



## **THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15176848>

**Abstract:** *Motivation is a fundamental factor in the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL). It significantly influences the learners' ability to acquire and retain linguistic skills, shaping their overall language proficiency. Research indicates that motivation can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic forms, both of which contribute to learning success in different ways. The study of motivation in EFL learning is essential because it determines students' engagement, persistence, and overall attitude toward language acquisition. This paper explores the impact of motivation on EFL learners by examining various theoretical frameworks, real-life examples, and pedagogical implications. The findings suggest that motivation not only enhances language learning outcomes but also affects students' self-efficacy and long-term interest in English. Understanding the role of motivation provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers in designing more effective teaching strategies.*

**Keywords:** *motivation, English as a foreign language, language acquisition, learning strategies, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation.*

**Introduction.** Motivation plays a crucial role in the successful acquisition of a foreign language. It serves as the driving force that encourages learners to invest time and effort in developing their language skills. Without motivation, students may struggle to engage with the learning process, leading to poor academic performance and a lack of confidence. In contrast, motivated learners display higher engagement, perseverance, and willingness to explore different aspects of the language. Given its significance, motivation is widely regarded as one of the most critical factors affecting language acquisition outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

This paper investigates how motivation influences EFL learners by discussing its theoretical foundations, real-world applications, and pedagogical implications. By analyzing the importance of motivation in language learning, we can develop better strategies to enhance students' engagement and overall proficiency in English.

A highly motivated learner is more likely to achieve fluency in English compared to someone who lacks motivation. The primary reason for this is that

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<sup>1</sup> Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.



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motivation fosters persistence, resilience, and a positive attitude toward learning. Students who are motivated tend to set clear learning goals and actively seek opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. This eagerness leads to improved language proficiency, increased self-confidence, and a greater sense of achievement.

Several studies support the idea that motivation significantly impacts second language acquisition. Dörnyei emphasized that students with high motivation tend to develop better learning strategies, engage more actively, and sustain their efforts for an extended period.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, motivation is directly linked to students' ability to overcome difficulties, remain consistent, and seek out additional learning resources. For instance, research has shown that highly motivated students are more likely to participate in extracurricular language activities, such as watching English-language movies, reading books, or engaging in online conversations with native speakers. These activities provide exposure to authentic language use, which significantly enhances listening and comprehension skills. In contrast, learners with low motivation may rely solely on classroom instruction, limiting their opportunities for real-world practice and slowing their progress in language acquisition.

One of the reasons motivation is essential in learning English is its direct impact on learners' engagement levels. When students are motivated, they participate more actively in classroom activities, engage in meaningful conversations, and take responsibility for their learning process. A motivated student embraces challenges, seek out opportunities, and push themselves to achieve proficiency in English.

Motivation can be classified into two primary types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.<sup>3</sup> Learners who are intrinsically motivated study English because they enjoy it. They find pleasure in learning new words, understanding grammatical structures, and communicating with others. For example, an intrinsically motivated student may enjoy reading English novels, watching English movies, or exploring different aspects of English culture simply because they find it interesting. In contrast, extrinsically motivated students learn English for external rewards such as high grades, career advancement, or passing an English proficiency exam. Although this type of motivation may not always foster a deep love for the language, it still plays an important role in driving students to achieve success in English learning.

<sup>2</sup> Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Springer Science & Business Media.



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Both types of motivation contribute to a student's overall progress. However, research suggests that intrinsic motivation leads to deeper learning and greater long-term retention.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, educators should aim to foster intrinsic motivation by creating an engaging and supportive learning environment.

Another reason why motivation is significant is its role in overcoming challenges. Learning a new language involves difficulties such as understanding complex grammar rules, expanding vocabulary, and improving pronunciation. Motivated students view these challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles. For example, a student struggling with English pronunciation may find it difficult to distinguish between similar sounds. A motivated learner will actively seek resources to improve, such as listening to podcasts, practicing phonetic exercises, or engaging in conversation with fluent speakers. On the other hand, a less motivated student may feel discouraged and avoid speaking English altogether.

Research has shown that learners who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to persevere when faced with linguistic difficulties.<sup>5</sup> They engage in self-directed learning, utilize available resources, and practice consistently, ultimately improving their English proficiency. Moreover, motivation affects how students handle feedback and correction. A highly motivated learner sees feedback as a tool for improvement, whereas a student with low motivation may view it as criticism. Teachers who provide positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, and encouragement help sustain students' motivation levels and promote a growth mindset.

Motivation also fosters a long-term commitment to language learning. Unlike other academic subjects, language acquisition is a continuous process that requires dedication over an extended period. Students who remain motivated are more likely to continue improving their English skills even after formal education. For instance, professionals who use English in their careers often continue expanding their knowledge through online courses, professional development programs, and international communication. They may seek advanced certifications, engage in business English training, or participate in international conferences to refine their language proficiency.

This sustained motivation ensures lifelong language competence and practical application in real-world scenarios. In contrast, students who lack motivation may

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<sup>4</sup> Ushioda, E. (2011). *Motivating learners to speak as themselves: Identity, motivation, and autonomy in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.



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stop learning after meeting a specific requirement, such as passing an exam. This lack of continuous exposure can lead to language attrition, where proficiency diminishes over time due to a lack of use.

To maintain long-term motivation, educators should encourage students to set realistic goals and track their progress. Small achievements—such as mastering a set of vocabulary words each week—can boost confidence and reinforce motivation. Additionally, integrating technology, such as language-learning apps and interactive multimedia resources, can make English learning more engaging and enjoyable.

**Conclusion.** Motivation is one of the most crucial factors in learning English as a foreign language. It influences engagement, persistence, self-confidence, and long-term commitment to language acquisition. Motivated learners are more likely to participate actively, embrace challenges, and seek out additional learning opportunities, all of which lead to higher proficiency levels.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play important roles in EFL learning, but fostering intrinsic motivation results in greater long-term success. Teachers and educators should implement effective motivational strategies, such as providing meaningful feedback, using engaging materials, setting achievable goals, and incorporating interactive learning methods to sustain students' interest in learning English. Ultimately, motivation is what drives learners to persevere, progress, and achieve fluency. By understanding its significance and applying effective teaching techniques, we can ensure that students remain inspired and dedicated to their journey toward mastering the English language.

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