
THE ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: This review explores various research studies on different types of learning motivation in the context of foreign language acquisition. By analyzing previous literature on the subject, it becomes evident that motivation plays a crucial role in foreign language learning, significantly influencing learners' strategies and overall achievements. Therefore, this review examines how different types of language learners are influenced by various forms of motivation and identifies the most common motivational factors among them. Additionally, numerous studies indicate a connection between motivation and demotivation, which should not be overlooked. Consequently, this review also organizes and discusses previous research on four key factors that contribute to demotivation in foreign language learners.

Keywords: motivation, intrinsic, extrinsic, demotivation.

Introduction

Motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process of any subject, and this is especially evident in foreign language acquisition. Understanding the concept of foreign language motivation and how it influences learning is essential. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, motivation refers to the reason behind an individual's actions or behavior. While this definition is straightforward, the concept of motivation itself is more complex and requires deeper discussion.

Main body

Motivation is generally categorized into two main types:

Intrinsic motivation (also known as internal motivation): This type of motivation arises from an individual's natural tendencies and personal interest.

Extrinsic motivation (also known as external motivation): This refers to motivation driven by external factors, such as rewards or social expectations.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation contribute to the process of foreign language learning. However, in contrast to motivation, there is also demotivation, which refers to the reasons that discourage individuals from engaging in an activity. This review aims to examine various studies on the impact of these motivational factors, along with other related influences, on foreign language learning.

Extrinsic Motivation

Research on Iranian English learners also indicates that many beginners and intermediate learners report being primarily driven by extrinsic motivation in their language learning process. This suggests that external factors play a crucial role in motivating novice and intermediate learners [3]. However, different learners may have varying extrinsic motivations depending on their proficiency level. For novice learners in Iran, common extrinsic motivations include employment opportunities and the necessity of communication. Intermediate learners, on the other hand, are

often driven by aspirations of achieving success, while factors such as better job prospects and improved communication with native speakers also hold significant value for them [3]. Advanced learners typically associate their extrinsic motivation with academic goals or migration. However, it is important to note that employment requirements may also continue to influence them [3]. Additionally, a study by Wang et al. found that extrinsic motivation influences learners across different proficiency levels in similar ways [4]. This explains why many English learners share common extrinsic motivators, such as career advancement, higher education, financial benefits, travel, success, and social interaction [4]. Their research also highlights that intrinsic motivation varies more significantly between learners at different proficiency levels compared to extrinsic motivation [4].

Iranian English learners serve as a representative case for foreign language learners in general. This review, therefore, concludes that extrinsic motivation is more dominant in the early stages of language learning, while intrinsic motivation plays a more substantial role as learners progress. Beginners are primarily influenced by practical factors such as communication and job-related requirements, whereas intermediate learners are more driven by personal success and broader opportunities [3]. Although advanced learners are largely guided by intrinsic motivation, they still experience external influences, particularly related to academic goals or migration, where proficiency in a foreign language is essential for employment and communication in a native-speaking environment [3].

Furthermore, Wang et al.'s research confirms that intrinsic motivation is the key factor differentiating learners at various proficiency levels, whereas the impact of extrinsic motivation remains relatively consistent [4]. Their findings suggest that the more proficient a learner becomes, the stronger the role of intrinsic motivation, while extrinsic motivation gradually becomes less influential. Conversely, learners with lower proficiency levels tend to rely more heavily on extrinsic motivation [4].

Conclusion

This review has explored intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in foreign language learning, demonstrating how these motivational factors function and identifying common types of motivation among different learners. As discussed, individuals may be driven by either intrinsic or extrinsic factors, or a combination of both. While extrinsic motivation is common among all learners, intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in distinguishing advanced learners from novice and intermediate learners.

Additionally, demotivation is an important factor that should not be overlooked. Learners must be mindful of potential demotivating influences and take steps to prevent them from hindering their language-learning progress.

However, this review acknowledges certain limitations. First, motivation has been classified into intrinsic and extrinsic types based on its source, but other classifications also exist. For example, motivation can be categorized as positive versus negative or as integrative versus instrumental, depending on different criteria. Furthermore, focusing primarily on Iranian English learners presents a somewhat narrow perspective on the broader concept of foreign language motivation.

Despite these limitations, this review effectively summarizes key research on motivation in foreign language learning. Readers will gain insights into the different motivational factors driving them and recognize the importance of avoiding demotivation. As an educator, I hope that teachers will carefully consider their teaching strategies to minimize demotivation and enhance motivation in their students after reading this review.

References :

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