strongly participate in student excitement, engagement, and persistence. Students who are motivated enough seems to use the target language often, participate actively, and use successful learning strategies, and those are the factors that increase their proficiency over time (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) ^[10]. The motivation of the language learners can be attributed to several factors, some internal to the student themselves, while others are more environment-related aids to motivation and ultimately learning in education.

Motivation, whose function is to urge students into action, brings them to fulfill their duties with the help of their competencies, is one of the essential functions. In the absence of motivation, language learners cannot fulfill their commitment toward learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc., in the target language. Hence, it becomes all the more important that some motivation is instilled in the students by their teachers. They can encourage them by developing interest in the target language and culture through exciting lessons, rapport building, and making classes fun and interactive. As motivation is closely linked with language learning performance, this paper examines the crucial impact of motivation on students' learning of languages. Thus, the research starts by defining motivation in context with language acquisition as that inner drive that prompts one to act and learn a language. This paper further tries to explain why motivation is so significant in the subject of language education and how motivation is believed to work as the driving force for success in learning a language. It then discusses the motivational factors possibly affecting the students, including internal issues: personal goals, self-efficacy, and interests, just to cite a few, as well as external

issues: teacher-student relationships, classroom environment, and parental support. The paper then discussed improvement in students' motivation, strategies for language learning through relevant content, interaction in teaching, feedback, and a supportive atmosphere. Ultimately, the essence of this paper is to give meaningful recommendations to the educator and language instructor for developing and sustaining high motivation levels among learners.

2. The Significance of Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is believed to play one of the biggest roles in learning a language. Learners motivated themselves intrinsically toward learning a second language often invest more effort, work harder to overcome difficulties, and finally end with a greater level of proficiency than those motivated extrinsically (Shan, 2020) ^[31].

In addition, comprehensive reviews indicate that motivation accounts for about 50% of variation in achievements in the learners (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003) ^[21]. More motivated students apply effective learning strategies, such as maximizing their exposure to the language, self-monitoring of their progress, peer cooperation, and making every effort to practice both in and out of school (Vandergrift, 2005) ^[36].

In fact, the research indicates that motivated students are, most of the time, much more likely to use active learning strategies that would prove more successful in mastering a new language. Such students are expected to take part more in-class activities, e.g. role play, discussion, debates, as well as interactive games (Dörnyei, 2005).

In addition, they will most probably engage in other acceptable outside-class activities, like listening to music in their target language, watching shows and movies in that language, reading books and magazines, and seeking conversations with a native speaker (Usioda, 2008). More motivated learners are likely to engage in metacognitive self-regulation activities such as goal setting, monitoring their progress, and evaluating their attainment (Vandergrift, 2005) ^[36]. They consider themselves responsible for their own learning and they continue regardless of moments of difficulty. On the other hand, motivated learners engage in cooperative activities of learning with other students such as forming study groups. Helping less advanced learners and also conducting group projects (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) ^[8].

Continuous motivation for the students in order to be proficient in the language will eventually lead them to be open to a lot of educational input in the target language, which will generate so many opportunities for the students production, self-evaluation and practice. This entire array of effective, active learning strategies allows motivated students to gain higher levels of linguistic competence compared to their less engaged peers.

Many studies were conducted in diverse educational contexts have consistently demonstrated the importance of motivation in second language acquisition. For example, one study conducted within the Chinese context examined motivation factors in learning English as a foreign language among 23 primary school students in Macau using questionnaires. It found most students had positive attitudes about learning English and were driven by both intrinsic motivation like interest and extrinsic motivation like future careers (Wallace & Leong, 2020) ^[37]. Another study of Malaysian university students found the majority of the target

students were highly motivated to learn English, attributing it to positive attitudes and past teachers using student-centered methods; females showed higher motivation, potentially due to greater verbal ability and interest in language usage (Mahammed & Rawian, 2018) ^[20]. Also, on the Saudi context a study of Saudi students also found most of them had high motivation to learn English for communication, media comprehension, and jobs, though discouragement from peer comparisons sometimes undermined it (Akbar *et al.*, 2021) ^[20]. Additional research in India comparing students across academic levels revealed strong motivation driven by careers and cultural integration, with some variations by gender and level (Doley, 2022) ^[7]. Another study related to the Indonesian setting was about high school students' motivation to speak English, the study found out that learners have moderate to high motivations and that's attributed to goals like grades, fluency, and conversing with native speakers (Sri, 2020). While some minor contextual differences exist between learners' motivations, the overall findings highlight remarkable consistency in the significance of motivation globally.

According to all the previous mentioned examples has been considered as one of the most important factors that affects success in second language acquisition and that's through extensive research carried out all over the world. Students who have this inherent motivation to learn a language tend to be more proficient because they work harder, persevere through difficulties, and select better strategies for learning. Across various educational contexts, constant studies show that most language learners are mostly highly motivated. Motivation is fueled by interests from inside the learners themselves toward the language and the culture of the target language, and also by a number of external goals of those learners, including developing their careers, enjoying media, and communicating in international settings.

Most educators focus on the importance of motivation through the process of making class material relevant to students' interests, creating a space for personal development and cooperation, developing a non-threatening classroom environment, aiming at goals that can be achieved, and effort that can be rewarded. Although there are some minor variations in context, the fundamental and universally critical role of motivation in applied linguistics and second language acquisition perfectly clear. Language teachers would do well to prioritize creative techniques designed to cultivating and sustaining student motivation, as it stimulates the beneficial learning behaviors and engagement that drive the ultimate mastery of a new language.

Considering the above discuss of the importance of motivation, there must be some factors that trigger that motivation and contribute to its continuation and that's what is going to be discussed in the next section.

3. Factors Affecting Students' Language Learning Motivation

Learners' motivation is influenced by many factors; these factors can be divided into internal factors inside the individual himself or herself and external factors that are related to their environment.

The internal factors are personality variables such as Sociability and self- esteem, where typically extraverted students have been found to be more motivated to communicate and socially interact with others in the language

(Boo *et al.*, 2015)^[3]. Learners with good self-esteem tend to take more risks along with perseverance even when facing problems while learning a new language (Listyani, 2022)^[19]. They usually set more challenging goals, use more strategies, and keep going, through obstacles. developing a strong sense of self-efficacy enhances motivation to put effort into language learning (Raofi *et al.*, 2012)^[29].

In some cultures, such as India, Belgium, Switzerland and many more where many languages are spoken and considered official and for that being multilingual is not just a practical skill but a deeply Fundamental value, multilingualism is a common and valued aspect of the culture. Such cultures embrace linguistic diversity and view multilingualism as a mark of pride and identity. Being raised in such contexts, people develop a strong intrinsic motivation to learn and master many languages, seeing language as a link to their own heritage, as a way of reaching out to a wider range of people, and as a means of gaining insights into the particularities of certain aspects of their culture. (O'Keefe *et al.*, 2017)^[27]. Various internal factors are also considerably influential in explaining the motivation and achievement of an individual in language learning. Such internal factors include a person's self-efficacy that implies that he or she has faith in the language ability and learning elevation. These are called self-efficacy beliefs and play a significant role to the language learners in one way or the other. (Mills, 2014)^[25].

Age is also considered an essential internal factor, which plays a role in motivational orientations toward language learning. According to the existing literature, motivation for language learning differs because of age due to developmental changes in motivational attitudes and in themselves (Lamb 2017)^[18]. Younger learners are more positive and motivated compared to older ones or the learners in higher grades. The key reason may include interest, enjoyment, and inspiration by the teacher while the young learners may lack persistence and their motivation is fueled by external factors (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020)^[24].

In the case of motivational orientations to language learning gender may therefore assume a significant influence. For example, a number of quantitative research works have examined gender differences in motivation profiles and established several patterns in the dataset based on males' and females' scores and gender-associated tendencies (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015)^[10]. For example, Henry and Cliffordson (2013)^[15] synchronously carried out an empirical study on the motivation levels of adolescent Swedish learners of English and the result showed that motivated learning behavior of female student was higher than the male students. The females seemed to work harder, more persistent and more involved in language related activities and undertakings.

Further study by Kissau *et al.* (2013)^[16] conducting survey on high school French students also indicated that female students' score higher in various factors like French learning motivation, motivational intensity and self attitudes towards learning French. The authors claim that motivational patterns related to gender socialization also promoting studying among females might be behind motivational advantages in language learning settings.

Still, other findings highlight more complex differences by gender depending on the aspects of motivation addressed; for instance, in a large-scale questionnaire survey of Kormos and Csizér (2013)^[17], female learners reported higher levels of language learning anxiety, as opposed to male learners'

higher self-efficacy for language learning.

However, the female participants in this study scored higher on the components of integrative Ness and attitudes toward learning English (Stolk *et al.*, 2021)^[33]. The external factors exerting influence over an individual's motivation to learn and acquire a language are molded by the physical learning environment and the social context. External motivational factors can include everything from the learning situation to interpersonal relations, external incentives, and the overarching social influences on the learner. Instructional context and learning tasks that instructors design are important external motivators. Activities that aim at learning are considered meaningful, related and engaging which have a tendency to increase the learner's motivation and boost their positive attitudes. Furthermore, it is considered that instructional strategies which are cooperative and interactive usually enhance motivation especially when compared to other approaches that are considered passive. Providing an appropriate level of challenge and the necessary scaffolding is also very important (Brown, 2007)^[4].

Outside the student, the teacher-student connection affects motivation levels (Ruesch *et al.*, 2012)^[30]. Teachers who exhibit concern for students, develop relationships, and encourage autonomy usually inspire learners and increase their self-confidence. Negative relationships developed through criticism or control often undermine motivation.

Goal-setting is another external component that guides motivation (Moskovsky *et al.*, 2016)^[26]. Such students can be encouraged by teachers to cultivate an interest in the development of their learning other than just achieving good grades or impressing others. This is likely to result in developing mastery goals, which are more motivating than performance goals; also, Goals emphasizing self-improvement over competing with peers are beneficial.

Awards and recognition can come as an extrinsic motivation for anything, but their effects depend on perceived autonomy and competence support (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014)^[12]. Then, the type of incentive matters: controlling incentives can demotivate individuals, while those providing informational feedback can be more motivating than controlling ones.

Broader social influences can be placed in the luck and motivation of a learner. Influences such as those among parents, peers, and community members help shape one's belief about one's ability, goal setting, and the value of the language being learned. For instance, children speaking a second language at home are likely to have parents who value education and such parents are likely to be successful in training those children to master the target language. Associated with this are peers learning the shared language who will provide support and encouragement, not to mention the community members who used that particular language would give a sense of belonging and identity to the learner, which could also push him further in studies (Mercer *et al.*, 2012)^[23].

4. Strategies to Enhance Students' Motivation

One of the hardest but most satisfying things one does in an ever-globalized world is learning a second language. For most students, the motivation to invest the long hours and hard work needed to learn a new language is considered a hard job to do. This implies the need to find ways to promote students' motivation and one of the most important factors in

this process is the teacher and his/her strategies to facilitate the process of learning a language.

Teachers enhance motivation through relevant language instruction, fostering a low-anxiety environment, and employing interactive activities, learner autonomy, and meaningful feedback (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) ^[13] also engaged students driven by career goals or cultural integration achieve higher language proficiency. There has been a lot of talk about motivation because it declines as the first excitement begins to decline (Yeşilçinar & Üyesi, 2021) ^[38]. By varying the tempo or speed, setting realistic, short-term goals, and emphasizing realistic relevance in language learning to their lives, teachers should be able to overcome this (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) ^[13], whereas projects, games, and media that the target culture finds interesting further invoke interest (Ushioda, 2011) furthermore, customizing content to students' interests and collaborative learning tasks further boost motivation (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) ^[8]. Autonomy as well as praise and not making negative comparisons would contribute in a long way towards maintaining motivation (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007) ^[6]. All are essential to maintaining motivation: adapting to the evolving needs of students on an ongoing basis.

Teachers are central to the administration of motivational strategies that inspire students towards the goal of lifelong learning of a second language. Moskovsky *et al.* (2016) ^[26] did much of their work in educational psychology and second language acquisition; they suggested three supportive evidence-based strategies to boost student motivation, namely: enhancing relevance, developing an adaptive classroom climate, and engaging in adaptive instructional strategies for instruction. Certainly, a great approach to inspire learners is making material pertinent to their objectives and daily lives (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021) ^[9]. Furthermore, when the learners realize how useful learning a second language is and how it might help them achieve their personal goals and expand their experiences, they will grow intrinsic motivation to study that language (Ushioda, 2011) ^[35] on the part of the teacher, they should personalize instruction for their students to emphasize actual-world applications that match student interests. For example, an English teacher could gather vocabulary lists relevant to students' passions and professional goals or arrange professional interviews who apply English in their jobs. Showing how useful the language is, there are some chances to use it when traveling, studying abroad, or in future jobs which suggests its realism. Adding alumni who mastered the language to describe how it has affected their lives gives the advantages concrete form. Learning becomes relevant to students interests with least possible reference such as little tweaks like referring to pop culture or employing song lyrics that learners find enjoyable because they link their outside-school experiences to their expected knowledge. Students usually tend to participate when they understand how studying the language will enable them accomplish their personal objectives.

Apart from relevance, research has indicated that regulation of motivation classroom environment adaption is a critical factor for student success; What teachers should do is create an environment in which anxiety is reduced and confidence built through a very strong teacher-student rapport an encouragement for taking risks, and very dynamic group activities (Mercer & MacIntyre, 2014) ^[22].

Confirming, warm, humorous, and patient teachers can make students feel accepted. Also, Multimedia resources, such as target language films, YouTube videos, and music all in the making use of technology that students enjoy in their daily lives. Project-based learning which relates to real-life problems fosters cooperation, customization, and thorough learning. Adolescents especially thrive on new things and social connection, thus interactive approaches inspire motivation.

While relevance, classroom climate, and engagement are central, differentiation and feedback are also impactful. Teachers' ought to assess each student's motivational orientation, such as why they are studying the language, to appropriately differentiate instruction (Putra, 2012) ^[28]. To encourage the students instead of punishing them for lack of skills, and providing constructive and special feedback on the difficulties the learners experience boosts their self-efficacy and a growth attitude (Dweck, 2014) ^[11]. Ultimately, to maintain a balance among the challenges with high encouragement and support can add up to motivation. Generally, lots of studies demonstrate that success in second language acquisition depends on student motivation. Teachers can significantly increase learners' learning motivation in a new language by making material relevant, projecting warmth in the classroom, and integrating interactive methods. Such student-centered techniques add life, challenge, and freedom to the learning process instead of depending on memorized drills. Carefully planning out means to elicit involvement will help learners achieve their targets of fluency and benefit from being multilingual worldwide citizens throughout their lives.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Motivation is a factor that has been given much attention in the language learning process, and this paper pays much attention to this important factor. Motivation, thus, operates as an active force that encourages participation, communication, and the constructive development of learner behaviors and procedures for improving proficiency. These have included the attitude of the teacher and the student, self-effort, the concept of locus of control, as well as attribution; the teacher-student relationship; the classroom climate; and the role of parents. According to the study, there is encouragement of diversified approaches to enhance motivation and this includes choice of material and methods, and fostering a positive learning environment. It emphasizes the role of teachers in the encouragement of learners and this is underlined by supporters such as educators, administrators, parents, and the learners themselves.

The strengthening of the learning environment can only be achieved by focused initiatives in key domains. Teacher preparation courses need to develop motivational strategies for learners to be implemented as necessary. Curriculum designers are required to have relevant materials, content and teaches for enhancing intrinsic motivation and engagement. There is adequate time in the educational policies to provide more class sections and flexible timetables to support new approaches of teaching and learning methods that employs the use of smaller classes.

Consequently, parental involvement is central for implementing motivational support in the domestic background. Recommendations for the present practice include encouraging parents to attend informational sessions

and providing teachers with relevant information that would help foster an encouraging atmosphere for learners. By identifying and encouraging successful incentive strategies, there is potential to replicate them among teachers. It is vital to make a cultural approach which defines the choice of approaches to teaching that will respect the cultural background of students to ensure that any teaching is done in a culturally sensitive manner.

Continued professional training keeps the educators informed on different aspects of learners and emerging strategies and methods that can be adopted in classroom teaching. Pursuing students' interest can enhance motivation as well as valuing their interests that reflect the use of multimedia resources including films, videos and music. Cooperative efforts which are most appropriate in this case include cooperation involving teachers, administrators, parents, students, and the community in order to provide common support for language learning motivation and inspiration.

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