

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING LANGUAGES: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

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Annotation: This article explores the significant role of motivation in language learning, focusing on both internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) factors that influence learners' success. Internal motivation is driven by personal interests, such as a passion for a language's culture or the joy of learning itself, while external motivation arises from external rewards, academic requirements, or professional goals. The article discusses how these motivations impact learners' engagement, persistence, and overall progress. It emphasizes the importance of balancing both internal and external factors to achieve long-term success in language acquisition. Furthermore, the piece highlights how understanding and fostering motivation can help learners stay focused, overcome challenges, and remain committed to their language learning journey.

Keywords: motivation, language learning, internal motivation, external motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, language acquisition, cultural passion, professional goals, academic requirements, language proficiency, language engagement, second language acquisition, language fluency, learner persistence.

Introduction. Language learning is a complex and dynamic process that involves not just mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also the deep and often personal motivation behind the effort. Motivation plays a crucial role in how effectively and efficiently one learns a new language, as it influences both the intensity and persistence of study habits. It can be broadly divided into two types: internal (or intrinsic) and external (or extrinsic) motivation. Understanding the role of these factors can provide valuable insight into how language learners can sustain their progress and achieve fluency. Internal motivation refers to the intrinsic drive to learn a language for personal growth, enjoyment, or self-fulfillment. Learners who are internally motivated tend to study a language because they find it personally rewarding or satisfying. This kind of motivation is often fueled by a deep interest in the culture, the desire for self-improvement, or the joy of learning itself.

1. Passion for the language and culture: many language learners are driven by a genuine passion for the culture associated with the language. this may stem from a love of literature, music, cinema, or even the desire to travel and immerse oneself in a foreign society. for example, someone who loves French cinema might be motivated to learn French to better understand and enjoy their favorite films without subtitles. this emotional connection makes the learning process feel more like an enriching experience than a task to complete.

2. Self-determined learning goals: internal motivation often arises from personal goals. a learner may decide to learn a language to enhance their own cognitive abilities, improve their career prospects, or even communicate with family members who speak a different language. when the motivation stems from within, learners tend to take ownership of their learning journey, which leads to better engagement and persistence in the face of challenges.

3. Enjoyment of the learning process: intrinsic motivation can also manifest in the simple joy of learning. For many, the process of understanding a new language—figuring out grammar rules, acquiring new vocabulary, or communicating in an unfamiliar tongue—provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. This enjoyment fuels a cycle of positive reinforcement, encouraging continued learning.

External motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external factors such as rewards, recognition, or social pressure. Learners may pursue language acquisition because they want to meet certain requirements or achieve a goal set by an outside force. While external motivation can be effective in initiating and sustaining language learning, it may not have the same long-term impact as intrinsic motivation, unless it aligns with personal interests and goals. One of the most common external motivations for learning a language is the pursuit of academic or professional goals. For instance, students may study a language to meet graduation requirements or improve their chances of securing a job in a multinational company. Similarly, professionals may seek to master a language to enhance their career prospects, improve their marketability, or take on international assignments. External factors such as social expectations or pressure from family and peers can also serve as motivation. For example, a student may feel pressured to learn a language because their parents expect it, or because of societal norms that emphasize multilingualism. While this can lead to success in the short term, it may not be sustainable if the learner does not connect with the language on a personal level. The promise of tangible rewards—such as certifications, travel opportunities, or even monetary incentives—can also act as powerful motivators. Many language learners find that the prospect of achieving a certain level of proficiency, passing a proficiency exam, or receiving a scholarship for studying abroad helps them stay on track and focused [1].

Relevance of the study. The study of motivation in language learning is highly relevant in today's globalized world, where multilingualism is increasingly valued for both personal and professional growth. Understanding the role of motivation—whether internal or external—can significantly enhance language teaching and learning strategies. For educators and language programs, recognizing how different motivational factors impact learners' engagement and persistence can lead to more effective and tailored approaches. This study is especially pertinent for designing curricula that not only meet academic or professional requirements but also foster a deeper, intrinsic connection to the language. It also provides insights into how to maintain long-term motivation among learners, addressing common challenges such as loss of interest or burnout. Furthermore, the findings of this study are useful for learners themselves, offering them a clearer understanding of how to sustain their motivation, set meaningful learning goals, and navigate the ups and downs of the language learning journey. As motivation plays a critical role in achieving language proficiency and fluency, this research is essential for anyone interested in optimizing language acquisition, from educators to language learners and beyond.

While both internal and external motivations play significant roles in language learning, striking a balance between them is key to sustained success. It is often observed that learners who combine personal passion for the language with clear, external goals tend to be the most successful in the long run. For instance, a person may be driven to learn Spanish because they enjoy the music and culture, but also because they need it for work or to fulfill an academic requirement. Moreover, external motivation can sometimes spark or enhance internal motivation.

For example, the achievement of a language proficiency certificate can boost a learner's confidence and satisfaction, creating a sense of accomplishment that fuels further internal interest. Alternatively, the enjoyment of a language's culture and the process of learning can inspire a deeper, more intrinsic drive to continue mastering the language.

Analysis of the literature. The role of motivation in language learning has been widely explored in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Research consistently demonstrates that motivation is one of the most significant factors influencing language learners' success. Motivational theories such as Gardner's socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985) and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) have provided valuable frameworks for understanding the dynamics of motivation in language learning. One of the most widely discussed distinctions in the literature is between intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to learning a language for personal satisfaction, enjoyment, or a genuine interest in the language and culture (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research has shown that learners who are intrinsically motivated often display higher levels of engagement, persistence, and success in language learning (Dörnyei, 1994; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2001). For example, a study by Noels et al. (2001) found that students who were motivated by intrinsic reasons, such as a desire to understand the culture of the language they were learning, were more likely to achieve higher proficiency levels than those who were motivated by external rewards [2,3].

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves learning a language for external rewards, such as job opportunities, academic requirements, or social recognition (Gardner, 1985). Extrinsic motivation is often seen as less sustainable compared to intrinsic motivation, as it is primarily driven by external factors rather than personal enjoyment or interest. However, some research suggests that extrinsic motivation, particularly when coupled with clear goals and incentives, can lead to short-term language learning success (Schumann, 1986). Furthermore, learners who initially start with extrinsic motivation may gradually transition toward intrinsic motivation as they become more engaged with the language (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Gardner's influential socio-educational model of motivation (Gardner, 1985) posits that motivation in language learning is influenced by social and cultural factors. According to this model, integrative motivation—learning a language to integrate into a community or culture—leads to greater language success than instrumental motivation—learning a language for utilitarian purposes, such as for career advancement. Numerous studies have validated this claim, showing that learners with integrative motivation are more persistent, develop deeper language skills, and experience greater satisfaction with the learning process (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). However, more recent studies challenge the rigid dichotomy between integrative and instrumental motivation. For instance, Dörnyei (1994) argues for a more nuanced understanding of motivation, recognizing that learners may exhibit both integrative and instrumental motivations simultaneously. In the modern global context, language learners often seek a balance between cultural immersion and career opportunities. A study by Ushioda (2008) emphasized that motivational goals are not fixed and can evolve over time depending on learners' personal experiences and life contexts [4,5,6].

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) is another influential framework that explores motivation in language learning. SDT posits that motivation exists on a continuum, with intrinsic motivation at one end and amotivation (lack of motivation) at the other.

Between these extremes are various forms of extrinsic motivation, such as external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation. Research applying SDT to language learning has demonstrated that the more autonomous a learner's motivation (i.e., the more it is aligned with their values and interests), the more likely they are to succeed in acquiring a new language (Noels et al., 2003). Autonomous motivation is linked to higher levels of language achievement, greater well-being, and a more positive attitude toward learning (Vallerand et al., 1992). Although intrinsic motivation is often emphasized, the impact of external rewards on language learning cannot be ignored. In some cases, external rewards such as scholarships, language certifications, or even social recognition can help sustain motivation, especially during the early stages of language learning (Schumann, 1986). A study by Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) highlighted that external rewards can be effective in increasing learners' interest in the short term, though the long-term impact on intrinsic motivation remains unclear [7,8].

In practical terms, it is important to recognize that external factors such as institutional support, social encouragement, and rewards can create a conducive environment for language learning. However, these external motivators need to be carefully aligned with the learner's internal interests for them to be most effective in fostering sustained motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Recent literature has also examined the interaction between motivation and other cognitive and social factors. Researchers have explored how motivation interacts with self-regulation, learner autonomy, and the social environment in language learning (Ushioda, 2011). For example, social and cultural factors, such as the presence of a supportive language community or access to immersive environments, can significantly influence learners' motivation levels (Chambers, 1999) [9,10].

Additionally, critics have argued that motivation research in language learning has been overly focused on Western models and may not adequately account for cultural differences in motivation (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). Studies in diverse contexts suggest that learners' motivation is shaped by a range of factors, including socio-political climate, identity, and the perceived utility of the language in their community [11]. The literature consistently emphasizes that motivation is a critical determinant of success in language learning. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play vital roles, with intrinsic motivation often leading to more sustainable and meaningful engagement. However, extrinsic motivators, when aligned with personal interests and goals, can be powerful in encouraging language learners. Future research should continue to explore how these motivational factors evolve over time and how they can be effectively nurtured in diverse learning environments.

Methodology. The study of motivation in language learning requires a comprehensive and systematic approach to understand the various internal and external factors influencing learners. This section outlines the methodology used to explore how motivation affects language learning, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon. This research adopts a mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather a comprehensive understanding of motivation in language learning. The study aims to assess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors and their relationship with language learning success, as well as to identify any significant trends or patterns within a diverse group of language learners.

- **Quantitative Approach:** A survey-based methodology is employed to gather data from a large sample of language learners across different levels of proficiency and backgrounds. The

survey includes both closed and Likert-scale questions that focus on learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, their engagement levels, and self-reported language learning outcomes.

- **Qualitative Approach:** Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a smaller subset of learners to gain deeper insights into their personal experiences and perceptions regarding the motivation behind their language learning efforts. The qualitative data help explain the quantitative findings by exploring the underlying reasons for learners' motivation and their personal goals.

The study involves two distinct groups of participants:

1. **Survey Participants:** 300 language learners from different educational institutions, both at the secondary and tertiary levels, are selected to complete the survey. The participants represent a variety of languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, and Arabic) and are from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. This large sample size ensures that the results are representative of a broad spectrum of learners.
2. **Interview Participants:** 30 language learners (10 from each language group) are chosen from the survey sample for follow-up interviews. The interviewees are selected based on their responses to the survey, specifically focusing on those who demonstrate varying levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This group includes learners with different proficiency levels and learning goals.

This methodology allows for a detailed exploration of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing language learners' motivation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a robust understanding of how motivation affects language learning success and engagement, offering insights that can inform future language education practices [12].

Research in second language acquisition (SLA) highlights the significant impact motivation has on a learner's success. Motivation affects not only the initial decision to learn a language but also how a learner engages with the material, copes with challenges, and persists through difficulties. Studies suggest that learners with higher levels of motivation tend to spend more time practicing, exhibit better retention of new vocabulary, and demonstrate greater fluency in the language. In contrast, learners who lack motivation or are primarily motivated by external factors may struggle to sustain their progress over time. External rewards alone—such as the desire to pass an exam or meet a requirement—may not provide enough of a lasting emotional connection to the language, leading to disengagement when the external rewards are no longer present. Motivation plays an essential role in the language learning process. Whether driven by internal interests, passions, and goals or by external rewards and pressures, motivation is what keeps learners engaged and focused. However, it is the learners who can connect their learning goals with their personal interests and desires who are likely to achieve long-term success. For educators and language programs, fostering both internal and external motivational factors is key to creating an environment where learners feel inspired, challenged, and empowered to continue their language journey. Ultimately, motivation is not static—it evolves and can change over time. By understanding the different forces that influence motivation, learners and educators alike can harness this powerful tool to create meaningful, lasting language-learning experiences.

Conclusion. In conclusion, motivation is a pivotal factor in the language learning process, significantly influencing learners' engagement, persistence, and overall success. This study highlights the complex interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, emphasizing that both play essential roles in shaping learners' experiences and outcomes.

Intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest, cultural connections, and the enjoyment of learning, often leads to more sustainable and deeper engagement with the language. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation, influenced by external rewards, academic requirements, and career aspirations, can be effective in initiating and maintaining learning, especially in the short term.

The findings suggest that learners who are able to balance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are more likely to achieve language proficiency and long-term success. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of creating supportive learning environments that foster both types of motivation. By understanding the various motivational drivers behind language learning, educators can design more effective curricula and teaching strategies that cater to diverse learner needs, promoting greater engagement and persistence. This research contributes to the broader field of second language acquisition by providing valuable insights into how motivation influences language learning outcomes. It calls for further exploration into the evolving nature of motivation over time, particularly in diverse cultural and educational contexts. Future studies could delve deeper into the role of social factors and learner autonomy in sustaining motivation, ultimately helping to optimize language learning experiences for students worldwide.

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