

Motivation in Foreign Language Classrooms “An Overview of Motivational Strategies from Gardner to Dornyei”

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Abstract :

The aim of this paper is to examine and discuss the nature of motivation in foreign language learning, i.e. definition, sources and factors that affect motivation. Also, we aim to introduce an overview of models studied in the field of language learning motivation, starting from earlier models such as Gardner's until the latest ones like Dornyei's framework. By the end of this exploratory study, we hope raise teachers' awareness about the main factors that affect students' motivation and about research done on motivation, then apply strategies that fit the needs of our students and classrooms.

الملخص:

الهدف من هذه الورقة البحثية هو التعريف بظاهرة التحفيز أي ماهيتها، مصادرها والعوامل المؤثرة فيها. كما تقدم الدراسة أهم استراتيجيات التحفيز التي ظهرت في مجال علم النفس التربوي والتحفيز في تدريس اللغات الأجنبية ابتداء من المناهج القديمة مثل نموذج فاردنر إلى أن نصل إلى الاستراتيجيات الحديثة في مجال التحفيز مثل منهاج زلتن دورني . ونتمنى في آخر هذا البحث أن نكون قد ذكرنا أساتذة اللغات الأجنبية بأهمية وضرورة استراتيجيات التحفيز، والعوامل المؤثرة في تحفيز متعلمي اللغات الأجنبية وتطبيق الاستراتيجيات حسب احتياجات الطلبة واهتماماتهم .

1. Introduction:

We start this paper by Davis's saying: « *Motivation is like food for the brain.* » (Davies P) [1] . Motivation is important in foreign language learning because it is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he /she devotes to it and how long he/she persevere. Most teachers and writers in the field of psychology of learning agree that motivation is a prerequisite for success in language learning. As teachers, we need to explore beliefs of all aspects of language and psychology.

2. Definition of motivation:

Although the word "motivation" might appear simple and easy, it is in fact very difficult to define. It seems to have been impossible for theorists to reach consensus on a single definition. According to Gardner (1979), motivation is: "*Those affective characteristics which orient the student to try to acquire elements of the second language, and include desire the students have for achieving a goal and the amount of effort he expends in this direction.*" (Gardner in Gils & Clair, 1979: 179) [2] Gardner (1985) also defines motivation by the combination of desire and the effort made to achieve a goal, and that links the individual's rationale for any activity such as learning with the range of behaviours and degree of efforts employed in achieving goals. (Gardner in Mc Caorthy in Mckay,S & Hornberger,N,H, 1996: 3) [3]

Moreover, Heckhusen (1991) defines it as: "*Global concept for a variety of processes and effects whose common core is the realization that an organism selects a particular behaviour because of expected consequences, and then implements it with some measure of energy , along a particular path* " (Dornyei & Otto, 1998: 64) [4]

Interestingly, many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language. Finally, based on the preceding definitions, we can come up with the following: motivation involves a goal, an effort, a desire, energy, active involvement, and persistence.

4. Sources of motivation:

In fact, "*without knowing where the roots of motivation lie, how can teachers water those roots?*" (Oxford & Shearin, 1994: 15)[5] Educational psychologists point to three major sources of motivation in learning: the learners ' natural interest (intrinsic satisfaction), the teacher/ institution / employment (extrinsic reward) and success in the

task combining satisfaction and reward. According to Littlejohn (2001): "*While teachers and school systems have drawn on both of the first two sources of motivation, the third source is perhaps under-exploited in language teaching*".[6] This is thus simple fact of success, and the effect that this has on our view of what we do. As human beings, we generally like what we do well, and are therefore more likely to do it again, and put in more effort.

5. Theories of motivation:

The object of teaching is that learner should change; the extent of this change however, is a matter of considerable debate. Behaviourists talk about changing behaviour, cognitivists about changing minds, and humanists about changing lives and critical reflectors about changing societies.

A. Behavioural theories:

According to behaviourists, motivation is explained in terms of external stimuli and reinforcement. The physical environment and actions of the teacher are of prime importance. Three theories fall under the umbrella of the behavioural. Bentham (2002) [7] restudied them as follows: Classical conditioning (Pavlov), Instrumental / operant learning (Skinner), and Observational / social learning (Bandura)

B. Cognitive theories:

Cognitivists explain motivation in terms of person's active search for meaning and satisfaction in life. Thus, motivation is intrinsic. Good & Prophy (1994) [8], Dornyei (2001a) [9] and Dornyei (2001b) [10] discuss these theories as being: **Expectancy – value / VIE theory** where Vroom (1964) proposes the following equation: Motivation = Perceived Probability of success (Expectancy) + connection of success and reward - material benefit (Instrumentality) + value of obtaining goal (Valence, Value) (VIE = Valence, Instrumentality, Expectancy). Since this formula states that the three factors of Expectancy, instrumentality, and valence or value are to be multiplied by each other, a low value in one will result in a low value of motivation. Therefore, all three must be present in order for motivation to occur.

The second is **Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1974)**. This theory proposes that every individual tries to explain success or failure of self and others by offering certain "attributions." These attributions are either internal or external and are either under control or not under control. In a teaching/learning environment, it is

important to assist the learner to develop a self-attribution explanation of effort (internal, control). If the person has an attribution of ability (internal, no control) as soon as the individual experiences some difficulties in the learning process, he or she will decrease appropriate learning behavior. If the person has an external attribution, then nothing the person can do will help that individual in a learning situation. In this case, there is nothing to be done by the individual when learning problems occur.

The third theory is the **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**. This theory was developed by Leon Festinger (1957) and states that, when there is a discrepancy between two beliefs, two actions, or between a belief and an action, we will act to resolve conflict and discrepancies. The implication is that if we can create the appropriate amount of disequilibrium, this will in turn lead to the individual changing his or her behavior which in turn will lead to a change in thought patterns which in turn leads to more change in behavior.

C. Cognitive Developmental Theories

Regarding the cognitive developmental theorists, students' needs, goals, and interests must be the starting point if motivation is to occur. Thus, for motivation and progress to exist, instructional input to students must be challenging and relevant (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Two important theories fall under the cognitive developmental: stages of cognitive development theory and zone of proximal development.

Cognitive theories include: first, **Stages of Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget, 1972, 1990)**. According to Piaget, children are motivated to develop their cognitive or mental abilities in a predictable set of stages. According to this model, fulfillment of the previous stage is necessary for advancement to the next stage. (Stevens-Long & J.Cob, 83:49-50) [11]. Then, **Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978)** which is the distance between the learner's actual developmental level and the level of potential development; it is the gap between what we are trying to teach and the current state of development in that area. If the gap is too large, instruction won't be *effective*; too small and the learner won't be extended, therefore teachers must have background knowledge of those they teach

D. Achievement Motivation Theories

Atkinson and Raynor (1974) talk about four theories described by Dornyei as follows: **Need for Achievement** stating that individuals with a high need for achievement are interested in excellence for its

own sake, tend to initiate achievement activities, work with heightened intensity on these tasks, and persist in the face of failure. The second dimension is **Fear of Failure**; this theory states that the main drive to do well comes from avoiding a negative outcome rather than approaching a positive one. Then **Fear of Success**; this theory states that some individuals might prefer to fail for fear of losing social support. However, Locke and Latham (1994) have discussed a *fourth theory*, the *Goal theory*, which covers three separate types of goals. The last one is **Goal Theory** including *Mastery goals*, *Performance/normative goals*, *Social goals*.

In the context of school learning, which involves operating in a relatively structured environment; students with mastery goals outperform students with either performance or social goals. However, in life success, it seems critical that individuals have all three types of goals in order to be very successful. One aspect of this theory is that individuals are motivated to either avoid failure or achieve success.

E. Psychoanalytic Theories of Motivation

Following the achievement motivation theories, came the psychoanalytic theories of motivation which propose a variety of fundamental influences. Freud (1990) suggested that all creation or behavior is a result of internal, biological instincts that are classified into two categories: life (sexual) and death (aggression). However, Erikson (1993) and Sullivan (1968) propose that interpersonal and social relationships are fundamental. Adler (1989) also proposes power and money as motivators, whereas Jung (1953, 1997) talks about temperament and search for soul or personal meaningfulness.

F. Humanistic Theories of Motivation:

Humanists stress the need for personal growth. They place a great deal of emphasis on the total learner. They also maintain that learners need to be empowered and have control over the learning process. The teacher becomes a facilitator. Three theories fall under the umbrella of the “humanistic” theories of learning. These are: first **Hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1954)** in a recent study, Green, D (2000) [12] made study on Maslow’s hierarchy. He summarizes the two groupings that form this hierarchy: deficiency needs and growth needs. Therefore, according to Maslow, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs if and only if the deficiency needs are met. The remaining four levels Growth Needs are: *Cognitive*, *Aesthetic* and *Self-Actualization*. The essence of the hierarchy is the notion of “pre-

potency”, which mean you are not going to be motivated by any higher-level needs until your lower level ones have been satisfied

The second is the **Hierarchy of Motivational Needs (Alderfer, 1972)** where Maslow recognized that not all personalities followed his proposed hierarchy. While a variety of personality dimensions might be considered as related to motivational needs, one of the most often cited is that of introversion and extroversion. Reorganizing Maslow's hierarchy based on the work of Alderfer and considering the introversion/extroversion dimension of personality results in three levels, each with an introverted and extroverted component. This organization suggests there may be two aspects of each level that differentiate how people relate to each set of needs. Different personalities might relate more to one dimension than the other. For example, an introvert at the level of Other/Relatedness might be more concerned with his or her own perceptions of being included in a group, whereas an extrovert at that same level would pay more attention to how others value that membership

The third **Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)** theory is based on the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and the basic human need for autonomy. It proposes that a person must be able to initiate and regulate, through personal choice, the effort expended to complete a task in order for the task to be intrinsically rewarding. Intrinsic motivation: it involves the performance of a task for its own sake. It values rewards gained through the process of task completion, regardless of any external rewards. Extrinsic motivation: it involves the pursuit of some reward external to the completion of the task such as good grades. It is believed to undermine intrinsic motivation; individuals will often lose their intrinsic interest in a task if the task is seen as a means to an end. (See also Noels, K et al 2000) [13].

G. Social Cognition Theory:

Bandura (1986, 1997) discusses two themes: self-efficacy, which highlights the belief that a particular action is possible and that the individual can accomplish it, and self-regulation, which highlights the establishment of goals, the development of a plan to attain those goals, the commitment to implement that plan, the actual implementation of the plan, and subsequent actions of reflection and modification or reduction.

H. Transpersonal / Spiritual Theories:

Finally, there are the transpersonal/spiritual theories which deal with the meaningfulness of our lives or ultimate meanings. According to Huitt (2000), the way we view our spirituality has a big influence on our values and self-concept: *“One's perspective on humankind's spiritual nature also impacts the dreams and goals one develops and how one pursues them”* (Huitt, 2000) [14].

6. Models of motivation:

A few relevant models of motivation are to be presented according to time evolution – from 1959 to 1998. These models are Gardner and Lambert 's Socio-Educational Model , Vroom 's Expectancy Model , Shumann 's Acculturation Model , Dornyei 's Motivational construct , Wen 's four Motivational factors.

In their Socio-Educational Model, and after concluding a study that lasted more than ten years, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) 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. (See also Chambers 1999[15], Belmachri & Humel 1998[16], Gardner et al 2004[17] and Norris, H (2001) [18]. In the context of language learning, instrumental motivation refers to the learner 's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes, whereas integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community .However, researchers challenged the social psychological approach claiming that it does not include the cognitive aspects of learning motivation (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, Dornyei, 1994), it is not practical and does not benefit L2 learning since it is too broad to help L2 educators generate practical guidelines.

According to Vroom 's (1969) expectancy model, the learners motivation to acquire a second language is determined by effort , valence, expectancy, ability to achieve the goals, and instrumentality.

In the years between 1978 and 1986, in his acculturation model, Schumann examined the effects of personal variables such as relative status, attitude, integration, amount of time in the culture, size of the learning group, and the cohesiveness of the group and adult language learning.

Schumann suggested three strategies taken by adult learners: (1) *Assimilation*: total adoption of the target culture, (2) *Rejection of target culture*: preservation of the home culture and (3) *Acculturation*: learning to function in the new culture while maintaining one's own identity. He suggests that the degree of acculturation determines the level of second language acquisition. When an individual chooses to acculturate and experiences success, the motivation to learn the L2 increases. (Oxford & Shearin, 1994) .In the EFL unlike the ESL classroom, the situation is slightly different, in that the need for assimilation or acculturation is practically non-existent, especially at beginning levels and in languages such as French or German. (See also Spolsky 1988 and Harley et al 1990) [19].

Another effective model in the history of motivation is Keller's. Keller (1983) presents an instructional design model for motivation that is based upon a number of other theories. His model suggests a design strategy that encompasses four components of motivation. The *ARCS Model* identifies four essential strategy components for motivating instruction: [*A*]ttention strategies for arousing and sustaining curiosity and interest; [*R*]elevance strategies that link to learners' needs, interests, and motives; [*C*]onfidence strategies that help students develop a positive expectation for successful achievement; and [*S*]atisfaction strategies that provide extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcement for effort.(Fernandez, J, 1999) [20].

In 1985, Gardner explored four other motivational orientations: the reason for learning, the desire to attain the learning goal, the positive attitude toward the learning situation, and the effortful behaviour. Gardner also described core second language learning motivation as a construct composed of three characteristics: the attitudes towards learning a language (affect), the desire to learn the language (want), and motivational intensity (effort). Therefore, according to Gardner (1985), a highly motivated individual will enjoy learning the language, will want to learn the language, and will finally strive to learn the language. He states: "*An integratively oriented learner would likely have a stronger desire to learn the language, have more positive attitudes towards the learning situation, and be more likely to exert more effort in learning the language.*" (Gardner, R.C. _____) [21].

In 1990, Dornyei considers instrumental motivation more important than integrative motivation for learners of foreign

languages. Thus, he postulates a motivational construct consisting of instrumental motivational subsystems, an integrative motivational subsystems, a need for achievement, and attribution about past failures.

In 1991, Crooks and Schmidt identified four areas of second language motivation: The micro level, the classroom level, the syllabus level, and a level involving factors from outside the classroom. The micro level involves the cognitive processing of the input. At the micro level learner motivation is evidenced by the amount of attention given to the input. The classroom level includes the techniques and activities employed in the classroom. The syllabus level refers to the choice of content presented and can influence motivation by the level of curiosity and interest aroused in the students. Finally, factors from outside the classroom involve informal interaction in the L2 and long term factors. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) also suggested that motivation to learn a language has both internal and external features

In 1994, Oxford and Shearin analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models, including those from socio-psychology, and identified six factors that impact motivation in language learning (1) Attitudes; (2) Beliefs about self ;(3) Goals; (4) Involvement ; (5) Environmental support and (6) Personal attributes

In 1994, Dörnyei brought another movement to theories of motivation in language learning with his taxonomy of motivation that is comprised of three levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level. The language level is the most general level which focuses on "*orientations and motives related to various aspects of the L2*". The motives and orientations at this level determine the language studied and the most basic learning goals. The learner level involves the influence of individual traits of language learners. Motivation is influenced at the Learner Level by the learner's need for achievement; self-confidence Dörnyei, 1994: 276) [22].

Different factors of cognitive theories, such as learned helplessness, a resigned, pessimistic state which develops when someone feels success is impossible, could be added to this model. Motivation at the learning situation level takes into account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts. So, it is influenced by a number of intrinsic and extrinsic motives that are course specific (interest, relevance, expectancy, satisfaction), teacher

specific (affiliative motive-please teacher, authority type -controlling vs. autonomy supporting, modeling, task presentation, feedback), group specific (goal-orientedness, reward system, group cohesiveness, classroom goal structure - cooperative, competitive, individualistic. Nevertheless, one cannot forget to say that this framework still lacks many aspects of practice and is still vague to realize in classrooms. About that, Dornyei adds “*many of its components have been verified by very little or no empirical research in the L2 field*” (1994: 283).

In 1997, Wen incorporated expectancy – value theories and identified four motivational factors: motivation of instrumentality, intrinsic motivation, expected learning strategies and efforts and passivity towards requirements.

After having identified those four motivational factors, Wen develops a tool for measuring motivation: the motivation scale which measures instrumental and integrative motivation, effort, valency, expectancy, and ability.

In 1998, Dornyei suggested seven main motivational dimensions: (1) the affective/integrative dimension; (2) the instrumental/pragmatic dimension; (3) the macro-context-related dimension; (4) the self-concept-related dimension; (5) the goal-related dimension; (6) the educational context-related dimension and (7) the significant others-related dimension. [23].

In 2001, Dornyei published his two interesting books motivational strategies in language classrooms and teaching and researching motivation. Dornyei in his latest model divides strategies into four main axes: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation. This model is viewed to be the latest and the best as it includes strategies from all models, concentrating on an eclectic approach. Unlike other models, this model seems to be more practical in which it gives details about many internal and external factors that control motivation and covers aspects from different theories. Dörnyei was also concerned with expanding the model of motivation beyond two orientations, specifically in a FL setting. He stated that “*the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where*” (1994: 275). Contrary to Gardner’s focus on integrativeness, Dörnyei (1994) asserted that in a FL setting instrumental orientation would have a greater influence on language learners.

8. Factors that affect motivation

Several factors affect students' motivation to learn a second language but the main ones are those mentioned via this quotation by Brophy (1987): *"Motivation to learn is a competence acquired through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others (especially parents and teachers)." (Brophy, J in Abisamra, N, 2006).* To complete that quote, we may say that the most effective factor and the important one among significant others is the teachers. To confirm that Stipek (1988) says: *"To a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn" (Stipek, D in Abisamra, N, 2006) [24].* Factors can be divided through many ways. William, M and Burden, R (1997) divide them into internal and external factors. [25]. So as teachers, by being aware of the role of affect in language learning and knowing the needs of our students, concentrating on the external factors, we may influence the internal factors such as interest and goals.

Conclusion:

The underlying issues related to motivation are complex, but it is clear that every person's motivation to learn is flexible rather than fixed. As teachers, when we learn to incorporate direct approaches to creating, generating and protecting motivation, we will become happier and more successful teachers. However, to motivate we have to be motivated first, to be motivated we have to love our job, to love our job we should be aware of the reality of our status, needs of our students and about research that is done in the field of educational psychology and didactics.

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