



The Role of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition: A Critical Review of Literature

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Abstract: Motivation plays a crucial role in learning English as a foreign or second language. This article aims to provide a historical analysis of key themes that have been examined by the field of language motivation. The article provides a forward-pointing exploration of the emerging trends. The research reviewed is insightful and demonstrates the complexity of motivation and its influence on learners' success in acquiring a second language, including motivational factors, social-psychological influences, cognitive processes, and the role of individual characteristics such as self-confidence and acculturation. In addition, the article also explains the research procedures that can bring maturity to motivation in learning studies. In conclusion, motivation to students is very critical in ensuring that they meet their intended goals.

Keywords: Motivation, Second Language Acquisition, Critical Review, Literature

Introduction

From the perspective of second language acquisition (SLA), various studies in recent years have considered practice as a technique involving the presentation of expressing emotions and ideas in the form of symbols and signs. Determined by Dornyei (2009), motivation pushes one to learn a second language. These signs and symbols are applied to the encoding and decoding of information, considering that there are numerous languages spoken around the world. Generally, sense, SLA involves learning a second language. Specifically, the term refers to process theory

by which people pick up or acquire a second language. As established by Alshenqeeti (2018), learning a second language is a subconscious language that takes place when people focus on communication.

Literature Review on the Research Topic

Following the definition of the topic/phenomenon – motivation – as it relates to second language acquisition by various research studies, they do not outline specific research questions. Rather, the focus is on the objectives of the research; for instance, Al-Hoorie (2017) identified the study's objective to explore the primary themes in the field of language motivation. The researcher clarified the purpose of the study by reviewing the situated-cognitive and social-psychological periods. A study by Noels (1996) does not have outright research questions; rather, it includes objectives such as exploring acculturation attitudes and how they impact language learning. The purpose of this study was to understand the process of acculturation as part of the interrelations between linguistic self-confidence and identity.

How Secondary Research is used in Primary Research.

Al-Hoorie (2017) used secondary sources to explore affect and emotion. This study attempted to reinterpret integrativeness using cognition to explore the field of language motivation. Secondary research shifted to affective-based approaches and models implicitly reflecting the view that affect can be considered a “post-cognition” phenomenon. This phenomenon influences the outcomes of cognition. A representation of secondary research by Noels (1996) explores the connection between language, adjustment, and identity. Linguistics plays a critical role in that the implication of acquiring a second language within the linguistic system influences individuals' ethnic identity. This plays a role in various sociopsychological language-learning models. The secondary research in this study established that self-confidence – considered as self-perceptions of competence in self-perceptions, including low anxiety levels – in using the second language results in increased application of the second language.

Accordingly, Dornyei (1994) focuses on motivation, including motivating students in class about learning a foreign or second language. The study, however, is guided by objectives but without outright research questions. For instance, the emphasis is on motivation being the primary determinant of foreign/second language. Various aspects of motivation influence students learning a second language. The study also has a clear purpose in terms of achieving

the research topic; for example, the emphasis is on motivation within the classroom setting and how it informs learning different languages within the social dimension. Dornyei (1994) considered motivation to be the main factor determining successful learning of a second or foreign language. However, the study does not have outright research questions, while making the objective clear.

Primary Research Analysis

One of the primary researches is Dornyei's (1994) "Motivation and Motivation in the Foreign Language Classroom." The primary studies that met the purpose of this research were selected systematically. A systematic review of various research studies on the motivation and the acquisition of a second language considered related studies. The current research did not dismiss previous research, but instead explored major contributions with a major emphasis on motivational issues within the social dimension (Dornyei, 1994). The systematic review of various primary studies was justified considering that the process of data collection is intense, especially when it involves the motivation of studies within the classroom setting, and their ability to learn the second language.

Accordingly, a justification for adopting a systematic review of relevant studies is evident considering the findings in this primary research delivers a comprehensive and clear overview of available evidence on the topic of motivation, and reasons for it being a major determinant in the learning of foreign or second languages. For instance, Dornyei (1994) explained the analysis of primary research studies by breaking down the findings under different subtopics, such as social dimensions of motivation within the classroom setting, and different components of motivation, as it informs foreign language acquisition in the classroom. Additionally, the systematic approach means that the researcher explored different primary studies on the topic of motivation, social dimensions, and using a foreign language in the classroom (Alshenqeeti, 2018). Therefore, the systematic approach adopted in the study considered the congruent concepts of motivation and ensured that they became education-friendly in advancing the successful acquisition of second/foreign language.

The author's analysis of primary research studies centered on language, adjustment, and identity on the basis of linguistic self-confidence roles in the process of acculturation. The analysis of these studies was divided into various unique subtopics in the form of language and individual identity. As determined by Noels et al. (1996), previous

research has explored acculturation attitudes and their impact on the patterns of identifying culture and ethnic identity. The researchers did so, first, identified and understood the acculturation process before identifying the relevant studies that advanced the research topic as it relates to the role of self-confidence within the classroom setting in the process of acculturation. This means adopting a different technique from the systematic review approach for research analysis.

Notably, the researchers identified students at the University of Ottawa who completed the questionnaire. The qualitative research adopted in the study was different from the systematic approach with few problems regarding how the researchers analyzed the findings (Noels et al., 1996). The approach focused on understanding their identity, the language they used, and the extent to which they adjusted to learn a foreign language. Therefore, this approach was successful in terms of understanding the topic.

Representation of Primary Research

The authors (re)presented primary research data in various forms. For instance, Dornyei (1994) presented the study in the form of a systematic review using different secondary studies to present data on motivation and motivating foreign students to learn the English language within the classroom setting. This study considered the motivational components adopted within the classroom setting. This includes the argument that students in the classroom tend to assume a natural intrinsic interest in activities that fail to meet intrinsic requirements (NAME, YEAR). Accordingly, the type of information provided by these primary sources, including Noels (1994), Dornyei (1996), and Dornyei (2009), are represented in the form of subtopics already interpreted to meet the research objectives. For instance, the representation of data is sparse depending on the different methods of data collection. In this case, different studies have considered motivation and acquisition of a second language as the primary focus during representation.

My Take

Having reviewed the selected articles exploring the issue of motivation in teaching and learning English as a foreign or second language, it is clear that motivation plays a crucial role in language acquisition. The reviewed studies offer diverse perspectives on the factors that influence motivation, including social-psychological influences, cognitive processes, and the role of individual characteristics such as self-confidence and acculturation. The studies also highlight the importance of adopting systematic review approaches to comprehensively analyze the research

landscape. Overall, the research reviewed is insightful and demonstrates the complexity of motivation and its influence on learners' success in acquiring a second language.

The selection process for the systematic review of articles used in the study, “Motivation and Motivation in the Foreign Language Classroom” by Dornyei (1994) used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. This bias ensured that the findings became outright and direct in relation to the aspect of motivation as it relates to students learning English as a second language within the classroom setting.

Accordingly, little was left out as far as the issue of second-language acquisition was concerned. This is evident considering that the process is straightforward and clear given that the process of data collection became clear. Finally, the articles are interesting to read given that the topic of focus is part of day-to-day life. Having explored all the findings in this article, I would be interested in reading further by exploring the current research. The goal is to determine whether the research remains the same or has changed, including the implications of research in today's world.

Literature Review for All Articles (Second Language Acquisition)

- Al-Hoorie, A.H. (2017). Sixty years of language motivation research: Looking back and looking forward. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017701976>

This reviews the three key phases, which the field of language motivation has gone through. The recent development has been characterized by several diverse themes. The ability of learners to acquire a second language is greatly determined by their relationship with the other group. It is critical to cultivate students' motivation to ensure achievement of positive results in second language acquisition. Motivation is influenced by various emerging themes that include the social-psychological period, cognitive-situated period, the current period, emotions and affection, conscious motivation, and technology. Motivation should be goal-directed and specific and should offer students with an idea regarding how near they are to achieving long-term learning objectives. In addition, the teacher's feedback plays a great role in motivating students. Motivation enables students to develop interest in learning new skills and tasks.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/article/abs/motivation-in-second-and-foreign-language-learning/CF6301F6C401F2CB511529925B298004>

Motivation is described as a process that takes time to accomplish. Motivation entails behaviors performed to experience satisfaction and pleasure. Another form involves performing behaviors to achieve desired ends. In addition, motivation in second language acquisition is influenced by internal and external factors. These internal and external factors play a great role in the process of second language acquisition. The article emphasizes that although aptitude in language plays a great role in language learning, motivational factors may override the impact of aptitude. Besides, the environmental setting also determines the level of second language acquisition. For instance, learners may master a national language as opposed to the local vernacular because of the environmental setting.

- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.2307/330107> **

The article emphasizes on the social aspects and attitudes of motivation. Attitudes are viewed as a function of social context as well as intergroup/interpersonal relational patterns. On the other hand, motivational psychologists have been focusing on human behavior motors in individuals as opposed to social being, dwelling on traditional ideas such as drive, arousal, instinct, personality traits such as achievement need and anxiety, cognitive failure and success appraisals, self-esteem, and ability.

- Noels, K.A., Pon, G., Clement, R. (1996). Language, identity and adjustment: The role of linguistic self-confidence in the acculturation process. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15(3), 246-264. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0261927X960153003>

The article emphasizes on linguistic self-confidence, psychological adjustments such as self-esteem, sense of control, life satisfaction, stress levels, happiness, ethnic identity, and learners' background. In addition, the article examines acculturation, which refers to those phenomena that result after groups of people from different cultures experience continuous contact (first-hand). The impact of motivation is determined by students' self-esteem, sense of control, life satisfaction, stress levels, happiness, ethnic identity, and learners'

background. Higher levels of self-esteem, sense of control, life satisfaction, and happiness translates to greater motivation's impact.

How the Authors Introduce the Topic

- Al-Hoorie, A.H. (2017). Sixty years of language motivation research: Looking back and looking forward. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017701976>

The author introduces the topic of the need for a thesis. In addition, the author demonstrated that the ability of learners to acquire a second language is highly determined by their relationship with the other group. The article also stipulates that it is important to cultivate motivation of students to ensure efficiency in second language acquisition. Furthermore, the article offers a historical background of studies on language motivation and highlights several emerging themes that have potential for future studies. The author begins with the need to expand and build previous efforts to comprehend historical trajectories in the field.

Social largely psychological duration focuses on macro-perspective language learning. This study largely addresses the affective factors affecting intergroup relationships. In addition, this study explores the micro classroom setting as well as the cognitive processes that determine second language acquisition. This article examines various motivational themes, such as affective, dynamic, long-term, and unconscious attributes, in learning English or other languages.

The present study provides a forward-pointing exploration of the emerging trends. In addition, to the themes, technology, plays a great role in improving technologization of classrooms' instructions and learning.

- Dornyei, Z. (2009). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/article/abs/motivation-in-second-and-foreign-language-learning/CF6301F6C401F2CB511529925B298004>

The author introduces the topic with the need for motivation as well as the factors that influence the success rates in acquiring second language. Besides, the article starts by highlighting the driving force that required sustaining the tedious and long learning process. From the article, acquisition of second language requires

motivation because without appropriate motivation, even students with remarkable abilities may fail to accomplish long-term objectives. Besides, good teaching practices and appropriate curricula may not ensure students' achievement without the appropriate motivation. Nevertheless, in some cases, high motivation may lead to considerable deficiencies in learning conditions and student's language aptitude.

- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.2307/330107> **

The author introduces motivation as a key determinant in second language acquisition. According to the author motivation plays a huge role in ensuring that students achieve the intended learning goals. Moreover, the article grounds its motivation study on the social psychological concept. The article also explains the research procedures that can bring maturity to motivation in learning studies.

- Noels, K.A., Pon, G., Clement, R. (1996). Language, identity and adjustment: The role of linguistic self-confidence in the acculturation process. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15(3), 246-264. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0261927X960153003>

The author introduces the topic by trying to integrate social psychology and cross-cultural psychology by trying to explore the relationship between interethnic contact, identity, psychological adjustment, and linguistic self-confidence. The effect of motivation on students is highly influenced by their linguistic self-confidence, identity, interethnic contact, and psychological adjustment. These extent to which these factors have affected students determine how they perceive motivation from their teachers.

Interesting Points and Strength and Weakness Points in the Study

It is interesting that the present study provides a forward-pointing exploration of the emerging trends. In addition, to the themes, technology, plays a great role in improving use of technology for classrooms' instructions and learning. In addition, good teaching practices and appropriate curricula may not ensure students' achievement without the appropriate motivation. Nevertheless, in some cases, high motivation may lead to considerable deficiencies in learning conditions and student's language aptitude. Social psychology and cross-cultural psychology determine motivation through interethnic contact, identity, psychological adjustment, and linguistic self-confidence.

Another notable point is that although aptitude in language plays a great role in language learning, motivational factors may override the impact of aptitude. Additionally, the environmental setting also determines the level of second language acquisition. For example, learners may master a national language as opposed to mother tongue language because of the environmental setting. Curiosity also plays a role in second language acquisition. For instance, the study by Al-Hoorie (2017), is because of need for a thesis topic and curiosity to gain more knowledge in the topic. Moreover, teachers should monitor students as they work and give appropriate motivation at key stages. On the other hand, motivation ensures that students do not forget what they have learned, helping to reinforce the acquired concepts and skills. It plays an important role in correcting any incorrect skills obtained by students as well as motivates them to improve on skills acquired.

Acquisition of second language requires motivation because without appropriate motivation, even students with remarkable abilities may fail to accomplish long-term objectives. Primarily, good teaching practices and appropriate curricula may not ensure students' achievement without the appropriate motivation. However, in some cases, high motivation may lead to considerable deficiencies in learning conditions and student's language aptitude if it is not properly administered. Additionally, the ability of learners to acquire a second language is highly determined by their relationship with the other group. There is need of expanding and building previous efforts of comprehending historical trajectories in the field of field of motivating learners in order to realize the expected learning goals.

Comparison and Critique of Secondary Sources

The article, "Sixty years of language motivation research: Looking back and looking forward", provides the historical analysis of key themes that have been examined by the field of language motivation. In addition, the article starts by summarily reviewing the situated-cognitive and social-psychological periods. On the other hand, the preceding one was essentially concerned with the affective considerations for intergroup relations, whereas the latter focuses on learners in the classroom context. Furthermore, the article's second half surveys several evolving themes in this field in order to highlight key findings as well as potential future courses. The themes entail the affective, unconscious, long-term, and dynamic attributes of motivation in learning English and the effect of pervasive technology's presence in daily lives (Al-Hoorie, 2017).

In the article, *Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning*, motivation is described as a process that takes time to accomplish. The first form of motivation entails behaviors performed to experience satisfaction and pleasure. On the other hand, the second form involves performing behaviors to achieve desired ends. Another aspect of learning English as a second language is self-confidence (Dornyei, 2009). Furthermore, motivation in second language acquisition is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include arousal of learners' curiosity, optimal level of challenge, perceived activity's value, personal relevance, expected outcomes' value, causality locus, attitudes, sense of agency, confidence, mastery, self-concept, developmental stage, among others. External factors include interaction with parents, teachers, peers as well as other significant stakeholders. Additionally, motivation is influenced by mediated experiences of learning, the amount and nature of feedback, punishments, rewards, the learning environment, and the broader learning environment such as cultural norms, broader family contexts, comfort, societal attitudes, and expectations etc. (Dornyei, 2009).

Interpretation of Results

Motivation is a key determinant in second language acquisition. Motivation plays a huge role in ensuring that students achieve the intended learning goals. It is imperative to consider social psychological factors in motivating students during the learning process and the appropriate procedures should be utilized for attainment of maturity in motivating students. The level of motivation attained is dependent on factors that influence the success rates in acquiring second language. For motivation to be successful, the necessary driving force is required to sustain the tedious and long learning process.

Motivation in second language acquisition should be purposeful and improve students' performance. It is important for teachers to give motivation to students. Effective motivation is a tool utilized to improve the learning-teaching process. Both students and teachers can benefit from crucial information that highlights achievements, strengths, and areas to improve on. For motivation to be successful, it ought to be systematic. Additionally, motivation in acquisition of second language should be encouraging, helpful, and tailored in order to attain effectiveness. Consequently, motivation leads to successful learning and teaching. Moreover, teachers' input, peers, and students should be considered for effective motivation. Furthermore, teachers ought to integrate social psychology and cross-

cultural psychology through exploring the relationship between interethnic contact, identity, psychological adjustment, and linguistic self-confidence.

Motivation is the base for positive learning outcomes. Nevertheless, motivation can be created differently. Teachers should ensure that they motivate students appropriately in order to avoid hurting their performance. For motivation to be successful, learners should clear objectives where the teacher's motivation should be utilized to help them enhance their performance to attain learning goals. Without the appropriate motivation, students with remarkable abilities may fail to accomplish long-term objectives. Achievement of learning outcomes requires the combination of good teaching practices, motivation, and appropriate curricula. Nevertheless, in some cases, high motivation may lead to considerable deficiencies in learning conditions and student's language aptitude if it is not properly administered. Additionally, the ability of learners to acquire a second language is highly determined by their relationship with the other group. There is need of expanding and building previous efforts of comprehending historical trajectories in the field of field of motivating learners in order to realize the expected learning goals.

Cultural issues should be considered when implementing motivating students in the teaching and learning process. Culture influences transfer of knowledge as well as failure or success may be determined by a mismatch between the school and home culture. Furthermore, it is important to consider the impact of culture and environment from the smallest learning level. Besides, educators', learning setting, and students' characteristics are determined by culture. Essentially, teachers play a vital role in shaping students' learning experience and environment. Teachers can influence students' capacity and inclination with the aim of realizing effective learning. Thus, teachers should consider the students' culture when offering motivation. In addition, the learning environment should be appropriate to allow successful and effective motivation.

Teachers should also consider the gender of students when motivating them because their response and interaction may not be similar for both girls and boys. It is therefore important for teachers to pay interest to external factors beyond the control of students, which can impact on the learning process. Failure to consider such factors as age, culture, and sex of the students may likely lead to general assumptions by teachers that students have learnt certain skills, which may not necessarily be the case. Every student has a different background and thus special

education teachers should approach each student independently. Such an approach would help to assess their independent needs, which is critical in determining the how motivation would be delivered without hurting students' emotions.

In conclusion, motivation to students is very critical in ensuring that they meet their intended goals. The level and impact of motivation in second language acquisition is dependent on several factors. As a result, teachers should consider these factors when motivating students to ensure that they impact on their students optimally. Consequently, motivated students are likely to attain higher performance in second language acquisition.

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