



MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A NEEDS-ORIENTED APPROACH

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Abstract: *Motivation plays a vital role in second and foreign language acquisition. It influences not only the learners' desire to begin learning a language but also their persistence and overall success in achieving proficiency. This article explores the importance of motivation in language learning with a particular focus on needs-oriented approaches. Drawing upon key theories and classroom-based practices, the paper examines how identifying and responding to students' specific needs can significantly enhance motivation and learning outcomes.*

Introduction

In the realm of language education, motivation has long been recognized as a critical factor that determines the success or failure of language learners. Without motivation, even the most intellectually capable learners may find it difficult to progress. Conversely, highly motivated learners often surpass expectations, overcoming obstacles and maintaining long-term commitment to language study. Needs-oriented motivation in language learning is based on the premise that learners are more engaged when their individual goals, interests, and expectations are acknowledged and addressed. Rather than imposing a uniform curriculum on a diverse group of students, this approach promotes personalized learning experiences that align with their academic, professional, or personal needs.

Theoretical Background Several theories of motivation provide a foundation for understanding why a needs-oriented approach is effective. Among the most influential is Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation stems



from internal desires, such as enjoyment or personal growth, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards like grades or job opportunities. According to SDT, learners are more likely to succeed when they feel autonomous, competent, and related to the learning environment. Another relevant theory is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which suggests that individuals are motivated to fulfill a series of hierarchical needs, from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. Language learning can be more effectively facilitated when instructors identify where learners are on this hierarchy and tailor their teaching accordingly. For instance, a student learning English to secure employment abroad will require different motivational strategies than a student studying for academic purposes.

Identifying Learners' Needs The first step in implementing a needs-oriented approach is conducting a needs analysis. This process involves gathering information about learners' backgrounds, goals, and expectations. Methods may include questionnaires, interviews, diagnostic assessments, and informal discussions. The data obtained help instructors develop lessons that are relevant, practical, and engaging. For example, a group of adult learners preparing for international employment may benefit from workplace English, resume writing, and interview preparation activities. Meanwhile, university students majoring in tourism might be more motivated by role-playing scenarios, cultural awareness discussions, and vocabulary related to customer service. Recognizing that learners' needs may evolve over time is also important. Continuous feedback and reassessment allow teachers to adapt their instruction to ensure sustained motivation.

Classroom Strategies for Needs-Oriented Motivation Implementing a needs-oriented approach requires flexible and student-centered teaching strategies. Here are several effective practices:

1. **Personalized Content** Tailoring lessons to students' interests makes learning more meaningful. If learners are passionate about sports, integrating sports-related topics into reading, listening, and speaking activities can boost engagement.
2. **Goal Setting and Reflection** Encouraging learners to set personal goals and reflect on their progress enhances intrinsic motivation. Teachers can facilitate this by using



language portfolios, progress charts, or self-assessment checklists.

3. Task-Based Learning Designing authentic tasks that simulate real-life communication needs increases learners' sense of purpose. Projects, role plays, interviews, and problem-solving tasks make language use more applicable and motivating.

4. Autonomy Support Giving students choices in topics, materials, or partners fosters a sense of ownership. Even small options—such as choosing between two writing prompts—can significantly impact motivation.

5. Cultural Relevance For EFL learners, connecting language content to their cultural background or current societal trends helps make the learning process relatable and respectful of their identity.

Challenges and Considerations

While the benefits of a needs-oriented approach are clear, there are challenges that educators may face. In large or mixed-level classrooms, addressing every individual's needs can be demanding. Moreover, institutional curricula and standardized assessments may limit teachers' flexibility.

To overcome these challenges, a balanced approach is recommended. Teachers can integrate needs-oriented methods within the framework of the existing syllabus by using differentiated instruction and mixed-ability group work. Professional development and institutional support also play a key role in equipping teachers with the tools to successfully apply this approach.

Conclusion

Motivation is not a fixed trait but a dynamic quality that can be nurtured through responsive and student-centered teaching. A needs-oriented approach recognizes the individuality of each learner and adapts language instruction to suit their goals, preferences, and circumstances. By conducting needs analyses, employing personalized strategies, and fostering autonomy, educators can cultivate a classroom environment where motivation thrives and meaningful language learning takes place.



In today's diverse and fast-changing educational context, prioritizing learners' needs is no longer a luxury but a necessity. As language educators, embracing this approach not only enhances students' academic performance but also empowers them to become confident and independent communicators in a globalized world.

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