MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

Dr. Mohammed Abd Alla AbdAlgane Mohammed^{1*}

¹Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics College of Science & Arts Arrass, Qassim University, KSA

**dr.mohammed_saleem@hotmail.com*

***Corresponding Author: -**

dr.mohammed_saleem@hotmail.com

Abstract: -

There are a lot of factors which influence success in language learning. However, one of the most important factors is the learner's motivation to learn the language in order to be able to use it in real-life situations. Research and experience show that learners with strong motivation can achieve a lot regardless of circumstances. Studies of motivation in second language learning have led to several distinctions, one of which is the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. According to this distinction, some learners are motivated to learn the language because they want to integrate into the target language community, while for others the driving force is their desire to achieve personal goals. Another distinction related to motivation is the distinction between extrinsic motivation, which is regulated from an external source, and intrinsic motivation, which is regulated from within. And according to a third distinction, there can be global, situational and task motivation. Even though teachers cannot control all types and aspects of motivation, they can do a lot to help learners develop motivation and interest for learning the language. This paper discusses the importance of motivation, the different types of motivation and the ways of promoting learner motivation and interest.

Keywords: - *learner motivation, integrative/instrumental motivation, extrinsic/intrinsic motivation, global/ situational /task motivation, promoting motivation*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last forty years, researchers have studied student motivation and have learned a great deal about:

- What moves students to learn and the quantity and quality of the effort they invest
- What choices students make
- What makes them persist in the face of hardship
- How student motivation is affected by teacher practices and peer behavior
- How motivation develops
- How the school environment affects it

Motivation is one of the most important factors that influence the success in language learning. Even though research has demonstrated that success in language learning is related to positive attitudes and motivation, it is not easy to define and measure motivation, and the direction of this relationship is not clear, whether motivation leads to successful language learning or the success in language learning increases motivation. Brown (1987: 114) defines motivation as ‘an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action’. Thus, a motivated learner is the learner who wants to achieve a goal and who is willing to invest time and effort in reaching that goal. Brown (ibid.) remarks that all human beings have needs or drives that are more or less innate, but their intensity depends on the environment. Ausubel (1968: 368-379) has identified six needs and desires that are integral parts of motivation: the need for exploration, the need for manipulation, the need for activity, the need for stimulation, the need for knowledge and the need for ego enhancement. Daskalovska (2012) cites that the results of a study on successful language learning (Naiman et al., 1978, cited in Ur, 1991: 275) showed that the most successful learners are not always those who have a natural aptitude for learning, but those who possess certain characteristics most of which are clearly associated with motivation. Ur (ibid.) lists the

following characteristics:

1. *Positive task orientation.* The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges, and has confidence in his or her success.
2. *Ego-involvement.* The learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote his or her own (positive) self-image.
3. *Need for achievement.* The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.
4. *High aspirations.* The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.
5. *Goal orientation.* The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them.
6. *Perseverance.* The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.
7. *Tolerance of ambiguity.* The learner is not disturbed or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she can live with these patiently, in the confidence that understanding will come later.

Classroom-based, teacher-directed language learning has been dominant in language teaching and learning for decades; however, the notion of independent, autonomous learners is also not novel to language teachers. The concept of autonomy started to take root when the *Centre de Recherches et d' Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL) was established in 1971 in France (Benson 2001). Both modes of language learning seem to have developed independently; no attempt had been made until the late 1980s to integrate self-access language learning into the school curriculum (e.g., Dam & Gabrielsen, 1988; Hall & Kenny, 1988; Karlsson, Kjisik & Nordlund, 1997). A majority of research in the English language learning field has been focusing largely on teaching or course effectiveness, but little has been done to look at what makes learners become self-determined enough to take control of their own learning, and the factors that differentiate successful and less successful self-access users. The growing interest in the sociocultural dimension of language learning among applied linguistics researchers has made ESL researchers turn their attention to learner motivation and autonomy in classroom settings; however, learner motivation and autonomy in self-access settings within the school curriculum have not been adequately addressed in the literature.

2. Types of motivation

Daskalovska (2012) cites those studies of motivation in second language learning have led to several distinctions, one of which is the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation.

2.1. Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

One of the most influential studies on motivation in second language learning was carried out by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They identified two kinds of attitudes that influence motivation in language learning: attitudes to the target-language speakers and attitudes related to the possible uses of the language being learned. Gardner (1985: 10) maintains that in contrast to motivation, attitudes do not have direct influence on learning: ‘Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language’. The two kinds of attitude correspond to the two kinds of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Gardner et al. (1977: 244) describe these two kinds of motivation as follows:

‘Integrative reasons are defined as those which indicate an interest in learning the language in order to meet and communicate with members of the second language community. Instrumental reasons refer to those reasons which stress

the pragmatic aspects of learning the second language, without any particular interest in communicating with the second language community.'

Thus, integrative motivation is the learners' desire to integrate themselves into the target-language community and to identify with the culture of the speakers of the target language, while instrumental motivation is the desire to learn the language in order to achieve personal goals such as passing an examination, studying, career advancement, etc.

Brown (2007: 170-171) points out that more appropriate terms would be instrumental and integrative orientation rather than instrumental and integrative motivation because within each orientation the intensity of motivation may vary. According to this view, learner's orientation can be academic or career related (instrumental) and socially or culturally related (integrative). Other studies have failed to find support for the integrative-instrumental construct, which indicates that 'there is no single means of learning a second language: some learners in some contexts are more successful in learning a language if they are integratively oriented, and others in different contexts benefit from an instrumental orientation' (ibid.). The studies have also shown that these two orientations are not mutually exclusive, that is a learner may start studying a language for instrumental purposes and later develop a desire to integrate with the culture and people speaking that language.

2.2. Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Another distinction related to motivation is the distinction between extrinsic (externally regulated) and intrinsic (internally regulated) motivation. External motivation is influenced by some kind of external incentive such as money, prize, grades, positive feedback (Brown, 2007: 172), the desire of students to please parents, their wish to succeed in an external exam, peer-group influences (Ur, 1996: 277). Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, comes from the learners and their attitudes towards the language, their learning aims and goals, their emotions, their ambitions, and so on. Deci (1975: 23) describes intrinsic motivation as follows:

'Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is not apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and because they lead to an extrinsic reward. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination'.

Ushioda (2010) emphasizes that 'what is crucially important is not whether motivational factors are intrinsic or extrinsic, but whether they are internalized and self-determined, or externally imposed and regulated by others'.

Both types of motivation are important for the success in language learning, and as Ur (1996: 276 - 279) points out, both are at least partially accessible to teacher influence. She mentions several sources of extrinsic motivation that are affected by teacher actions:

1. *Success and its rewards.* Learners who have been successful in past tasks are more likely to engage actively in future tasks and have greater confidence in their ability to learn the language. The teacher's task is to make sure that learners are aware of their own success as well as to help them develop an ability to recognize success on their own.
2. *Failure and its penalties.* Learners should be aware that they are failing if they are not making satisfactory progress, but they should also know that occasional failures are normal in any learning experience and they should not be ashamed of them but learn from them and use them constructively in order to succeed next time.
3. *Authoritative demands.* Learners may be motivated to work harder under the teacher's pressure, especially the younger ones, but teachers should try to find a balance because too much authoritative demands by the teacher will make learners dependent on the teacher and will not allow them to develop personal responsibility for their learning, while too much freedom and autonomy may lead to lowering of effort and achievement and learner dissatisfaction.
4. *Tests.* If they are not used too often, tests may be motivating for learners because when they know that they are going to be tested they will invest more time and effort to learn the material than when they are simply told to learn it.
5. *Competition.* Learners are often motivated to do their best when they take part in a competition. However, teachers need to be aware that individual competition can be stressful for people who find losing humiliating and so should opt for group competitions because they tend to be more enjoyable, less tense and equally motivating.

Although intrinsic motivation comes from within and thus is internally motivated, teachers can also influence this type of motivation by 'developing a relationship with learners, building learners' selfconfidence and autonomy, personalizing the learning process, and increasing learners' goal-orientation' (Brown, 2007: 174).

2.3. Global, Situational and Task Motivation

A third distinction concerning motivation has been made by Brown (1987: 115) who identifies three types of motivation:

1. *Global motivation*, which refers to the general orientation of the learners to the goals of learning the foreign language.
2. *Situational motivation*, which depends on the situation in which the learning takes place (classroom learning, naturalistic learning).
3. *Task motivation*, which is the motivation of the learner to do a particular task.

Brown explains that learning a foreign language requires some of all three types of motivation. For example, a learner may have high global motivation to learn the foreign language, but low task motivation for doing a certain activity. While the second motivation does not depend on the teacher, the first and especially the third motivation is where teachers can have an influence and help learners develop, maintain and enhance their motivation by discussing the benefits of learning the foreign language and by designing and using tasks and activities that are interesting, engaging and enjoyable for learners.

3. Promoting Learners' Motivation

Daskalovska (2012) cites that all the learners in the classroom do not have the same type and level of motivation. Some learners may have a very strong motivation to learn the language, others may have a weaker motivation, and yet others may have no motivation at all. However, motivation is not static and it can change in both directions. As motivation is essential in language learning, one of the tasks of the teacher is to awaken, sustain and strengthen learner's motivation. Harmer (2001: 53-54) suggests three areas where teacher's behavior can influence learners' motivation:

- *Goals and goal setting.* Learners who set goals and expectations for language learning are likely to be motivated to achieve those goals. Teachers can help learners sustain their motivation for achieving their long-term goals by focusing on short-term goals as they can be attained in a shorter time, so that learners can see the results which will motivate them to continue to work hard in order to achieve their long-term goals.
 - *Learning environment.* The physical appearance and the emotional atmosphere of the lesson are very important for learners' motivation. Teachers can do a lot about both aspects by decorating the classroom with visual materials, using music, or moving the furniture, if necessary, as well as by 'building positive relationship with the learners, creating a supportive and cooperative environment and being careful when responding to learners, especially when giving feedback and corrections'.
 - *Interesting classes.* One way of increasing learners' motivation to learn the language is by using a variety of interesting topics and activities in order to keep learners engaged and interested in what they are doing in the classroom.
- Ur (1996: 280) points out that 'it is in the arousing of interest, perhaps, that teachers invest most effort, and get most immediate and noticeable pay-off in terms of learner motivation'. She lists several ways of arousing learner interest in the tasks and activities in the classroom:
 - Setting clear tasks goals.
 - Using varied topics and tasks.
 - Using visuals.
 - Incorporating tension and challenge by using game-like activities.
 - Providing entertainment in the form of jokes, stories, dramatic presentations, movies, video clips, television documentaries, etc.
 - Using rope-play and simulations.
 - Using information gap activities.
 - Personalizing tasks and activities.
 - Using tasks and activities with open-ended cues.

Since classroom activities may have a considerable influence on learners' motivation and since it is the teacher who plans, designs and organizes them, it is worth investing time and effort in preparing these activities in order to make them interesting and motivational for learners. However, teachers should be aware that learners of different ages have different types of motivation, so that they cannot use the same methods with all groups of learners. Harmer (1991: 7-8) describes the characteristics of the learners of different ages and different levels and suggests ways of approaching them. For example, because children are curious and have a short span of attention and concentration they need frequent changes of activities which should be exciting and which stimulate their curiosity.

They greatly depend on the teacher's attitude and behavior and often seek teacher approval, so they need to be appreciated by the teacher. Adolescents, on the other hand, value more the approval of their peers rather than the teacher, and they need to be seen in a good light by their peers, so teachers need to be careful not to criticize or humiliate them as it will lead to de-motivation and dissatisfaction. Unlike children, they are not inspired by mere curiosity, so they need challenging activities that will involve them and make them eager to accomplish them. Adult learners are usually highly motivated, they perceive and achieve learning goals easily, and they need realistic challenges and positive teacher attitude.

4. Cognitive Motivation in Language Learning

Conttia Lai M. W. (2007) cites that since the 1990s, some influential theories of motivation in the general education literature have been used to explain L2 motivation in relation to autonomy. Among those motivational formulations, Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory has been one of the most widely-adopted approaches to account for motivational autonomy. Dickinson (1995) demonstrates the possibility of reinterpreting Gardner's distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation in language learning in terms of a more general distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

4.1. Self-determination theory

According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, there are two types of motivation, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic orientation, extrinsic orientation and amotivation lie on a continuum from self-determined to non-determined. An individual with a high level of self-determination is likely to demonstrate autonomy in his or her learning and lead to higher achievement.

4.1.1. Definitions of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations

Intrinsic motivation is defined as "motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do" (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 39) whereas extrinsic motivation refers to "actions carried out to achieve some instrumental

end such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment” (p. 39). Deci and Ryan (1985) hypothesized that people will seek challenges if they are given freedom to choose what activities to perform. They will then develop a sense of competence in their abilities and internalize it into the self-concept. Extrinsic motivation, in a similar vein, lies at one point on a continuum of self-determination, depending on the type of extrinsic motivation.

4.1.2. Operationalization of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

A three-part taxonomy of intrinsic motivation (IM) and three levels of extrinsic motivation (EM) were developed by Vallerand (1997). Intrinsic motivation is derived from humans’ innate needs for competence and self-determination. According to cognitive evaluation theory, a sub-theory of self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation is characterized by people’s need for meeting “optimal challenges” that “stretch personal abilities by a small but significant amount each time, and promote feelings of competence and skill development” (Deci & Ryan 1980, cited in Ushioda 2006b, p. 10). Furthermore, it is hypothesized that “when people are free to choose to perform an activity, they will seek interesting situations where they can rise to the challenges that the activity presents” (Noels *et al.* 2000). The first type of intrinsic motivation in the taxonomy, IM-Knowledge, relates to the sensations stimulated by discovering new knowledge.

The second type of intrinsic motivation, IM-Accomplishment, refers to feelings associated with task completion or goal attainment. Lastly, the third category of intrinsic motivation, IM-Stimulation, is the motivation for doing an activity for the feeling and sensations associated with performing pleasurable tasks. Individuals will experience pleasurable sensations when they are performing tasks which are initiated by the individual and challenging enough. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation lies on the continuum from non-self-determination to self-determination: external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation.

External-regulated extrinsic motivation holds only when external incentive is present. The behaviors of an externally-regulated individual are determined by sources external to the individual such as monetary rewards. If the external incentive is taken away from individuals, they will discontinue the engagement in the activity.

This is the most extreme form of extrinsic motivation which represents least self-determination and can be comparable to Gardner’s (1985) instrumental orientation.

Introjected-regulated extrinsic motivation takes place when the external pressure has been transferred to the self of the individual. The basis for introjected regulation is “taking in but not accepting a regulation as one’s own” (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan 1991, p. 329). Although introjected regulation is internal to an individual, task engagement only results from threatened sanctions or promised rewards and the regulation is not part of the integrated self (Deci & Ryan 1991). As a result of internal coercion and seduction, the behaviors exhibited resemble external control rather than self-determined forms of regulation where true choice is not present.

The final type of extrinsic motivation, identified regulation, refers to a state where individuals will do an activity for a good cause. Identified-regulated individuals would engage in an activity at their own will because they identify with the values it entails. A sense of choice or volition about behaving in the absence of external contingencies and introjects is essential to the development of autonomy and self-determination. Though this form of extrinsic motivated behaviors is not fully self-determined as the behaviors are motivated by the usefulness or instrumentality for the activity itself, it is relatively self-determined because the individual would carry out the activity “willingly, for personal reasons, rather than external pressure” (Deci, Vallerand *et al.* 1991, p. 330).

4.1.3. Conceptualization of self-determination

Despite the fact that less self-determined motivation is less likely to help individuals develop autonomous learning behaviors, Noels *et al.* (2000) note that extrinsic motivation “does not imply a lack of self-determination in the behavior performed... different types of extrinsic motivation (EM) can be classified along a continuum according to the extent to which they are internalized into the self-concept” (p. 61). Nunan (1997) points out that “autonomy is not an all-or-nothing concept, that there are degrees of autonomy” (p. 192). Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that self-determination “is integral to intrinsically motivated behavior and is also in evidence in some extrinsically motivated behaviors” (p. 38). They conceive of self-determination not only as a capacity, but also a need which embodies “a basic, innate propensity to be self-determining that leads organisms to engage in interesting behaviors, which typically has the benefit of developing competencies, and of working toward a flexible accommodation with the social environment” (p. 38). As a result of such tendency toward adequate accommodation in the service of one’s self-determination, the choices made by an individual “are based on an awareness of

[his]...organismic needs and a flexible interpretation of external events” (p. 38). Individuals can choose to exert control over their own environment or his outcomes, and according to Deci and Ryan (1985), giving up control willingly is also a form of self-determined behavior. In other words, extrinsically-motivated behaviors could be considered to be self-determined if the individual has made an informed choice of being other-regulated instead of self-regulated. In fact, there are a number of studies which attempt to link intrinsic motivation and autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation to positive academic performance² (e.g., Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci 1991; Pintrich, & De Groot 1990).

No activity in reality, especially in the L2 learning context, would guarantee to induce intrinsically-motivated behaviors for all individuals. Deci, Vallerand *et al.* (1991) assume that “people are motivated to internalize the regulation of uninteresting behaviors that are valuable for effective functioning” (p. 338) if 1) they identify with the personal utility of the activity; 2) they are offered choices about the activity in an autonomy supportive environment; and 3) their sentiment and views are respected and acknowledged by significant others. Internalization is the central concept of self-determination and it is “a proactive process through which people transform regulation by external contingencies into

regulation by internal processes (Schafer 1968, cited in Deci, Vallerand *et al.* 1991, p. 328). Internalization of a personally-valued behavior as a result of increased perceived competence, relatedness with significant others and autonomy would give rise to willingness to perform the activity although the activity may remain uninteresting.

Competence, relatedness and autonomy are the three basic psychological needs inherent in human beings.

Deci, Vallerand *et al.* (1991) conceptualize *competence* to be the understanding of “how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing the requisite action” (p. 327); *relatedness* to be the development of “secure and satisfying connections with others in one’s social milieu” (*ibid.*); and *autonomy* to be the state of “being self-initiating and self-regulatory of one’s own actions” (*ibid.*). According to self-determination theory, autonomy-supportive social and interpersonal contexts are essential for fulfilling the three psychological needs and, in turn, facilitate intrinsic motivation and self-determination.

Controlling contextual events such as promised rewards and threatened punishment are found to have the tendency of fostering an external perceived locus of causality, compromising intrinsic motivation for interesting tasks and hampering the internalization of regulations for uninteresting tasks (Deci, Vallerand *et al.* 1991; Deci *et al.* 1994). On the contrary, where choices are offered about what tasks to engage in and the amount of time spent on the task, learners of all ages would become more self-regulated and more able to internalize the regulation (Deci *et al.* 1994; Swann & Pitman 1977; Zuckerman, Porac, Lahin, Smith, &

Deci 1978). Acknowledging learners’ negative feelings about the task or the way in which they are requested to complete the task is found to reinforce learners’ self-determination (Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt 1984).

Similarly, learners’ self-determined regulation differs depending on the interpersonal style a person, especially the teacher in the language classroom, employs in administering events and presenting feedback. Deci *et al.* (1994) observed that non-controlling styles of presenting feedback to learners promotes the internalization of regulation and subsequent autonomous self-regulation. In addition, classrooms with autonomy-supportive teachers are shown to have positive effects on learners’ intrinsic motivation, perceived competence and self-esteem (Ryan & Grolnick 1986).

2.2. Learner Beliefs

In Deci and Ryan’s (1985) theory of self-determination, the intrapersonal aspect of motivation has been accounted for in terms of the internalization of regulation. To a large extent, internalization of regulations could only be made possible when the orientations are compatible with the individuals’ value and belief system. Learners’ subjective value system is “a more or less organized collection of internalized perceptions, beliefs and feelings related to one’s position in the social world, developed during the past as a reaction to past experiences” (Benson 2001, p. 124) and it determines the internal regulation of learners’ approaches to learning and motivation to complete language learning tasks. Developing learners’ positive language-related values and attitudes is, therefore, conceived of as having the most far-reaching consequences in motivating learners to become more self-regulated.

Among the beliefs that learners hold which have a direct impact on their motivation, self-efficacy refers to beliefs about their possession of the capability to accomplish a task. Learners’ self-efficacy has been shown to be positively correlated with the tendency of engaging in more self-regulatory activities and demonstrating greater intrinsic interest in their studies (Miller, Behrens, Greene, & Newman 1993; Schunk 1984).

Ushioda (1996) argues that differing beliefs are also likely to affect and shape motivation, and the ways in which learners perceive the experiences of learning itself is a crucial motivational dimension. She proposes the notion of motivational thinking which encompasses learners’ beliefs about their past learning experiences; motivational and learning goals; intrinsic value of learning in relation to skill development, competence and personal satisfaction; self-concept; learning process; and their relationships with significant others. This new dimension has an implication for the development of learner autonomy.

According to Ushioda (1996), it is the learner’s own thinking which motivates intrinsic, self-regulatory learning behaviors. It is, therefore, crucial to help learners shape positive motivational thinking which would facilitate the development of more self-regulatory language learning behaviors.

In an investigation of learner readiness for autonomy, Cotterall (1995) found that learners’ beliefs are likely to reflect their readiness for autonomy, and autonomous language learning behaviors are supported or impeded by specific sets of beliefs. She identifies six factors that underlie learners’ readiness for autonomy including learner beliefs about the role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experiences of language learning and approach to studying. These beliefs may either enhance or inhibit, “learners’ receptiveness to the ideas and activities presented in the language class, particularly when the approach is not consonant with the learners’ experience” (p. 203), as in the case of SALL.

5. Conclusion

It is often stated that bad teaching kills motivation and that good teaching brings out the best in students of all ages. If you want to encourage your students to become their own teachers and develop independent learning skills, you need to know about the principles that guide motivated learning. Further research should thus be conducted to find ways to enhance and sustain students’ motivation better so that the students’ engagement in learning and outcomes will be ensured. Strategies that can nurture and protect students’ natural interests in learning and enhance their sense of regulation over the learning are definitely needed in this fast growing information society to ensure that the students will sustain their learning throughout their life.

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