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SCIENCE**



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THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: This article discusses the importance of motivation in language learning, categorizing it into integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. Psychological factors such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, explained through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, are explored in relation to their impact on motivation. Additionally, strategies for enhancing and sustaining motivation, including goal-setting, gamification, cultural immersion, and peer support, are examined.

Keywords: motivation, language learning, second language acquisition, engagement, persistence, goals, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, autonomy, competence, relatedness, cultural immersion, peer support, attitudes, self-determination theory (SDT).

Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning, significantly influencing learners' goals, persistence, and engagement. It drives individuals to overcome challenges and improve their ability to acquire new linguistic skills effectively. According to Canadian psychologist Richard Crump, learning is driven by excitement, interest, enthusiasm, and a desire to participate. However, motivation varies among individuals, as each learner has different intensity and types of motivation. British linguist Vivian Cook identifies motivation as one of the core factors in second language acquisition, along with age and personality, asserting that motivation plays the most significant role in determining learner success. British applied linguist Rod Ellis describes motivation as the effort learners invest in studying a second language due to their specific needs or desires. Canadian researchers Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada emphasize that motivation is a multifaceted construct, where a learner's willingness to communicate is directly linked to their goals and proficiency level. This aligns with the research of Canadian psychologists Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, who introduced the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. Motivation in language learning is generally categorized into two main types: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative

motivation refers to learning a language to communicate with its speakers and engage with their culture. Learners with integrative motivation aim to become part of the language community. Instrumental motivation focuses on learning a language for practical purposes, such as career advancement, academic success, or other functional goals. Gardner and Lambert's work highlights the impact of these motivational types on language learning. Cook further emphasizes that understanding these motivation types helps educators design effective learning strategies. Beyond integrative and instrumental motivation, motivation can also be classified as intrinsic or extrinsic: Intrinsic motivation occurs when learners engage in language learning for personal satisfaction and enjoyment. According to American educational psychologists Christopher Walker, Barbara Greene, and Robert Mansell, intrinsically motivated learners view learning as an intellectually stimulating experience and are more likely to persist through challenges. Extrinsic motivation involves external rewards or pressures, such as grades, certificates, career benefits, or avoiding negative consequences. While extrinsic motivation can drive short-term success, intrinsic motivation is generally more effective in sustaining long-term language learning. Several psychological theories help explain how motivation affects language acquisition. Two major frameworks include Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Gardner's Socio-Educational Model. Self-Determination Theory, developed by American psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, states that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: Autonomy refers to the sense of control learners have over their language learning process. When students are given the freedom to choose study topics or learning methods that interest them, they become more engaged and intrinsically motivated to continue learning. Competence plays a crucial role in maintaining motivation. When learners experience a sense of progress and accomplishment, they feel more confident in their abilities. Providing appropriately challenging tasks—neither too difficult nor too easy—helps learners build their language skills effectively and stay motivated. Relatedness emphasizes the importance of social connections in language learning. Meaningful interactions with native speakers or language communities create a sense of belonging, making the learning experience more enjoyable and motivating. Engaging in real-life conversations and cultural exchanges encourages persistence and long-term commitment to language learning. Gardner's model, developed by Canadian psychologist Robert C. Gardner, emphasizes the role of social factors and attitudes toward the language



community. According to this model: Learners with positive attitudes toward the target language culture are more likely to succeed. Integrative motivation is key to long-term language acquisition, as it fosters deeper engagement. Negative attitudes toward the language community can hinder progress and lower motivation. Sustaining motivation in language learning requires intentional strategies. Some effective approaches include: Setting Achievable Goals – Using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals helps learners track progress and stay motivated. Gamification makes language learning more engaging by incorporating game-like elements. Apps such as Duolingo use rewards, badges, and progress tracking to keep learners motivated. These features create a sense of achievement and encourage continuous learning. Cultural immersion helps learners connect with the language in real-life situations. Watching movies, listening to music, reading books, or interacting with native speakers exposes learners to authentic language use, making the learning process more natural and enjoyable. Peer support and language partners play a crucial role in maintaining motivation. Learning with a partner or being part of a language-learning community provides encouragement, shared progress, and opportunities for real conversation, making the journey more effective and enjoyable. Motivation is a key determinant of success in language learning. Whether through integrative or instrumental motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic drivers, the right motivational strategies can significantly enhance learners' engagement and persistence. Applying psychological theories such as Self-Determination Theory and Gardner's Socio-Educational Model can help educators and learners create effective, motivating language learning environments.

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