



## MOTIVATION AS A PROMOTING DETERMINANT IN SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A REVIEW

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### Abstract:

Motivation plays a significant role in the rate and success of second and foreign language learning in general, and in classroom language learning in particular. This paper overviews research on motivation as a promoting determinant in second and foreign language classroom and deals with the meaning of motivation, theories of motivation and explains how teachers can generate and maintain motivation in second language classroom. Research on motivation for second language learning has shown that teachers should be aware of their actions and behaviours in classroom because it is very likely that teachers' actions can demotivate learners.

**Keywords:** intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, instrumental/integrative motivation, SLA (Second Language Acquisition), EFL (English as a Foreign Language)/ESL (English as a Second Language)

### 1. Introduction

Over the last fifty years, research on motivation for second and foreign language learning has evolved considerably from focusing on describing what composes student motivation to a detailed list of suggestions that help teachers initiate, sustain, and further promote student motivation in a classroom. Driving into motivation is essential for language teachers because we know that motivation is one of the key aspects impelling language learning success (Dörnyei, 2001; Ellis, 1994). In fact, teachers often see it as their job to motivate students by creating classroom tasks that are interesting

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and engaging and by using authentic materials to stimulate further interest in the language and the people who speak it. At present, as we are embarking on a new academic year with bright, shiny, motivated students, I would like to highlight learner motivation as a variable that not only students bring to the classroom, but also as one that teachers can implement, cultivate and promote throughout the year to enhance learning.

Motivation is no longer seen as a reflection of certain inner forces such as instincts, volition, will, and psychical energy; neither is it viewed in strictly behavioural terms as a function of stimuli and reinforcement. Rather, current cognitive approaches place the focus on the individual's thoughts and beliefs (and recently also emotions) that are transformed into action. Thus, in Pintrich and Schunk's view, motivation involves various *mental processes* that lead to the initiation and maintenance of action; as they define it, 'Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained' (1996: 4). From this process-oriented perspective, the main disagreements in motivation research concern *what* mental processes are involved in motivation, *how* these operate and affect learning and achievement, and *by what means* they can be enhanced and sustained at an optimal level (Dörnyei, 1998).

## 2. Historical Viewpoints on Motivation

Different researchers have classified motivation from different points of view. From a cognitive viewpoint, two types of motivation are recognized: *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*. The former is applied by others and involves systems of rewards and punishments, while the latter is self-applied, lying in the affective domain of feelings and emotional responses (Slavin, 2003). In other words, extrinsic motivation is related to doing an action in order to receive an extrinsic reward or to avoid punishment, whereas intrinsic motivation is about an action that is done for its own sake to experience satisfaction (Dörnyei, 2001a). An example of extrinsic motivation would be the case of an employee who studies English as a foreign or second language because she or he will be sent to England for work, and if it were not for that sake, she or he would not study it. An instance of intrinsic motivation would be learning English as a second or foreign language because one is interested in it, and nobody has asked him or her to do so.

Although the terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have been widely used by many researchers (Chen et al., 2005; Lamb, 2007; Liu, 2007), some scholars have identified other motivational patterns based on the contextual features or other aspects related to specific participants or groups of participants. *Required motivation* is a term that was first coined by Warden and Lin (2000) because the participants in their

research were motivated by certain requirements. In another study in the same setting, Warden (2000) found that social expectations emphasizing standard requirements are likely to be motivating for Chinese students. *Chinese imperative* was another term first used by Chen et al. (2005) to emphasize their findings that among Chinese and Taiwanese people, strong adherence to traditional values like obtaining good grades will bring social respect. Therefore, being respected by others can motivate individuals in such settings to do their best.

Julkunen (2001) mentioned other forms of motivation, such as *situation-specific motivation* and *task motivation*, and the researcher believed that motivation depends on context and task. Accordingly, individualistic; cooperative; and competitive situations might affect motivation differently. Furthermore, Wlodkowski (1984) identified three sequences in motivation: (a) attitude and needs; (b) stimulation and affection; and (c) competence and reinforcement. Within the first stage, the teacher's job is to create a positive attitude in L2 learners towards an L2 and to provide a collaborative rather than competitive environment in the classroom. At the next stage, learners' attention should be stimulated and a positive atmosphere should be created. Finally, at the third stage, the teacher should have the students engage in activities that give them a sense of accomplishment, such as praising them for making progress. Although these researchers have come up with new terms and categories for motivation, the usage of such classifications seems to be limited in scope, and they are not widely referred to in other studies.

### 3. Overview of Theories on Motivation

#### 3.1 Socio-educational Model

Research into second language motivation dates back to the late 1950s and flourished in the 1970s with the pioneering work of Lambert and Gardner. Gardner (1985) proposed three key components of L2 motivation: (a) "motivational intensity or effort," (b) "desire to learn the language," and (c) "attitudes towards learning the language", (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41). Gardner distinguishes between motivation and what he called orientation, where orientation stands for a goal. Orientation is an incentive that gives rise to motivation and steers it towards a set of goals. Strictly speaking, orientations are not part of motivation, but function as "motivational antecedents" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41). Gardner identified two main orientations through his research: an integrative orientation, which is an interest in interacting with the L2 language group; and an instrumental orientation, an interest in the more materialistic and practical advantages of learning a new language, such as aspiration for a better

career. The integrative component in Gardner's work is consistently cited in empirical studies as "*explaining a significant portion in the variance in language learners' motivational disposition and motivated learning behavior*" (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 5). Gardner described the difference between these orientations and actual motivation. For example, an integrative orientation was a class of reasons suggesting why a person might undertake language study, including a desire to integrate with a particular language community. By itself, this reflected a goal that might or might not lack motivational power. In contrast, an integrative motive included this orientation, plus the motivation, which included desire, motivational intensity, and a number of other attitudes involving the target language community.

However, Gardner's socio-educational model was criticized on the basis of its emphasis on the integrative orientation. Clement and Kruidenier (1983) conducted a research study in order to identify additional factors that influence motivation. The findings showed four different orientations to language study. The instrumental orientation was an important factor, associated with reasons such as travelling, seeking new friendships, and acquiring knowledge. They asserted that "*relative status of learner and target groups as well as the availability of (or at least familiarity with) the latter in the immediate environment are important determinants of the emergence of orientations*" (p. 288).

### **3.2 Psychological Model**

The 1990s saw a shift from the socio-educational model of motivation to an emphasis on a psychological model, which views motivation as a more dynamic factor, more cognitive in nature, and more established in the educational contexts where most L2 learning occurs. This shift came with Dörnyei's concern to expand the model of motivation beyond two orientations. He stated that "*the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on what languages where*" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 275). His motivational model was categorized into language level, learner level, and learning situation level. The language level refers to aspects of the L2, including the culture, community, and the values and benefits associated with it. The individual level consists of the learner characteristics that language learners bring to the classroom. However, the learning situation involves various factors including the classroom environment, teacher, learning context, teaching methods, classmates, and teacher personality. The intriguing factor in Dörnyei's model is that each of the three levels of motivation operates independently of the others.

Unlike Gardner's focus on integrativeness, Dörnyei argued that in an EFL context, instrumental orientation would have a greater impact on language learners. In addition, research on L2 motivation by Dörnyei (1994, 1997, 2001b, 2001c), Dörnyei and

Ushioda (2011), and Williams (1994) revealed a need for a more pragmatic education centered approach, investigating classroom reality and identifying and examining classroom specific motives. Cortazzi and Jin (1999), on the other hand, found that culture and identity are two essential variables in motivating L2 learners. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) introduced a new approach in L2 learning labeled "*L2 motivational self-esteem*," which links the learning of a foreign language to one's personal identity. This approach has implications for learning a foreign language in that the learner develops self-maturity and thus self-motivation in acquiring the target language.

### **3.3 Self-determination Theory**

Another theory, which captures both the dynamic dimension of motivation and its relevance for classroom applications, is the self-determination theory. The theory was initially developed by Deci and Ryan (between 1985-1991); it is concerned with supporting learners' natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective ways. The self-determination theory contains three orientations to motivation, which are placed on a continuum of increasing self-determination: amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation. Amotivation occurs when learners see no relation between their actions and the consequences of their actions. Amotivated language learners believe that they are wasting their time studying the L2. They do not value language learning and do not expect to be successful (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Amotivation should not be confused with demotivation, which refers to a reduction of motivation due to some specific external forces (Dörnyei, 2001b,c). Dörnyei (2001b,c) made a distinction between amotivation and demotivation. Demotivation concerns "*specific forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action*" (Dörnyei, 2001b, c, p. 143). Demotivation refers to a decrease of motivation. Demotivated learners were once motivated, but due to some external causes, they became demotivated. Demotivation might be brought by an attractive alternative or distraction. For example, a student decides to watch TV instead of doing homework. On the other hand, Dörnyei (2001b, c) claims that when the outcomes are believed to be unrealistic and unreasonable, this results in amotivation. Amotivation, thus, is brought about by a belief that there is no point in doing something. That is to say, the learner realizes that that goal is not achievable and it is beyond his or her ability. Basically, amotivation is a lack in motivation.

Douglas Brown (1981, 1990, 1994) has been one of the main proponents of emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motivation in the L2 classroom. He argues that traditional school settings cultivate extrinsic motivation, which, over the long haul, 'focuses students too exclusively on the material or monetary rewards of an education

rather than instilling an appreciation for creativity and for satisfying some of the more basic drives for knowledge and exploration' (Brown, 1994:40). In contrast, '*an intrinsically oriented school can begin to transfer itself into a more positive, affirming environment [...] The result: an appreciation of love, intimacy, and respect for the wisdom of age*' (Brown, 1994: 41). The same book also offers a number of strategies on how to achieve such an optimal state (Dörnyei, 1998).

Another aspect of self-determination theory that has been applied to the L2 field has been the emphasis on fostering *learner autonomy* in L2 classrooms in order to increase the learners' motivation. This emphasis is relatively new; however, a number of recent reviews and discussions (e.g. Dickinson, 1995; Ushioda, 1996b) provide evidence that L2 motivation and learner autonomy go hand in hand, that is, 'enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning [...] and perceiving that their learning successes and failures are to be attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control' (Dickinson, 1995:173-4). These self-regulatory conditions are characteristics of learner autonomy, and thus, as Ushioda (1996b: 2) explicitly states, '*Autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners*'.

Most of the studies that were performed in China or with Chinese participants yielded similar results with respect to the type of orientation of the participants (Liu, 2007; Rahman, 2005) and potentially influential factors in motivation (Liu, 2007). The findings of some of these studies that were performed in the university or high school context indicated that the students possessed instrumental, rather than the integrative orientation (Liu, 2007; Rahman, 2005). The variables under study included a training program; the power of choice and goal setting ; L2 proficiency; anxiety; motivational strategies, such as doing enjoyable tasks ; language learning strategies; and the learning atmosphere, including "*the physical environment, instructional arrangements, and social interaction*".

It was found that all of these variables might influence motivation in SLA positively. In particular, the reviewed literature indicated that integrative motivation might lessen anxiety, and that teachers' motivational practice could increase students' motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). It was also discovered that the use of metacognitive language learning strategies could potentially motivate learners, and that strategy use might be linked to integrative motivation, rather than instrumental motivation. Furthermore, it was found that the classroom atmosphere might be positively correlated with L2 learners' motivation (Wu & Wu, 2008). Finally, the study that was conducted in Nigeria concluded that the use of games; songs; and stories might also influence motivation in SLA (Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008).

However, there is no agreement among the researchers on the superiority of one type of motivation or orientation over the other, despite the fact that integrative orientation was initially thought to be a predictor of successful ESL learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In one case, the findings even contradicted that of a previous study done on a similar subject in the same context (Lamb, 2007). Since some studies aimed solely at describing participants' motivational patterns (Rahman, 2005; Chen et al., 2005), they did not predict whether certain kinds of motivation can guarantee success in learning ESL.

### **3.4 How can motivation be promoted in the second and foreign language classroom?**

After surveying 200 EFL/ESL teachers in Hungary, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) wrote the article "Ten commandments for motivating language learners," which was published in *Language Teaching Research*. For the study, each teacher was asked to rate 51 motivational strategies according to their perceived importance or how much the teacher used the motivational techniques in his or her classroom. The top ten, along with some of the specific ways Dörnyei and Csizér recommended – based on the teachers' responses – to implement each one, are listed below.

Commandments for Motivating Language Learners in a Second or Foreign Language Classroom:

1. Set a personal example with your own behavior.

- Dörnyei and Csizér recommended that teachers prepare for lessons, be committed and motivated themselves, behave naturally, and be sensitive and accepting.

2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

- Teachers should bring in humor, laughter and smiles, do fun things in class, and have game-like competitions, Dörnyei and Csizér wrote.

3. Present the tasks properly.

- To present tasks properly, Dörnyei and Csizér recommended that teachers give clear directions, provide guidance about how to do the task, and state the purpose and utility of every task.

4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.

- This is a well-known principle that Dörnyei and Csizér let stand for itself - basically, they say to make the students want to please you.

5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.

- Dörnyei and Csizér said to make sure students experience success regularly. Teachers should also constantly encourage them, demystify mistakes (they are natural), and select tasks that do not exceed the learners' competence.

**6. Make the language classes interesting.**

- Dörnyei and Csizér recommended that teachers select interesting, challenging, and a variety of tasks and supplementary materials, vary the tasks; build on students' interests rather than tests or grades as the learning impetus, and raise curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.

**7. Promote learner autonomy.**

- Dörnyei and Csizér asked teachers to encourage creative and imaginative ideas, encourage questions, and share responsibility by having students help organize the learning. They should also involve students in choosing the materials, they wrote.

**8. Personalize the learning process.**

- Teacher should, Dörnyei and Csizér wrote, try to fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students.

**9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.**

- Dörnyei and Csizér wrote that teachers can do this by helping the students develop realistic expectations about their learning and by helping them set up several specific learning goals. They suggested that teachers do a need analysis with the students, and help students design individual study plans.

**10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.**

- To do this, Dörnyei and Csizér wrote that teachers should use authentic materials, occasionally invite native speakers to the classroom, and help establish penpals for the learners.<sup>ii</sup>

So, teachers can promote learners' self-confidence in different ways in a second or foreign language classroom. For example, they can focus on the positive aspects of their learners by showing their learners what they can do rather than what they cannot and by giving them a chance to make a useful contribution in class. They can also make the students feel that they can come forward to offer help, and making the teaching context relaxing and less stressful. Motivation can also be preserved when students feel that they can demonstrate a positive social image and show their strength. Similarly, learners' social image can be enhanced in an environment where learners are not criticized or humiliated and where students can work in groups so that the norms of tolerance and acceptance are established. In addition, many research studies in educational psychology (e.g., Benson, 2010; Little, 1991) have pointed out that encouraging learners' autonomy is beneficial to learning. Teachers can foster learning autonomy in different ways, including sharing learning responsibilities, involving them

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<sup>ii</sup> This is a summary of Tables 4 and 5 in the *"Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners,"* which appear in Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998, pages 215-223.



in making decisions regarding classroom materials, and giving them positions of authority through peer teaching and project work (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Most of the discussions on maintaining motivation emphasized the teacher's role in a language classroom, but if we also give the students the opportunity to share this responsibility, it will be beneficial. Learners who motivate themselves exhibit more success in pursuing their goals. Teachers can promote their students' self-motivation by drawing their attention to useful strategies, such as favorable expectations, incentives, dealing with procrastination and boredom, and eliminating distractions.

This review has served to draw together common themes from recent research on motivation as a means of influencing future inquiry in this area, and for informing curriculum and textbook developers. In particular, this review highlights the increasingly international perspective in the field of motivation as a promoting determinant in language classroom. Although much research on motivation as crucial factor in language classroom has been conducted, it seems that motivation still has a limited place in L2 teacher education programs all over the world (Dornyei, 2001a). Therefore, future review work in the area of motivation might focus on research into practical aspects of motivation, such as motivational teaching strategies devised and employed by L2 teachers worldwide. In this way, a review of practice-oriented work that highlights educators' successes and challenges in motivating L2 students might bring together new themes, international perspectives, and pragmatic experiences of relevance to both researchers and practitioners. This type of review might further serve as a guide to L2 teachers, especially novice teachers seeking ways of enhancing L2 learning for their students.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In a second and foreign language classroom, a committed and considerate teacher can offer satisfaction to the learner's extra needs. This helps to strengthen the learner's motivation to know about a second and foreign language. On the other hand, a teacher's attitude towards the learner has major influence on the learner's learning. As regards emotional cramming, a teacher's physically and mentally pouring into his teaching, and being filled with affection, will help arouse the learning enthusiasm of the learners. However, if the teacher only works as a "teaching craftsman" and put no emotion into teaching, the classroom will become static to lessen the learning enthusiasm of the learners. Within the classroom, there are certain actions teachers can take to cultivate student motivation to varying degrees in order to enhance their L2 learning. In a language classroom, the teacher has control over many of the factors

which effect students' motivation, and from the materials and activities they select for the students to the type of social-contexts (classrooms) they create (which are aimed at cultivating confidence, competence and autonomy), teachers can play a central role in activating and sustaining students' motivation. Changes in teachers' perspectives on motivation, teaching strategies, and learning activities might all result in more inviting and friendly classroom atmospheres, which seems to facilitate L2 learning for students.

### **About the Author**

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