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THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION ON LEARNING ENGLISH

***Summary.** The article analyzes the impact of motivation on learning English. The possible links between foreign language teachers' motivational practices and their students' motivation are investigated. It also considers several driving forces and incentives which motivate students to learn English as a foreign and international language.*

***Key words:** foreign language, motivation, self-motivation, student, learning.*

Problem statement. It almost goes without saying that good language learners are motivated. Common sense and everyday experience suggest that the high achievers of this world have motivation, a word which derives from the Latin verb *movere* meaning to move. Thus, simply defined, we might say that motivation concerns what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, and to persist in action. Without motivation, success will be hard to come by, and the case of learning a second or foreign language is little different [8, p. 19]. At a time when many students tend to opt out of foreign language learning as soon as they can, and even passively or actively resist teachers' attempts to involve them in foreign language learning activities, it is hoped that theories of motivation will help foreign language teachers to motivate their students. Theories of motivation generally seek to explain why and how individuals choose, perform, and persist in various activities, but ultimately, they are also

expected to provide insights to those whose job is to attempt to motivate others. More specifically, teachers are eager to find ways of increasing the quantity and quality of students' engagement in learning activities, since students' active participation in class helps everyone learn more effectively, and makes life more pleasant in the classroom [4].

Analysis of recent research works and publications. Different motivational theories have been put forward to try to understand how and why students are motivated for academic achievement. Such well-known scientists as E. Deci, Z. Dörnyei, R. Gardner, S. Jacques, K. Julkunen, K. Precosky, R. Ryan, P. Tremblay, E. Ushioda, and B. Weiner devoted their research works to this problem. The analysis of the scientific works of H. Brown, G. Robson, and M. Lamb who investigated students' motivation to learn English as a foreign and international language gives us reasons to believe that motivation has always been a pivotal concept in the study of language learning, as teachers always feel frustrated when their message cannot get through to their students, or when they see that students lose their motivation for learning English.

The aim of the article. In this article, we will analyze the impact of motivation on learning English. In particular, we will investigate possible links between foreign language teachers' motivational practices and their students' motivation. More specifically, the article will consider several driving forces and incentives which might motivate students to learn English as a foreign and international language.

Presentation of the core material. It is a matter of common knowledge that a compelling reason to learn, such as a desire to integrate into a community, or to achieve professional success, is a primary key factor that motivates someone to learn a second language (L2). But, because desire itself is not sufficient to acquire a L2, learners must commit to language learning plans. Another key factor of L2 learning motivation is intrinsic interest, because although learners can commit to short-term learning plans regardless of interest,

learners who are interested in language activities are more likely to remain motivated. A third key factor of L2 learning motivation is the belief that one's effort is leading to improvement: learning a language is a long, challenging process, so recognizing one's success gives satisfaction to hard effort.

When teachers or language advisors are involved in a learner's language development, they have the potential to improve the learner's language learning motivation at all phases of the language learning process. However, as language learning success in the absence of a teacher depends on a learner's ability to motivate oneself, successful learners are ones who are able to do this. It is obvious that there is a link between language teachers and ongoing self-motivation. This link is not always clear, but language teachers can certainly familiarize students with self-regulating techniques. Furthermore, by teaching interesting and effective classes, language teachers may inspire learners to remain committed to language learning [6].

Moreover, teachers can give students a reason to study a foreign language beyond the classroom door. Z. Dörnyei argues that teachers can 'inspire a lifelong commitment to the subject matter' through a motivating teaching style [2]. Motivating classes should be an essential part of L2 learning class management. There are techniques which allow teachers to establish and maintain intrinsic motivation in language activities. Teachers also can, to some extent, encourage students to subjectively assess their language results in positive ways. However, although teachers can inspire positive feelings towards a language, or remind students of the instrumental need to study a language, they do not determine for the student the reasons why (social reasons, for example) pursuing achievement in a particular language will, or will not be important. Furthermore, teachers cannot determine whether or not students will adopt positive self-motivating techniques. But, teachers should try and develop these techniques in students because self-motivation is necessary for long-term language achievement.

Teachers should establish a motivating class environment from the outset of the course. There are four main motivational factors that are important when generating student interest in the classroom: interest (intrinsic motivation), relevance (connected to the students' goals, needs, and values), expectancy (the students' expectation of success, realistic beliefs), and satisfaction (an appropriate combination of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards) [3].

At the head of a motivating classroom should be an active teacher-facilitator who allows students an optimal degree of autonomy: the teacher should not be a dictatorial figure, but should be strong enough to establish and maintain positive group norms, and to assign group roles. Group norms refer to the unspoken rules of social interaction within a social context, such as a classroom. Group norms can be positive and helpful, or negative and detrimental to a motivational classroom environment: for example, when high achieving students are shunned. Z. Dörnyei states that if the norms are successfully established from the beginning, the class will appreciate their benefit and voluntarily protect them. Group norms refer to assigning roles (for example, writer, helper, and 'quiet captain') to individual students, in order to allow equal participation in co-operative learning activities [2].

Different classes require different motivational techniques. Several items can be observed as factors which make classes enjoyable and effective: good teacher role model, relaxed classroom atmosphere, good teacher-learner relationship, increased learner linguistic self-confidence, interesting classes, personalized content, and familiarization with cultural knowledge.

Learning foreign languages, especially English, is increasingly important in society, so teachers who can develop self-motivating language learners do students a great service. Z. Dörnyei divided self-motivating strategies into the following main categories:

1. Commitment control strategies which help to preserve or increase students' original goals. Teachers may remind students of the possible outcomes, positive or negative, of the language learning action.
2. Metacognitive control strategies for managing concentration and reducing procrastination. Teachers should try and teach effective study habits.
3. Satiation control strategies for avoiding boredom. Teachers can, for example, think of interesting subjects or suggest interesting activities for self-study.
4. Environmental control strategies such as maintaining a quiet, distraction free study area, or asking for help [2].

According to E. Ushioda, motivated students have well-established self-motivating strategies as part of a habitual study practice [7]. It is not apparent that these students learned their self-motivating strategies from language teachers in particular; rather, they probably applied effective study habits, acquired from teachers and parents, to a subject that they experienced success in and enjoyed. However, language teachers should remind students of the importance of applying self-motivating strategies to language learning, and should explicitly instruct students in the strategies outlined by Z. Dörnyei [6].

It is worth noting that there are a number of reasons why students lose motivation in the middle of their studies. These include things such as: not being sure whether this is the right course for them; not feeling that they are as good as everybody else; financial difficulties, making it impossible to meet certain demands; relationship problems, leaving them feeling there is no adequate support; feeling under-pressure from things outside which then impacts on their academic work; poor health conditions and feeling exhausted before they have even started; negative comments by people around them leaving them with a negative self-perception; lack of clear focus – suddenly they may realize that they have too many priorities and do not know where to start; lack of direction – not so sure where they want to go with this and find themselves asking 'what

if...'; failure to accept constructive criticism – criticism seen as an attack rather than something to help them improve [5].

It is clear that teachers should focus on boosting their students' motivation using different tools. For instance, at the University of Greenwich they emphasize that students need to take the following steps to achieve academic success. Firstly, it is necessary to label the obstructions, for example, money problems, relationship, course context, health problem etc. so that students can start to explore an alternative solution to each of the problems separately. Then students need to set small daily or weekly goals and ensure that they are manageable and achievable. The goals need to be positively phrased. And finally, it is important to draw an action plan [5].

It is obvious that keeping students motivated to learn English is one of the biggest challenges any teacher faces. It is sometimes appropriate for teachers to take an active role in trying to improve the motivation levels of a group. Let us consider some practical ideas which may help teachers improve motivation levels in their groups.

- Setting goals. Teachers should try to negotiate some realistic goals with the group. For instance, what do they want to be able to do in English by the end of the courses? Then teachers think of ways of achieving those goals. Achieving the goals will take effort on both parts. Students should be ready to accept their part of the task and take some responsibility for their own learning goals.

- Progress markers. All language learners know that there are times when they seem to be getting nowhere and making no progress. They reach a plateau and there seems to be no way to get better. If this is the case for some students, teachers need to gather some evidence of their level by keeping a piece of their written work, recording them or keeping the results of a test. Then it is necessary to set a date in the future (for instance, end of term) and tell them they will redo the piece of work at the future date. When they have done this, teachers give

them back the old piece of work and look for evidence of improvement. This usually helps students to 'see' their improvement in a more tangible way.

- Feedback sheets. Asking for feedback on classes can be a daunting thought. Teachers leave themselves open to both positive and negative comments. However, it is one way to show that teachers are thinking about their learners. Simple questions will help teachers plan the classes and select activities for each group.

- Questionnaires. Some students resent the widespread use of English and can even see it as a threat to their mother tongue. Designing a questionnaire about the student's attitudes towards English may be a nice way to bring their feelings out into the open.

- Looking outside the classroom. Teachers should encourage their students to look at how English is used outside the classroom and exploit any examples they can find. The internet is an obvious source of authentic English, but also advertising, tourist information, menus, original version films etc. This should remind students that learning English can be useful in all sorts of areas of their lives. If there are any students who have travelled to an English speaking country, teachers should use their experiences with the group. Moreover, it is possible to find some local job advertisements where English is required. Teachers could base a lesson around jobs and offer help with writing CVs. This may make students think of English as more than just another subject and more as a tool to help them achieve their future goals [1].

- Pair work or group work. This type of collaboration results in benefits for all or both students. They can help each other while working on different types of tasks such as writing dialogues or interviews.

- Role play. Teachers can use the role-play activity to motivate their students and to help the less motivated learners take part in the lesson.

- Using audio and visual materials. Since schools and universities are equipped with various audio and video materials, teachers should include the

appropriate ones to use while planning their lessons. For instance, an overhead projector can be used in presenting research works or writing drafts for classroom correction or to read.

- Autonomy and responsibility. When teachers allow autonomy and require responsibility, they encourage motivation and self-guided learning, academic achievement and a sense of excitement in their students. Providing students with choices leads to autonomy and, in turn, motivation and learning. Students tend to be more motivated to complete a task and perform better when they choose to engage in the task themselves, rather than having the task chosen for them.

- Digital technology. There may be two ways that technology can effectively increase engagement with the kind of tasks traditionally found on worksheets: giving feedback and tracking student performance. Computers can offer feedback that reinforces the work that led to a correct response, or feedback that helps guide the student to pathways to correct answers. Feedback for correct answers, from the teacher or the computer, should highlight the steps that led to success. Feedback for incorrect answers should promote reflection on the error. Digital technology can use past performance and the performance of other students to dynamically determine what item, task, or instruction should come next. The focus on learning can be reinforced by a focus on growth, and digital systems can display that growth immediately and graphically. That kind of progress feedback can be very motivating as all students like to see themselves getting better.

It should be emphasized that these are just a few practical ideas of how to keep motivation levels up. People are motivated to learn languages for a variety of reasons, and successful learners are able to stay motivated through the long and difficult process of language acquisition. Although the link between language teaching and long-term motivation is not clear, there seems to be links between language learning enjoyment, success, and long-term learning motivation. By planning enjoyable classes, language teachers may be able to

inspire long-term learning motivation in students. Research shows that there are many techniques teachers can use to prepare motivational classes, so teachers should familiarize themselves with a variety of techniques. Not every technique will work with every class, or with every teacher [6].

Conclusion. Motivation is one of the key factors that determine the rate and success of L2 acquisition. It provides the main incentive to initiate learning a foreign language and later the determination to persevere and sustain the long and often difficult learning process. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the best abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals. Teachers are first and foremost supposed to teach the curriculum, but we cannot ignore the fact that this cannot happen without motivating the students. In addition, learners come with their own emotional and psychological baggage and interests making the task of motivating them one of the greatest challenges for teachers.

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