

MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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This article deals with the problem of Foreign Language Acquisition and the role of a teacher in achieving the goal. The main attention is given to Motivation and strategies to foster students to study the language in enjoyable and productive way.

Keywords: *instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, trigger, acquisition, persistence.*

MOTIVAREA ÎN ACHIZIȚIA UNEI LIMBI STRĂINE

În articol este abordată problema privind însușirea unei limbi străine și rolul unui profesor în atingerea obiectivului respectiv. Atenția principală este acordată motivației și strategiilor de încurajare a studenților să studieze limba în mod plăcut și productiv.

Cuvinte-cheie: *motivație instrumentală, motivare integratoare, declanșare, achiziție, persistență.*

Why Do People Learn a Second/Foreign Language?

This seems to be the key question in all kinds of research! And of course, the reasons vary from a person to another.

One answer comes from the students themselves: Coleman found, that the most popular reasons among U.K. university students of modern languages were [1]:

1.	For my future career
2.	Because I like the language
3.	To travel in different countries
4.	To have a better understanding of the way of life in the country or countries where it is spoken
5.	Because I would like to live in the country where it is spoken
6.	Because I am good at it
7.	Because it is an international language
8.	To become a better-educated person
9.	To meet a greater variety of people in my life
10.	To get to know/make friends among the people who speak it

Another answer comes from the expectations of the educational systems in various countries: the UK Modern Language Curriculum [2] expects pupils to “understand and appreciate different countries”, to “learn about the basic structures of language”, and how it “can be manipulated”. Another perspective comes from second language acquisition (SLA), which sometimes states the target of L2 learning overtly: ‘LP (language pedagogy) is concerned with the ability to use language in communicative situations’ [9] – the point of language teaching is to help the students communicate, but more often puts it covertly: Oxford [10] assumes that discussion of age concerns “whether the very best learners actually have native-like competence”, i.e. successful L2 learners become like L1 native speakers.

As for those who aren’t living in an English speaking community/country, they are learning English as a FOREIGN language. “Foreign language learners are surrounded by their own native language and have to go out of their way to find stimulation and input in the target language. These students typically receive input in the new language only in the classroom and by artificial means, no matter how talented the teacher is” [3].

Research has shown that the use of specific learning strategies and techniques while studying a second or foreign language leads to success. “The conscious, tailored use of such strategies is related to language achievement and proficiency” [8].

However, how simple and easy the word “motivation” might appear, it is in fact, very difficult to define. It seems to have been impossible for theorists to reach consensus on a single definition.

Here are a few, I've found in the literature: "Motivation is like food for the brain" [7]. Everybody needs motivation. Everybody needs to have a reason for action. We, teachers, need to be committed to offering students the opportunity to believe in themselves and achieve great things.

Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal.

Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language; it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning [3].

What can we infer from all those definitions? What are the keywords that "Motivation" triggers in our minds?

MOTIVATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> *Goal	<input type="checkbox"/> *Energy
<input type="checkbox"/> *Effort	<input type="checkbox"/> *Active involvement
<input type="checkbox"/> *Desire	<input type="checkbox"/> *Persistence

Life takes on meaning when you become motivated, set goals and charge after them in unstoppable manner [12].

What is motivation? Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal. Students who are motivated, have desire to undertake their study and complete the requirements.

Can we motivate our students if they aren't "ready" for motivation? It's not only the teacher's / parent's job to motivate students, they need to assume responsibility for their own learning="intrinsic motivation. We can search for the most valuable thing for us, but if we only look with physical eyes, we won't find it... If we help our students to look deep inside in them, they will find what they need: intrinsic motivation. We have been everywhere but have ignored our inner selves. We are the ones that create our own reality; what we are, what we want to be. We need to realize that, to understand it, to acknowledge it=> set goals!

After conducting a study that lasted more than ten years, Gardner & Lambert [4] concluded that the learner's attitude toward the target language and the culture of the target-language-speaking community play a crucial role in language learning motivation. They introduced the notions of instrumental and integrative motivation.

Integrative motivation was identified by the fact that students are attracted by the culture of the community speaking that language and they want to integrate themselves into such a culture or become a part of that society. It's associated with components such as "interest in foreign languages", "desire to learn the target language", "attitudes toward the target language", "attitudes toward the learning situation", "desire to interact with the target language," and attitudes toward target language community" [5].

Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is marked by the fact that the learner studies the second language (L2) with a utilitarian purpose in mind, such as a better job or higher salary. Thus, no matter what type of motivation students have, foreign language teachers have to keep in mind that the strength of motivation on the state of student's needs and goals.

Keywords	
<i>Integrative motivation</i>	learning the language in order to take part in the culture of its people
<i>Instrumental motivation</i>	learning the language for a career goal or their practical reason

"Instrumental motivation might be more important than integrative motivation for foreign language learner". Dornyei showed that instrumental motives significantly contribute to motivation in EFL contexts, and can involve a number of extrinsic motives, resulting in a fairly homogeneous subsystem. Instrumental motives most efficiently promote learning up to the intermediate level, but to go beyond this level, the learner must be "integratively motivated".

Strategies to enhance student motivation

Research studies have shown that language acquisition is the result of an interplay between cognitive mechanism and environmental conditions [6, 11, 12]. Teachers can observe circumstances under which learners

acquire language and can make adjustments toward creating optimal learning conditions. In designing learning activities, the language teacher should remember that because language learning focuses on both the accuracy and appropriateness of application in various contexts of use. These opportunities will result in learners' heightened motivation and awareness of the intricacies of language use. Some teaching strategies that can be used to foster motivation and provide better opportunities of language skills include the following:

* Encourage learners to take ownership in learning.

Have learners take ownership of the learning assignment by letting them identify and decide for themselves relevant learning goals. This will motivate them to apply what they have learned to attain these learning goals.

* Send them positive messages about language learning.

Teachers should introduce all new activities carefully and explain how they can help students improve their English skills. Motivation levels drop and anxiety levels go up when students are unsure about how and why they should perform certain language tasks. Making positive statements about upcoming activities, moreover, is an excellent way to increase motivation.

* Increase authenticity of learning tasks and goals.

Create activities that foster real communication. Teachers of college level writing classes, for instance, can help their students write articles for the wall newspaper or even correspond with students in other countries. Students in one of my classes put together a collection of short articles they wrote about themselves and their country, for students of their twin school in Canada, Montreal. They were proud of their role as co-students and worked on the project with great enthusiasm. Thus providing our learners with the motivation to learn is one of the best steps we can take to facilitate learning success. This is best conveyed by Spolsky [12]: "The best way to create interest in a subject is to render it worth knowing, which means to make the knowledge gained usable in one's thinking beyond the situation in which learning has occurred." Oxford & Shearin [3] offer Practical Suggestions for Teachers:

1. Teachers can identify why students are studying the new language.
2. Teachers can find out actual motivations (motivation survey).
3. Information on motivation can be passed on to the next class in a portfolio.
4. Teachers can determine which parts of L2 learning are especially valuable for the students.
5. Teachers can help shape students' beliefs about success and failure in L2 learning. Students can learn to have realistic but challenging goals.
6. Teachers can learn to accept diversity in the way students establish and meet their goals, based on differences in learning styles.
7. Teachers can help students improve motivation by showing that L2 learning can be an exciting mental challenge, a career enhancer, a vehicle to cultural awareness and friendship and a key to world peace.
8. Teachers can make the L2 classroom a welcoming, positive place where psychological needs are met and where language anxiety is kept to a minimum.

Dornyei suggests [6]:

"Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners"

Set a personal example with your own behavior.

1. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
2. Present the task properly.
3. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
4. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.
5. Make the language classes interesting.
6. Personalize the learning process.
7. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
8. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

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