# "The only way to do great work is to love what you do"

Motivation in the L2 Classroom

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B.Ed. Thesis

University of Iceland

School of Education

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

MENNTAVÍSINDASVIÐ

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## *Motivation in the L2 Classroom*

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B.Ed. Thesis in the teaching and learning of foreign languages

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"The only way to do great work is to love what you do": Motivation in the L2 classroom

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# Abstract

The main objective of this paper was to gather information on the history of language learning motivation as well as on how motivation influences the way students learn a second or foreign language. Sources were gathered from some of the leading experts in the field and a special focus was given to Dörnyei's Process Model, which brings together the work of many great theorists. The Process Model covers all the main aspects of motivation from the initial wish or idea to the evaluation of the task after its completion. It is the joint opinion of some of the foremost scholars in the field of language learning that motivation is of great importance to learning success and that the teacher and his/her actions are the single most influential parts in moulding and supporting that motivation. The paper concludes with a list of guidelines that can be used by language teachers to help them make their classroom a positive learning environment and increase their students' general motivation to learn a second or foreign language.

# Ágrip

Helsta markmið þessarar ritgerðar er að kanna áhugahvöt í tungumálanámi í sögulegu samhengi og á hvaða hátt áhugahvöt er talin hafa áhrif á það hvernig nemendur læra annað eða erlent tungumál. Í ritgerðinni er farið yfir helstu heimildir um efnið frá leiðandi sérfræðingum á þessu sviði og sérstakri athygli beint að ferlamódeli Dörnyeis sem dregur saman verk margra annarra kennismiða í heildstætt módel sem nær yfir alla helstu þætti áhugahvatar, frá fyrstu ósk eða hugmynd að mati á verkinu að því loknu. Margir helstu fræðimanna á sviði tungumálanáms eru sammála um að áhugahvöt skipti afar miklu máli fyrir námsárangur og að kennarinn og gjörðir hans séu sá þáttur sem hafi mest áhrif á að móta og styðja við áhugahvöt nemandans. Ritgerðinni lýkur því á samantekt, eins konar gátlista, sem tungumálakennarar geta nýtt til að gera kennslustofuna að jákvæðu námsumhverfi og auka þannig almenna áhugahvöt nemenda sinna til að læra annað eða erlent mál.

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# Preface

I started working on this paper with the idea in mind to find some practical advice on motivating students in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. I had no idea that the search would take me on such a complicated and diverse journey into psychology as well as educational theory, from Freud´s analytic theory to behavioural psychology, from Maslow´s hierarchy of needs to cognitive theories. Being aware of why people do what they do and, in the case of teaching, why students behave the way they do and learn the way they do, can in my opinion help teachers structure their teaching in a way that motivates students. It can help teachers create a more positive learning environment and help them find ways to help students become more autonomous.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Samuel Lefever for his patience and our many conversations about the topic of my thesis, which helped mould my work into what it is. I would also like to thank my husband who has made it possible for me to work on my thesis alongside a full job and raising our two young children. Last but not least I would like to give special thanks to my sister Birgitta Elín Hassell, who with her great advice, interest and encouragement throughout my work on this thesis, as well as other assignments during my education, has helped me more than I can say.

This thesis is composed by me. I have fully acquainted myself with the Code of Ethics (2003, November 7, http://english.hi.is/university/code_ethics) and followed it to the best of my knowledge. I have properly cited all of the sources I used, including suggestions, images, material and wording. I appreciate the support others have given me and I take full responsibility for this thesis. This statement is hereby confirmed with my signature.


Reykjavík, _____._____ 20__


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# 1   Introduction

In this essay I will discuss recent theories on motivation and how motivation influences the way students learn a second or a foreign language. The focus will be on issues that relate to what language teachers bring to their classroom, how the classroom environment and atmosphere as well as the community, the family, and the students' expectations influence students' motivation to learn.

The results of research related to these theories are then summarized into a list of ideas that language teachers can use to create a learning environment that increases students' motivation and makes them more willing and likely to learn a second or foreign language.

Ideas of learning and motivation can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. These theories have evolved throughout time and in the last few decades, theories and theory models have been built that capture the concept of motivation and its many aspects quite well. Theorists have focused their work on explaining how motivation affects individuals differently and what factors influence motivation and how. This leads to the question whether a teacher can influence his/her students' motivation to learn, and if so, how? Even though theorists may not agree on how motivation affects student learning, my conclusion is that there is a lot of conformity on the issue among the theorists of recent decades. This conformity makes it possible to build a comprehensive list of things for teachers to have in mind when they step into the classroom with the goal of teaching language to a diverse group of students.

## 2    Motivation

Although the idea of human motivation has a long history and dates back to Plato and Aristotle, the actual concept of motivation was not introduced until the twentieth century. Before, words such as conation, volition, intention and motive were more commonly used. Hobbes (as cited in Cofer, 1981) stated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that "…we choose what will give us pleasure and avoid what will give us pain". This is what has been called hedonic motivation and many motivational theories have been based on this basic notion of pain and pleasure. Operant conditioning is a theory that deals with hedonic processes and is based upon three methods that can change behaviour; positive and negative reinforcement, which increase behavioural responses, and punishment, which decreases the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated (Bozarth, 1994).

### 2.1    Defining the concept of motivation

Defining motivation is no easy task since the concept has to do with human emotions, personal characteristics, as well as environmental influences.

The Oxford dictionaries (2014) define motivation as "a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way or as a desire or willingness to do something". Gardner, who along with his associates, has been one of the most influential theorists in language learning motivation, has defined motivation as "a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language" (as cited in Williams & Burden 1997, p. 116).

Williams and Burden (1997) propose that motivation can be construed as:

> A state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals) (p. 120).

The arousal may involve an element of desire or have other causes. These causes can be internal, such as interest and curiosity, or external, such as another person or event. This internal-external distinction has played a large part in many current motivational theories but Williams and Burden point out that it would be a mistake to consider motivation simplistically as either internal or external since the two cannot be easily separated. What needs to be kept in mind is which external influences are more likely than others to

arouse people's thoughts and emotions and also how people internalize these influences in ways that lead them to making the decision to work towards or achieve a certain goal (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 120). Dörnyei (2012, p. 7) concludes that "motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity".

Since this essay focuses on motivation in second or foreign language learning, the concept of motivation, based on the work of Gardner, Williams and Burden and Dörnyei could be explained in this way: motivation explains what sparks the language learners interest in the task at hand, how the environment affects that interest, what makes the learners decide to do the task, how hard they decide to work at it and how long that effort and interest is sustained.

# 3    Motivational theory

The term motivation has been widely used in both educational and research contexts. Motivational theories seek to explain the fundamental question of why humans behave the way they do, thus, it is not surprising that a variety of theories should arise. Researchers generally agree that motivation is responsible for determining a large part of human behavior but there is less agreement about how it happens (Dörnyei, 1998).

During the first half of the 20th century Freud, Hull and other theorists focused on human instincts and drives, some of which were believed to be unconscious or repressed. Although not considered important in modern motivational thinking, these views play, according to Dörnyei, a big part in our lives and are therefore likely to be rediscovered within the field (Dörnyei, 2012).

Conditioning theories related to Behaviourism gained prominence in the 1950s. Behavioural theories focused on stimulus and response in the formation of habits. These theories were mostly based on animal experiments, e.g. Pavlov's dogs and Skinner's rats, but are still relevant for understanding the role of practice and drilling, reinforcements - positive or negative - and maybe most importantly the role of punishment or praise in learning (Dörnyei, 2012).

In 1970, Maslow presented his *Hierarchy of needs* model. He based his theory on the hierarchy of human needs from basic physiological needs to higher level needs such as happiness and self-actualization. He proposed that the lower-level needs needed to be fulfilled before the higher-level needs would come into play. Maslow's pyramid includes five levels with physiological needs forming the basis. If physiological needs are met the safety needs come into the picture; the need for security and protection. When those needs have been met the person's need for love emerges, which includes general social acceptance and approval. When the needs for love and acceptance have been met the need for esteem comes into play. This level includes self-esteem, confidence, respect from others and achievement. The fifth and final level in Maslow's hierarchy is the level of self-actualization where the person starts pursuing inner talents, solving problems, showing creativity and spontaneity, lack of prejudice and acceptance of facts (see Figure 1).
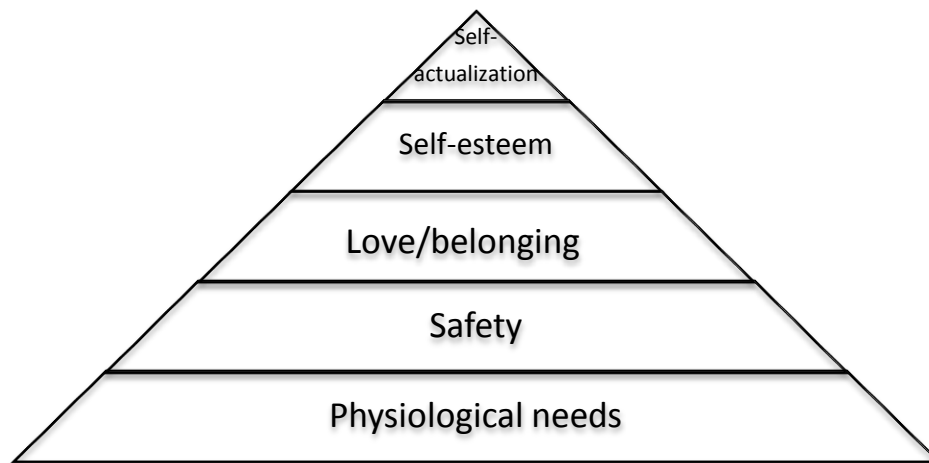
**Figure 1: Maslow´s hierarchy of needs**

In more recent research the concept of a 'need' has been replaced by the more specific goal, which is seen as the "… engine to fire the action and provide the direction in which to act" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 120). Two goal theories became particularly influential in the last decade of the 20th century: the *Goal-Setting Theory* and the *Goal Orientation Theory*.

According to Dörnyei (1998) The Goal-Setting Theory is based upon the idea that all action is caused by a purpose or goal and for action to take place that purpose or goal has to be set and pursued by choice. For these goals to lead to higher performance or success they need to be both specific and difficult. Goals that are either vague or not difficult enough are not likely to lead to improvement or success.

The Goal Orientation Theory was specifically developed to explain children's learning in a school environment and is based on the idea that there are two main contrasting achievement goal orientations that students adopt towards their school work: a *mastery orientation* and a *performance orientation*. If students adopt a mastery orientation they are more likely to pursue mastery goals or learning goals/task involvement, where they focus on learning the content being taught. Those who adopt this orientation believe that effort will lead to success and that self-improvement and growth are the most important things in their studies. If, on the other hand, students adopt a performance orientation they are more likely to focus on the performance goals, demonstrating ability, getting good grades and outdoing their classmates. Students with mastery orientation are therefore more likely to accept more challenging tasks, show more intrinsic interest and positive attitudes than those who look at their learning as the way to achieve a goal and receive recognition for it.

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Other theories worth mentioning in the context of this thesis are the Cognitive Approach and Expectancy-Value theories, also discussed by Dörnyei (1998). Contemporary motivational psychology focuses generally on what has been called The Cognitive Approach. This theory focuses on the individual's conscious attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, and interpretation of events and how they influence behaviour. The decision to do something is based upon the beliefs about the values of the action and about perceived competence and the likelihood of getting sufficient support from the surroundings, people and institutes. Underlying these theories is the belief that people are innately active learners and have an inborn curiosity and urge to get to know their environment and meet different challenges (Dörnyei, 1998).

According to Expectancy-Value theories, which share these basic beliefs with Cognitive theories, motivation to perform a particular task is the product of two main factors: a person's expectancy of success in the task and the value attached to that success (Dörnyei, 1998). According to these theories, it is unlikely that any effort will be invested in the task if either of these factors is missing; if the individual is either convinced that s/he will not succeed or if the task does not lead to a valued outcome. The main concern of expectancy-value theorists is not what motivates learners but what directs and guides their already inherent motivation. Expectancy-value theories are compatible with goal-setting theory in that people are likely to show more commitment and progress if they believe that the task is possible and important.

Although the theories are diverse and have different focuses they all contribute to our understanding of how motivation is affected by the learner's goals and beliefs. But other factors also influence the willingness of a learner to put in the effort to study and achieve specific goals. These factors can be both intrinsic and extrinsic.

# 4 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century cognitive psychologists drew a distinction between types of motivation and defined it as either *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. Intrinsic motivation is when an act is performed simply for the enjoyment of the act itself or interest in the task at hand. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is when an act is performed to gain something outside the activity itself, e.g. passing an exam. Williams and Burden (1997) propose a general question to see whether motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic. Ask yourself the question whether you would do the activity even if no reward or punishment followed. If the answer is yes, the motivation is truly intrinsic.

This distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been influential in motivational studies and has been used in various attempts to explain how students are motivated in different ways by different influences (Williams & Burden, 1997). Williams and Burden find it likely that most teachers would agree that both types of motivation have a part to play in the classroom and are in fact closely linked to each other.

## 4.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning

This distinction of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation can be applied to motivation in language learning as well as in other subjects and to the motivation to learn in general. In language learning there is a distinction made between second language acquisition and foreign language learning. In a second language acquisition situation the language is spoken in the individual's environment and s/he is able, and perhaps pressured, to use the language to communicate in natural communication situations. In a foreign language learning situation, typically the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment and learners have no or limited access to the language outside the classroom. The distinction is mainly seen in the prevailing learning situation and is not used in terms of the learning process itself (Ringbom, 1979). The focus of this paper is on motivation in foreign language learning only, although some theories and ideas apply to both.

Wu (2003) conducted a study on young Chinese students learning a foreign language (FL) in a predominantly monolingual environment. He examined the influence of classroom environment on intrinsic motivation and found that a predictable learning environment, moderately challenging tasks, necessary instructional support, and evaluation that emphasizes self-improvement and attributed success or failure to controllable variables, were effective ways to enhance the learners' self-perceived target language proficiency. Freedom in choosing the content and methods of learning as well as

integrative strategy training led to higher perceived autonomy, both of which are said to lead to intrinsic motivation in FL learning.

Wu states that intrinsic motivation is of great importance for young FL learners in terms of stimulating their interest and developing their FL proficiency. He also cites Gottfried who says that this positive inclination formed in the beginning of foreign language learning predicts later intrinsic motivation and, therefore, forming, maintaining and developing intrinsic motivation in young learners should be important goals pursued by all teachers of foreign or second languages (Lamb, 2003; Wu, 2003).

## 4.2    Extrinsic incentives

Brophy (1998) discusses the question of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation in the classroom and draws attention to studies that show that adults generally believe that students who are extrinsically motivated will exert more effort after failure at a task, show enhanced performance following success, show more general effort in school work and take more responsibility for their work than intrinsically motivated students.

Motivational strategies that involve rewarding students for their work in some way are in some respects the simplest and most direct strategies. They can result in students investing more work in a task than they would otherwise have done, and thus increase success. According to Brophy (1998) adults generally believe that rewards are effective and stimulate the development of intrinsic interest in school activities. However, most motivational theorists believe that this is more of a control of the students' behaviour than actually motivating them to learn. Many educators have opposed using rewards and view it as bribing students to do what they should be doing anyway because it is the right thing to do and in the student's or society's best interest. They often claim that rewards undermine students' intrinsic motivation and risk decreasing that behaviour in the future. They also suggest that this takes the students' focus away from the task at hand and onto the reward, which will lead to them doing as little as possible for the reward rather than doing something for its own benefit. Students will then choose tasks that they can easily finish instead of choosing challenging work where they can develop their knowledge and skills (Brophy, 1998).

The following characteristics of rewards are thought to have the biggest negative effect on intrinsic motivation and performance quality (Brophy, 1998):

- High salience, which means that the reward is very desirable and presented in a way that draws attention to it.

- Noncontingency: Rewards that are given for participation only and are not given for achieving specific goal.

- Unnatural/unusual: where the rewards are not natural outcomes of the behaviour but artificially tied to it.

Fortunately, according to Brophy (1998), research has shown that extrinsic rewards do not necessarily have a negative effect on intrinsic motivation and can be used for supporting its development. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation seem to be relatively independent of each other so people can be high in both or low in both or high in one and low in the other. It is, however, necessary to learn when and how to use rewards, to ensure that they do not have a negative effect on students' intrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, a research study by Kohn (as cited in Brown, 2007) gives examples from a study where extrinsic rewards decrease intrinsic motivation. In one part of the study subjects were asked to solve a fascinating and complex puzzle with no announced reward. When the subjects were halfway done with the puzzle they were informed that they would receive monetary rewards if they solved the puzzle. After this the intrinsic motivation of the subjects decreased. In another part, the subjects, teenage girls, were split into two groups and given the task of teaching games to younger children. One group was promised a reward for successfully completing the task, the other group was not promised any reward. The second group was recorded accomplishing their task faster and with more success. They also reported greater pleasure in doing so than the first group.

Brown (2007) claims that when feedback boosts students' feelings of competence, is seen by the students as a validation of their own autonomy, critical thinking ability and self-fulfilment, it increases or maintains intrinsic motivation. He also claims no other externally administered reward has a lasting effect.

# 5 Motivation and language learning

Even for the best of learners, language learning is a long, arduous, complex and evolutionary process in which the intensity and levels of motivation are bound to fluctuate, both over time and in response to events or situations. It is therefore important to look at the language learner as a whole person and not only as a language learner (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013).

## 5.1 Gardner's motivational theory

According to Graham (1997, p. 96), Gardner proposes that motivation with regard to language learning is "the effort, want (desire) and affect associated with learning a second language." Gardner closely associates the desire part with the learner's goals in regards to learning the language, also known as orientation of the learners' motivation.

Gardner (1985) proposes that foreign language learning is unlike any other subject taught in school since it "…involve[s] the acquisition of skills or behaviour patterns, which are characteristic of another cultural community." (p. 146). Subjects like mathematics, science or history involve the development of the student's own heritage or cultural community whereas the language learning involves an acquisition of characteristics of another culture and community. The attitude towards the target language (TL) community is an important factor in successful language learning (Gardner, 1985).

Gardner also points out that the general attitude towards the TL in the first language (L1) community impacts the general level of achievement. If the community considers acquisition of the TL important or meaningful, the level of achievement in general will be higher and if, on the other hand, the TL is considered difficult by the community or for some reason the TL learner has negative attitudes towards the TL native speakers or their community, the general level of achievement and proficiency will be lower (Gardner, 1985). Gardner distinguishes between two types of orientation in language learning that have to do with the reasons for wanting to learn a TL and attitudes towards the TL community: instrumental and integrative orientation.

### 5.1.1 Integrative and instrumental orientation

Learners with integrative orientation learn a language because of a desire to integrate into the target language's culture and community. They want to identify with the native speakers of the language so the language in itself becomes a means to an end. Gardner proposes that a learner with integrative orientation would show willingness to identify

with the target language group to the extent that he would be open to adopting distinctive aspects of behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of that group (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In contrast, learners with instrumental orientation learn a language for other purposes. They learn a language with other goals in mind, such as a future career, educational goals, a practical value and the advantages of learning the language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Some theorists claim that integrative motivation, being an internal and enduring part of the learner's personality, will be more closely linked to achievement in language learning. They claim that learners who are more instrumentally motivated will be more influenced by external factors such as rewards, which, in the end, will not be as constant and rewarding as integration into the target language community (Graham, 1997).

Contradictory results from research on the matter show that the question of integrative and instrumental orientation may not be as clear-cut as this. Gardner and Lambert (1972) found that integrative orientation of students learning French in Montreal (a bilingual community) was strongly positively linked to success. They found that a friendly and integrative orientation towards the target language group can:

> differentially sensitize the learner to the audio-lingual features of the language, making him more perceptive to forms of pronunciation and accent than is the case for learners without this open and friendly disposition (p. 134)

On the other hand they found that Philippine students learning English in the Philippines, where English has become not only a second national language but also the language used for instruction from early grades on, showed more instrumental motivation towards learning English. In the Philippines, English has become an essential language for economic advancements and success. According to the researchers, it seems that where there is an urgency to learn a language, such as for language minority groups like Spanish speakers in the United States, the instrumental approach seems very effective.

In response to these conflicting findings, it was suggested by Krudenier and Clément (cited by Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000) that the source of these discrepancies were to be found in definitional problems as well as the failure to take into account the influences of social environment. They found in their examinations of French and English foreign language students' orientation that the integrative orientation seemed to appear only in a multicultural context among members of a clearly dominant group.

A student with integrative orientation would then likely be someone who is studying a foreign language for social or cultural purposes. That student can then be driven or held back by high or low levels of motivation. The same goes for someone who has instrumental orientation and is studying a foreign language to attain a certain academic or career goal. The intensity of his/her motivation to learn the language could then be either high or low (Brown, 2007). Orientation (integrative/instrumental) is a true dichotomy and refers to the context or purpose for learning only, which then is either intrinsic or extrinsic. Motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic), on the other hand, indicates a broad continuum of possibilities in intensity of one's feeling or drive to learn. Motivation can range from deeply internal or intrinsic to strong, externally administered rewards or extrinsic (Brown, 2007).

## 5.2 Williams' and Burden's theory of motivation

Whereas Gardner and associates focus on the attitudes of individuals towards the L2 and the L2 community, Williams and Burden (1997) give the concept of choice and decision more attention. They point out that motivation, from the teacher's point of view, is often seen as simply sparking an interest in students. Many teachers put a lot of energy into starting a project in a way that awakens the students' curiosity and interest but then fail to follow through with sustaining that interest. Williams and Burden propose a three-stage model of motivation. The first stage includes the *reasons* for undertaking a particular activity. This stage involves a mixture of internal and external influences, which will vary between individuals. The second stage involves *deciding* to do something and, like the first stage, is concerned with initiating motivation. Here they consider what makes people choose to embark on a task and to invest their time and energy in that particular task. The third and final stage is *sustaining the effort* or *persisting.* As these three stages can all influence each other Williams and Burden present their model as a triangle and add the *social context* as an influencing factor into the model as the all - encompassing circle.
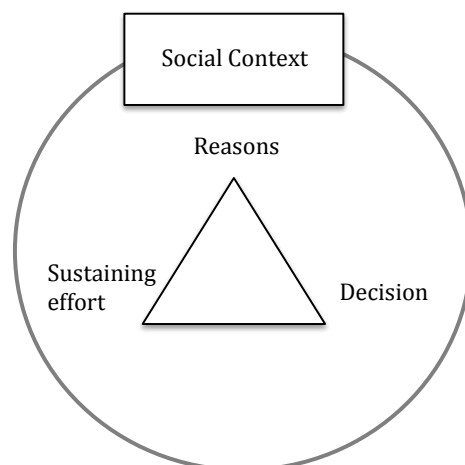
(Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 122)

**Figure 2: Williams' and Burden's (1997) Interactive model of motivation**

Williams and Burden (1997) view their approach to motivation as cognitive, constructivist, socially contextualized and dynamically interactive. They base their ideas on the fundamental idea that motivation involves choice about actions or behaviours: decisions as to whether to do something, how much effort is asserted and the degree of perseverance. Decisions are made based upon people's construction of the world around them and their internal attributes: their personality, confidence etc. as well as the influence of mediators and significant others in their lives. These internal attributes and mediating influences are then affected by people's beliefs, their culture and society. Both internal and external factors have an effect on a person's motivation (see table 1).

**Table 1: Williams' and Burden's (1997) framework of L2 motivation**

| Internal factors | External factors |
|---|---|
| Intrinsic interest of activity<br>• arousal of curiosity<br>• optimal degree of challenge | Significant others<br>• parents<br>• teachers<br>• peers |
| Perceived value of activity<br>• personal relevance<br>• anticipated value of outcomes<br>• intrinsic value attributed to the activity | The nature of interaction with significant others<br>• mediated learning experiences<br>• the nature and amount of appropriate praise<br>• punishments, sanctions |
| Sense of agency<br>• locus of causality<br>• locus of control re: process and outcomes | The learning environment<br>• comfort<br>• resources<br>• time of day, week, year |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • size of class and school<br>• class and school ethos |
| Mastery<br><br>• feelings of competence<br>• awareness of developing skills and mastery in a chosen area<br>• self-efficacy | The broader context<br><br>• wider family networks<br>• the local education system<br>• conflicting interests<br>• cultural norms<br>• societal expectations and attitudes |
| Self-concept<br><br>• realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in skills required<br>• personal definitions and judgments of success and failure<br>• self-worth concern<br>• learned helplessness | |
| Attitudes<br><br>• towards language learning in general<br>• towards the L2<br>• towards the L2 community and culture | |
| Other affective states<br><br>• confidence<br>• anxiety, fear | |
| Developmental age and stage | |
| Gender | |

(Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 137-139)

According to Williams and Burden (1997), internal and external factors and influences interact with each other and, since learning never occurs in a vacuum, it is important to take into account these contextual variables. Contextual variables can be interpreted in different ways by individuals and will have a significant impact on their levels of motivation for learning and persistence in achieving their goals (Williams & Burden, 1997). Influencing students to choose to invest their efforts in a particular language learning task and sustain that effort until the task is accomplished involves internal and external factors. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to keep all these factors in mind when designing and presenting tasks to students.

## 5.3 Dörnyei's motivational theory

Dörnyei has been one of the leading experts in the field of language learning motivation in recent years. Similar to his predecessors, Dörnyei views motivation as one of the key

factors that influences the rate and success of L2 learning. He claims that without motivation even individuals with the most outstanding language learning abilities cannot achieve long-term goals. The same would apply for appropriate curricula and good teaching; neither are enough on their own to ensure learner achievement (Dörnyei, 1998).

This view is supported by Gardner and Lambert (1972) who state that even though aptitude plays a large role in students' language achievements, motivation can in some settings override the importance of aptitude. Although this might not be completely relevant in the L2 classroom, it shows the power of motivation in general and that by tapping into students' motivation it might be possible to increase students' learning, regardless of their aptitude.

### 5.3.1 Dörnyei´s Process Model of Motivation

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) built what they called *A Process Model of Motivation* (see figure 3 which constructs a solid picture of most of the elements known to be involved in shaping and maintaining an individual´s motivation for L2 learning. It involves separating sequentially ordered phases within the motivational behavioural process. It summarises the whole process from initial idea/wish/desire through forming a plan to evaluating the culmination of the action. Their main idea is that having a reason for wanting to do something and the fact that one wants to do it, is one thing, but actually getting started on it and completing it, is another.

The Process model contains two dimensions: *Action Sequence* and *Motivational influences.* Action Sequence represents the process where wishes, hopes and desires are transformed into specific goals, from goals into intentions and further into action. These desires are then hopefully accomplished and the process is evaluated. The other dimension, Motivational influences, includes all the energy sources and motivational forces that make up and fuel the behavioural process. This process is then divided into three main phases, *preactional-*, *actional-*, and *postactional phase*.

MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCES · ACTION SEQUENCES

**P R E A C T I O N A L  P H A S E**

Motivational influences on Goal Setting

Wishes and hopes

*Goal Setting*

Desires · Opportunities

Motivational Influences on Intention Formation

Goal (Assigned tasks)

*Intention formation*

Action Plan · Commitment

Motivational Influences on the Initiation of Intention Enactment

Intention

*Initiation of Intention Enactment*

Means and resources · Start Condition

Action-Launching

**INSTIGATION FORCE**   Crossing the "rubicon" of action

**A C T I O N A L  P H A S E**

Executive Motivational Influences

Subtask Generation and Implementation

*Action*

Appraisal · Action Control

*Modify or continue action*

− Actional outcome + *Modify goal*

Terminated Action · Achieved goal

**POST ACTIONAL PHASE**

Motivational Influences on Postactional Evaluation

Forming Causal Attributions

*Postactional evaluation*

Elaborating Standars and Strategies

Dismissing Intentions and Further Planning

(Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998)

**Figure 3: A Process Model of Motivation**

*Preactional-phase*

The Preactional phase has three subphases, which are *goal setting*, *intention formation* and *initiation of intention enactment.* Each of the three subphases has three antecedents. The first, goal setting, includes wishes/hopes/desires and opportunities, which is added

because in some cases the starting point of the motivational process is an emerging opportunity and not a desire within the individual. Dörnyei and Ottó make a distinction between the components of the goal setting antecedent and the ones that follow in the sense that they are not yet in a state of concrete reality. The first component to reach that state is the outcome of the goal setting process or the goal itself. They use the concept of goal in the way that it is the first concrete mental representation of a desired outcome and does not directly determine action.

An *intention* in the model involves commitment and differs in that way from a goal. A goal would count as any wish, desire and plan the individual might have at any given point of time while the intention is when an individual makes an actual resolution to follow through with a goal (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

*Commitment* is considered to be a very significant part in intention formation and goal setting. It is an important personal decision and adding commitment to a goal is a crucial step in the motivational process. Commitment, although significant, is not enough in itself to trigger action if an action plan for how to reach the goal is not made. According to Dörnyei and Ottó, an action plan is necessary for there to be any kind of act. It does not need to be fully completed before the act is initiated but before one is able start the action, there needs to be some kind of general action plan.

For intention to turn into action there are other factors that need to come into play. The right opportunity or start condition to start the action as well as means and resources are necessary conditions for issuing an action-launching impulse (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

### Actional-phase

When the preactional-phase has been completed, one moves onto the actional-phase, which is a very large step in the motivational process. Dörnyei and Ottó use the metaphor of "crossing the Rubicon" which means to pass a point of no return, where the individual has committed himself/herself to the act.

*Subtask generation and implementation, appraisal* and *action control* are the three processes that come into play in the actional-phase and affect the action itself. As mentioned before action plans are rarely complete at the initiation of action and subtasks or sub-goals are continuously generated or assigned throughout the course of action. The quality and setting of sub-goals and subtasks are, in fact, principle indicators of effective learning (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

*Appraisal* is a very wide term and refers to everything that affects the way that the individual continuously evaluates the stimuli coming from the environment and progress towards accomplishing his/her goal. Dörnyei and Ottó emphasize that a person's

appraisal of one level can easily be transferred to a broader or narrower level. For example if an individual has negative attitudes evoked by failure, he/she could transfer those to the whole course, class or even school.

The last process that affects the action itself is *action-control* or self-regulatory processes. This refers to a control of one's concentration regarding the intention and goal, and the protection of directed effort in the face of personal and/or environmental distractions. This is especially important in the context of education and specifically in education of children and teenagers in an academic classroom where research has shown a negative relationship between feeling motivated and being in an academic class (Schneider, Csikszentmihalyi & Knauth, 1995). Also, teachers, school authorities or parents dictate in many cases what goals should be met when they assign tasks for students. Thus, the assigned task becomes the actual goal and in these cases making a commitment could be seen as a process of compliance. In such cases, the student moves straight onto the actional-phase, jumping over the preactional-phase and the instigation force of the action needs to be built up during the actional-phase. The action-control process is one way of doing that.

With the combination of appraisal, action-control and subtask generating, the ongoing action will lead to an *actional-outcome*. This can either mean completion of the task/reaching one's goal or possibly arriving at a dead end and abandoning the action. Alternatively, if the motivational foundation of the initial wish/desire is strong enough, the individual might step back to *preactional-phase*, revise the goal and form a new intention, modify the strategies and subtasks and continue with the same intention or leave the action to be continued at a later time.

### *Postactional-phase*

The *postactional-phase* is reached when a goal has either been reached or the action terminated or paused for a longer period. At this phase the individual evaluates the accomplished action and contemplates possible conclusions and interpretations that can be transferred to future actions. Here the individual is no longer engaged in the action, which allows him/her to have a broader perspective of the whole process and its effect on his/her self-esteem. The individual compares his/her initial expectancies and action plans to the actual outcome and in that way forms *causal attributions* and evaluates what caused the process to lead to where it did.

During the post-actional phase the initial intentions have to be dismissed to give way for new intentions or goals. When an intention has been successfully accomplished it may

lead to another related or more challenging intention, in which case the process moves back into the preactional-phase and the process starts again (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). This would be very relevant in L2 learning where an accomplished goal, be it learning vocabulary, writing an essay, or acting in a play, would give students increased self-esteem and confidence to aim even higher and set themselves new goals.

The actional sequence described in the Process Model is fuelled by various motivational influences and the model would be incomplete without these influences. The influences can be both enhancing and inhibiting to the process, either by contributing to the successful implementation of the goal or by discouraging the actor. The following tables list the motivational factors or influences Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) designate as influential to the process model. Each table includes the motivational influences of one of the five action sequences composing the Process model. The first table lists the motivational factors that influence the goal setting process. The second table covers the factors specifically assessed in the *intention formation process.* The third table gives an overview of the motivational influences on the *initiation of intention enactment*: Crossing the Rubicon of action. The fourth table lists the *executive motivational influences* or the actual stimuli generated by the environment and the fifth table covers motivational influences on *post-actional evaluation*.

**Table 2: Goal setting process**

| Motivational factor | Notes |
|---|---|
| Subject values and norms | The individual's sense-of-self, with regards to past experiences. |
| Incentive value of goal-related action, outcomes, and consequences (instrumentality) | What the individual will gain from attaining his/her goal (in the L2 context). |
| Perceived potency of potential goal | How likely it is for the goal to be achieved? |
| Environmental stimuli; action possibilities; family expectations | In the school environment this plays a large role on students' goals. |
| Language/language-learning-related attitudes (integrativeness) | The attitudes the individual has towards the L2 and the L2 learning. |

(adapted from Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

**Table 3. Intention formation process**

| Motivational factor | Notes |
|---|---|
| Expectancy of success/perceived coping potential; Self-confidence, perceived goal difficulty, amount of expected support, L2 anxiety, perceived L2 competence, L2 contact, causal attributions | The greater the expectancy of success the higher the degree of positive motivation. |
| Relevance (personal and setting-related); cost-benefit and calculations | The individual chooses the most pressing and relevant of a number of goals and evaluates the cost (time, effort, fear etc.) needed. |
| Need for achievement and fear of failure | Opposite ends of a spectrum where those with a need for achievement work towards achieving their goal and those who fear failure work to avoid a negative outcome. |
| Degree of self-determination | To what degree does the learner take responsibility for his/her own learning or show autonomy? |
| Goal properties; Goal specificity, goal proximity, goal harmony/conflict, level of aspiration | How clear and elaborate are the goal specifications? |
| Availability of task opportunities and options | Are the opportunities presented to the learner or does s/he have to start from scratch to find them? |
| Learners beliefs about L2 learning; knowledge of learning strategies; domain-specific knowledge | Families, peer groups etc. can influence learners' predispositions about L2 learning. |
| Urgency; external demands; unique opportunity | If none of the above factors suffice to motivate a L2 student to learn, what might be needed is some kind of a push or urgency, e.g. an exam. |

(adapted from Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

**Table 4. Initiation of intention enactment: Crossing the Rubicon of action**

| Motivational factor | Notes |
|---|---|
| Action vs. state orientation | People who are action oriented are more likely to act their intentions out then those who are state oriented and tend to be hindered by various excuses. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Perceived behaviour control | The perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. |
| Distracting influences and obstacles; number and strength of competing action tendencies | Relatively strong intentions may be downgraded in terms of priority if there are powerful competing action tendencies available. |
| Perceived consequences for not acting | Shifting the focus from what it takes to reach a goal to what will happen if it is not reached. |

 (adapted from Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

**Table 5. Executive motivational influences**

| Motivational factor | Notes |
|---|---|
| Selective sensitivity to aspects of the environment | |
| Quality of internal model of reference; action schemata, performance standards | |
| Quality of learning experiences | Novelty, pleasantness, goal/need significance, coping potential, self and social image |
| Perceived contingent relationship between action and outcome; perceived progress; success, "flow" | Confidence will be higher if the student perceives a contingent path between his potential actions and the learning outcome. |
| Sense of self-determination/autonomy | The desire to be self-initiating and self-regulating of own actions, is an innate human need, which when met is intrinsically rewarding. |
| Teacher's and parents' motivational influences | Autonomy supporting vs. controlling, affiliative motive, direct socialisation of motivation; modelling, task presentation, and feedback |
| Performance appraisal, reward structure, classroom goal structure | Is the classroom structure competitive, individualistic, cooperative etc.? |
| Influence of learner group | Goal orientedness, cohesiveness, norm and role system, peer role modelling, classroom climate and school environment |
| Task conflict | Competing action tendencies; other distracting influences; availability of action alternatives |

| Costs involved and natural tendency | e.g. to lose sight of goal and get bored/tired of the activity |
|---|---|
| Knowledge of and skills in using self-regulatory strategies; | There are individual differences regarding knowledge base about self-regulatory learning; learning language strategies, goal setting strategies, action maintenance strategies. |
| Perceived consequence of action abandonment | Is the perceived negative effect of abandoning the action enough to keep going? |

(adapted from Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

**Table 6. Motivational influences on post-actional evaluation**

| Motivational factor | Notes |
|---|---|
| Attributional factors: Attributional styles and biases, prior knowledge about "scripted" events | Ability and effort (the most dominantly perceived causes in Western culture), task difficulty, luck, mood, family background, help or hindrance from others. |
| Self-concept beliefs: self-confidence/self-efficacy; self-competence; self-worth; prior performance history | Learners with high self-perceptions handle occasional failure much better then learners with low self-worth beliefs. |
| Evaluation/attributional cues, feedback | Feedback is the most featured attributional cue in the classroom context. |
| Action vs. state orientation | Disengagement from an intention and initiation of another, which can be a difficult step in the process. |

(adapted from Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

Dörnyei and Ottó do not claim that this model is without limitations. They list a few aspects that are not addressed in the model and need further investigation. Those factors include unconscious/irrational motives, simultaneous action, multiple goals and goal hierarchy and task-specific motivation. For them the Process Model of Motivation is an attempt to integrate models from several directions or sources and create a comprehensive scheme that covers the whole process of learner motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

# 6   Motivational strategies for teachers

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) claim that adopting a process model, such as the one they have compiled, offers considerable practical gains to teachers. The model offers a framework for motivational influences and lists them in a comprehensive manner to be used in the classroom as a structural basis for motivational strategies.

According to Dörnyei (2012) motivational strategies refer to "… those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect" (p. 28). He organizes them according to an approach that focuses on different phases of the Process model introduced earlier. He proposes four key units in his process-oriented organization of strategies. The first is to *create the basic motivational conditions* with appropriate teacher behaviours, a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom and cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

The second key unit is *generating the initial motivation* by enhancing the learners' L2 related values and attitudes, increasing their expectancy of success and their goal-orientedness, making the teaching materials relevant for the learners and creating realistic learners beliefs.

When the initial motivation has been established *maintaining and protecting that motivation* is important. This third key unit can be reached by making learning stimulating and enjoyable, presenting tasks in motivating ways, setting specific learner goals, protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence, and by allowing them to maintain a positive social image. To maintain the motivation the teacher should also create learner autonomy, promote self-motivating strategies and cooperation among the learners.

The last key unit in Dörnyei's process-oriented organization of strategies is *encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation* by promoting motivational attributions, providing motivational feedback, increasing learner satisfaction and offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner.

Dörnyei emphasizes the importance of not looking at these strategies as rock-solid golden rules that will work in any situation and with every group of students. He would rather that teachers look at them as suggestions that can be applied in situations where they are relevant. This is particularly important in the context of L2 learning since language learning situations worldwide vary greatly and it is unlikely that the same strategies will benefit different groups in different situations (Dörnyei, 2012).

Dörnyei and Csizér conducted a survey, among a large number of practitioners from a diverse context within L2 teaching, ranging from primary school instructors to university lecturers teaching English majors. The results showed the teacher's own behaviour to be the single most important motivational factor and that that tool was also one of the most under-utilized motivational tools in classroom practice (Dörnyei, 2012).

As well as presenting the Process model, Dörnyei, along with Csizér (1998) put forth *10 commandments for motivating learners* and based them on a survey of Hungarian foreign language teachers. These commandments discuss the most important things a foreign language teacher can do to stimulate intrinsic motivation among his students. Brown (2007) similarly presented *Questions for teachers regarding contribution to students' intrinsic drives* or a checklist to help foreign language teachers determine whether their efforts in the classroom are contributing to their students' intrinsic drives. The commandments and Browns questions have a lot in common which supports the notion that these are the most important things that L2 teachers should keep in mind in their classroom.

Students admire passion and commitment towards a subject matter, so when a teacher is able to show his/her own enthusiasm for his/her specialization area in a public manner the students are more likely to be infected by that enthusiasm and their motivation will be awakened. A teacher should share his/her own personal interest in the L2 and show students that s/he values the L2 learning as a meaningful experience that enriches his/her life (Dörnyei, 2012). Dörnyei's and Csizér's (1998) first commandment says that the teacher should set personal examples with his/her behaviour. Brown (2007) agrees and similarly puts on his checklist the question whether the teacher presents tasks in a positive and enthusiastic way.

One of the most potent factors that undermine L2 motivation is situational anxiety. A relaxed and pleasant environment is likely to decrease anxiety and thereby increase student motivation. A Learning Community cannot be established unless the students feel good and certain preconditions must be in place before motivational strategies can be effective (Brophy, 1998). Brophy (1998) talks about Maslow´s hierarchy in this context and implies that the student´s lower level needs such as security and safety must be met before the student is expected to learn new things. Students will not respond to motivational attempts if they feel afraid, resentful or focused on negative emotions. Dörnyei's and Csizér's (1998) second commandment is therefore to create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

The third commandment states that <u>the task should be presented properly</u> but Brown's (2007) first question on his checklist is whether the activity is presented in a positive and enthusiastic way (as also connected with the first commandment). Raising the students' interest in the topic at hand is a very important step in student motivation. Setting realistic goals and offering effective strategies to reach those goals is equally important and increases the likelihood that the students will be interested in the task and accomplishing it (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

<u>Developing a good relationship with the learners</u>, as well as being a generally good advice for teachers, is Dörnyei's and Csizér's fourth commandment. It is known by most teachers that students' learning effort is in many cases driven by the motive to please the teacher. Having a good relationship with students is one of the basic requirements in any modern approach to education (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

The fact that not the actual ability or competence but the perceived ability or competence determines the person's use of the L2 tells us that it is important to support the learners' self-confidence. A person who is quite confident but only knows a 100 words in the target language is more likely to put those words into use then a person with 1000 words but no self-confidence. The fifth commandment is about <u>increasing the learner's linguistic self-confidence,</u> with prompt motivational feedback and praise the teacher can have a great impact (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

<u>Making the language classes interesting</u> is the sixth commandment. The quality of the learners' subjective experience is an important contributor to motivation to learn, making the lesson or task interesting is therefore very important (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Brown (2007) addresses this issue in his checklist and asks if the activity evokes genuine interest and if it is of any relevance to the students' lives.

Dörnyei's and Csizér's seventh commandment is promoting learner autonomy. 'Autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners' (Ushioda, 1996, p. 2). Learner autonomy means that learners take responsibility for their own learning. They perceive their own successes and failures to be attributed to their own efforts and not controlled by outside factors (Dörnyei & Csizér, (1998). In his checklist, Brown (2007) asks if the students have some choice in activity or how to accomplish the task, if the activity gives the students a chance to discover e.g. rules for themselves, and if the activity contributes to the students' independence from the teacher. With these questions he is making sure that learner autonomy is incorporated in the task presented.

<u>Personalizing the learner process</u> is the eighth commandment (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). This refers to the course being personally relevant to the student. Have students

use their own experiences and share their own views and peer relations and group development will benefit as well as individual student's motivation. Similarly Brown's checklist includes the questions: Does the activity evoke genuine interest with the students? Is it relevant to their lives? (This point is also connected with Dörnyei's and Csizérs sixth commandment) and, does the activity encourage or force true interaction between students? (Brown, 2007).

Goal setting can have exceptional importance in stimulating L2 motivation and many of the current theories of motivation focus on goals related to the students' learning process and include goal dimensions. Goals should be specific, hard but achievable, accepted by the students and followed by a feedback on progress (Oxford and Shearing, 1994). Increasing the learners' goal-orientedness is Dörnyei's and Csizér's (1998) ninth commandment. Brown (2007) addresses this matter in his checklist by asking whether the students are aware of the purpose of the activity, whether the activity presents an appropriate challenge for the students and whether the students receive sufficient feedback on their work.

The last of the ten commandments is familiarizing learners with the target language culture (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). According to Gardner, language learning success is dependent on the learners' disposition towards the target language group or culture so introducing the learners to the culture of the target language country or even establishing some kind of connection with native speakers, is likely to increase students' motivation to learn the language.

Based on Brown's *Questions for teachers regarding contribution to students' intrinsic drives* and Dörnyei's and Csizér's *10 commandments for motivating learners*, the guidelines below, draw together and simplify the most important advice these experts have for L2 teachers on how they can work towards increasing their students' motivation. With this list of guidelines for L2 teachers the question of 'how can a teacher influence his students' motivation?' is answered.

**Guidelines to increase student motivation in the L2 classroom**

1. Be competent in your field. Set personal examples with your behaviour by showing your interest in the subject and positive attitudes towards the material.

2. Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom to decrease anxiety and thereby increase student motivation.

3. Develop a good relationship with the students by showing interest in them as individuals. Show the students that you care about their progress by giving feedback promptly and making yourself available to them.

4. Be aware of students various needs and environmental influences. Make the course relevant to them, having them share personal experiences and views.

5. Provide interesting and engaging activities and present them in a positive and enthusiastic way.

6. Present the tasks properly so that the students are aware of the purpose of the activity and can set realistic goals and use effective strategies to reach that goal. Goals should be specific, hard but achievable, and accepted by the students.

7. Make sure that the tasks match the students' level and provide challenge.

8. Give the students some choice in activities or how to accomplish the task. This will increase their learner autonomy and independence from the teacher and increase the likelihood of the student taking responsibility for their own learning.

9. Provide opportunities for individual and group work to encourage true interaction between students.

10. Make sure that the activity gives students a chance to discover for themselves.

11. Increase the students' linguistic self-confidence and decrease situational anxiety e.g. by giving constructive feedback, praise, and letting them know that making mistakes is all right.

12. Activate reflection on the skill levels related to the task by giving constructive feedback on the students' progress and moving focus away from grades and towards the experience of the task.

13. Introduce the target language culture and country to the students and try to establish some kind of connection with native speakers to increase motivation by promoting a positive attitude towards the target language.

## 6.1 Conclusion

There is widespread agreement among researchers and theorists regarding the importance of motivation in foreign and second language learning. They also agree that there are many factors that contribute to and affect student motivation. Motivation is influenced by internal as well as external factors and each student's reasons for learning another language are based on the individual's goals and attitudes.

The purpose of this paper was to explore the question of what influences students' language learning motivation. Many aspects of this issue have been discussed and it is clear that the influences on student motivation are abundant and diverse. The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been explained and discussed. Intrinsic motivation, where the learning is done for the enjoyment of the act itself, seems to have a greater effect on stimulating interest and developing proficiency than extrinsic motivation, where learning is done to gain something outside the activity, such as a grade. The development of students' intrinsic motivation should, therefore be prioritized by language teachers. In some cases, extrinsic rewards, if used correctly, can support the development of intrinsic motivation so extrinsic factors and rewards should not be disregarded all together.

Two types of motivational orientation, instrumental and integrative, introduced by Gardner, were also discussed. The motivation orientation refers to individuals' reasons for learning the language. Integrative orientation, where the target language is learnt for the purpose of integrating in some way into the target language community, is by some experts considered more likely to lead to language learning success or achievements. Instrumental orientation, where the language is learnt for another purpose, such as a future career or educational goals, has also been shown to be affective in some social situations in helping students reach their language learning goals.

The other question asked in this paper was whether teachers could influence student motivation and in what way. According to leading experts and their research, teacher behaviour and attitudes are the most important factors influencing student motivation. So yes, teachers can certainly influence their students' attitudes toward the target

language and their willingness to focus on and work towards their language learning goals.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do" is a quote by Sir Winston Churchill and captures the material of this paper quite well. If a student is interested in the task at hand, enjoys the activities, has positive attitudes towards the target language, has clear goals and self-confidence, and is relaxed in the classroom s/he is much more likely to succeed in reaching his/her goals. It is the teacher's job to create an environment where students experience this love of what they are doing. With the list of guidelines presented in this paper s/he can be one step closer to this goal.

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