

Exploring Motivation: Its Role and Impact in Learning English as a Second Language

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Abstrak

Studi ini secara mendalam mengkaji motivasi sebagai elemen kunci dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua atau ESL (English as Second Language), dengan melihatnya bukan sebagai sesuatu yang statis, melainkan sebagai fenomena yang terus bergerak dan memiliki banyak sisi. Penulis menggunakan berbagai aspek motivasi, termasuk motivasi intrinsik yang muncul dari kesukaan dan ketertarikan seseorang terhadap proses belajar serta motivasi ekstrinsik yang didorong oleh faktor luar seperti penghargaan atau tekanan. Motivasi merupakan faktor kunci untuk menjelaskan keberhasilan atau kegagalan dari aktivitas yang sulit. Memiliki dampak yang mendalam pada keterlibatan dan ketekunan pelajar, ketahanan mereka dalam menghadapi tantangan linguistik. Selain itu, motivasi membentuk penerapan strategi pembelajaran yang efektif, di mana pelajar yang sangat termotivasi lebih cenderung mencari peluang untuk berlatih, memanfaatkan sumber daya yang ada, dan berpartisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan komunikatif. Yang terpenting, motivasi merupakan prediktor kuat dari keseluruhan kemahiran serta pencapaian ESL, memengaruhi keakuratan tata bahasa, perolehan kosakata, serta kompetensi komunikatif dan kemauan untuk berkomunikasi. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor motivasi yang memengaruhi pembelajaran ESL, menganalisis peran motivasi dalam keterlibatan dan strategi pelajar, serta menilai hubungan antara motivasi dan pencapaian bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode wawancara untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif dari pelajar ESL untuk memahami pengalaman dan motivasi mereka, serta tinjauan pustaka untuk mengkaji sumber yang relevan terkait motivasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa, dengan harapan memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang peran motivasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Kedua, Belajar Bahasa Inggris, Motivasi.

Abstract

This study thoroughly examines motivation as a key element in learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Viewing it not as something static, but as a constantly evolving phenomenon with many facets. The researchers use various aspects of motivation, including intrinsic motivation that arises from a person's enjoyment and interest in the learning process, as well as extrinsic motivation that is driven by external factors such as rewards or pressure. Motivation is a key factor in explaining the success or failure of challenging activities. It has a profound impact on learners' engagement and perseverance, as well as their resilience in facing linguistic challenges. Additionally, motivation shapes the application of effective learning strategies, with highly motivated learners more likely to seek opportunities to practice, utilize available resources, and actively participate in communicative activities. Most importantly, motivation is a strong predictor of overall proficiency and ESL achievement, influencing grammatical accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, communicative competence, and willingness to communicate. This article aims to identify the motivational factors that influence ESL learning, analyze the role of motivation in student engagement and strategies, and assess the relationship between motivation and English as a second language achievement. This study uses interviews to collect qualitative data from ESL learners to understand their experiences and motivations, as well as a literature review to examine relevant sources related to motivation in language learning, with the hope of providing deep insights into the role of motivation in learning English as a second language.

Keywords: Learning English ,Motivation, Second Language.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a critical factor in the process of learning and teaching, defined as an internal drive that compels individuals to act in order to achieve specific goals (Harmer, 2001). In the context of language acquisition, particularly when learning a second language, motivation plays an essential role in determining success or failure. A second language is characterized by its institutional and social significance within a community, serving as a recognized means of communication among its members, many of whom may speak a different mother tongue (Thohir, 2017). The success of second language learning, especially in classroom environments, is significantly influenced by students' levels of intrinsic motivation (Kaboody, 2013). Learning English as a Second Language (ESL) has become increasingly important globally, as it serves as the primary means of communication across diverse cultures. As globalization continues to shape interactions among people, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a key skill that opens doors to educational and professional opportunities. However, motivation is not merely a drive to learn; it encompasses various dimensions that can evolve over time, affecting learners' engagement and persistence. Research has shown that motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is a drive that arises from within the individual to achieve certain goals while Extrinsic motivation is an impulse that arises from the external environment that can influence individuals to do something (Rismayanti et al., 2023) Intrinsic motivation arises from a learner's genuine interest and enjoyment in the subject matter, fostering a love for the language itself. This type of motivation can lead to a deeper engagement with the learning material, as students who are intrinsically motivated often seek to explore and understand the language beyond the classroom setting. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors such as rewards, social pressures, and the desire for recognition. While both types of motivation are vital, they can have different impacts on how learners approach their studies and overcome challenges. In this study, we aim to examine motivation as a key element in ESL learning, viewing it as a dynamic process rather than a static attribute. By understanding how motivation shifts in response to various experiences, challenges, and successes, we can better support learners in their language acquisition journey. Importantly, the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can

significantly shape learning outcomes. For instance, a learner may initially be motivated by the desire to pass an exam (extrinsic), but over time, they may develop a love for the language (intrinsic), thereby enhancing their overall learning experience. The research will focus on analyzing the specific ways in which motivation influences learning strategies and outcomes. By gathering qualitative data through interviews with ESL learners, we hope to capture their personal experiences and perspectives on what motivates them to learn English. Additionally, a comprehensive literature review will help identify existing theories and findings related to motivation in second language acquisition. This dual approach ensures that we not only explore learners' lived experiences but also situate our findings within the broader academic discourse. Through this research, we aim to provide deeper insights into the role of motivation in learning English as a second language. By illuminating the factors that contribute to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, we hope to inform more effective teaching practices and learner support systems. Ultimately, a nuanced understanding of motivation can lead to enhanced engagement, improved learning outcomes, and a more fulfilling language learning experience for ESL learners. As we navigate the complexities of motivation, this study aspires to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of language education, fostering a more enriching environment for learners worldwide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is a key factor for explaining the success or failure of any difficult activity. We know that success in a task is due to the fact that someone is motivated. Language proficiency improves when an intense and ongoing engagement with the language is fostered by intrinsic motivation (Dorneyei, 2008). It is easy in second language learning to state that a learner will be successful with the right motivation. Such claims supported by numerous studies and experiments in human learning. Motivation refers to the combination of attempt plus desire to obtain the objective of learning the language plus desirable attitudes towards learning the language. Motivation provides learners with an aim and direction to follow. Therefore, it has a key role in language learning. Due to the lack of enough motivation, some difficulties may happen for learners. Without desire to learn, it is very difficult for learners to gain effective learning (Chang, 2010). Motivation is one of the important factors which is responsible to students' performances in learning a language. In this term, it is English (Christianto & Karin, 2019). Motivation and affective factors play a significant role in

ESL learning, and personal experiences and perspectives contribute significantly to this. Prior language learning experiences, exposure to various cultural contexts, and personal attitudes toward language acquisition can all influence these experiences (Dorneyei, 2005). Students may approach ESL learning with greater confidence and motivation if they have had good experiences with prior language learning endeavors. Motivation, a fundamental psychological construct, is widely recognized as a critical determinant in the success of any learning endeavor, particularly in the realm of language acquisition. Harmer (2001) succinctly defines motivation as an internal drive that propels individuals to act and persist in order to achieve specific goals. This intrinsic force is especially potent within the context of second language (L2) acquisition, where learners embark on the challenging yet rewarding journey of mastering a language distinct from their mother tongue. (Thohir, 2017) elaborates on the concept of a second language, characterizing it as a language that assumes an institutional and social role within a community, serving as a recognized and functional means of communication among its diverse members. The interplay between this societal function and individual learning underscores the multifaceted nature of L2 acquisition. Most teachers and researchers have widely accepted motivation as one of the key factors which influence the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. Moreover, motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, n.d.). The profound impact of motivation is particularly evident in formal educational settings. (Kaboody, 2013) highlights that in classroom environments, students' levels of intrinsic motivation significantly influence their engagement and ultimately, their learning outcomes in a second language. This suggests that cultivating an internal desire to learn is paramount for effective language instruction. Given the globalized landscape, the importance of acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL) cannot be overstated. English has firmly established itself as the primary lingua franca, facilitating communication across diverse cultures and nations worldwide. English as a Second Language (ESL or TESL) is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment it is also known as English for speakers of other languages (Nordquist, 2025). Consequently, the success of ESL learners directly impacts their access to information, opportunities, and global networks. While

motivation is undeniably a key factor, it's crucial to understand that it is not a static attribute but a dynamic and evolving process. It encompasses a spectrum of influences that can fluctuate over time, adapting to new experiences, challenges, and successes. This dynamic nature means that what motivates a learner at one stage of their journey might differ considerably at another. Recognizing this fluidity allows educators and researchers to approach motivation with a nuanced perspective, moving beyond simplistic definitions to explore its deeper complexities. This study, therefore, aims to delve into motivation as a pivotal element within ESL learning, emphasizing its dynamic and adaptable nature. Rather than viewing it as a fixed characteristic, we consider it a continually unfolding process influenced by various internal and external factors. Our research specifically focuses on two fundamental types of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation stems from an individual's innate interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction derived directly from the learning activity itself. For an ESL learner, this might manifest as a genuine fascination with English literature, a joy in conversing with native speakers, or a personal sense of accomplishment from mastering a new grammatical concept. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors or outcomes. These can include the desire for academic rewards, pressure from peers or parents, the need to pass an exam for career advancement, or the social prestige associated with speaking English proficiently. Understanding both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators is paramount because they both contribute to and influence a learner's sustained engagement, persistence through difficulties, and overall commitment to the learning process. By meticulously analyzing how these different facets of motivation interact with various learning strategies and ultimately impact learning outcomes, this research endeavors to provide deeper and more comprehensive insights into the intricate relationship between motivation and success in the ESL context. To achieve this objective, our methodology incorporates a mixed-methods approach. We will conduct in-depth interviews with ESL learners, allowing us to gather rich, qualitative data directly from their lived experiences and perspectives on motivation. Concurrently, a thorough and critical literature review will be undertaken to synthesize existing theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and scholarly discourse pertaining to motivation in second language acquisition. Through this integrated approach, we aim to offer a more nuanced and profound understanding of the indispensable role that motivation plays in the journey of learning English as a second language, ultimately contributing to more effective

pedagogical practices and learner support systems. According to Brown (2007), there are three different ways to define motivation; from a behavioristic perspective, cognitive perspective, and constructivist perspective. From a behavioristic perspective, motivation is defined as the anticipation of reward which is driven to achieve positive reinforcement and driven by previous experiences of reward for behavior. From a cognitive perspective, motivation seeks to explain human behavior as a product of the careful study and active processing and interpretation of information received. From a constructivist perspective, motivation is derived as much from a person's interaction with others for it is from one's self-determination. Internal factors refer to (1) the cognitive processes that enable students to summarize or extract information about the second language from the input they receive. For instance, English pluralization occurs by adding the suffix -s to nouns, and relative pronouns like "who" and "which" replace agent nouns or non agent nouns, among other rules. (2) Students also employ various communication strategies that help them use the second language effectively, drawing on their existing knowledge. (3) Another factor involves a person's language aptitude, which can lead some learners to acquire a language more quickly than others. (4) Finally, motivation plays a crucial role, encompassing the types of motivation—whether intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, or a combination of these—that can enhance language learning. External factors include aspects of the social environment in which learning takes place. For example, language learning outcomes may vary significantly for a student who feels appreciated by native speakers compared to one who does not receive such encouragement. Additionally, the input a student receives is crucial; vocabulary that is heard repeatedly and consistently tends to have a greater impact than words that are infrequently encountered (Christianto & Karin, 2019). Motivation in learning can be divided into two categories; intrinsic and extrinsic. Harmer states that intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual. People may be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process or a desire to make themselves feel better. Motivation comes from within the individual, not from external or external rewards such as money or value. Students with intrinsic motivation will get pleasure from someone doing the task or a sense of satisfaction in completing or even doing a task. Motivation in learning can be divided into two categories; intrinsic and extrinsic. Harmer (2007:98) states that intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual. People may be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process or a desire to make themselves feel better. Harmer (2007:98) states, "extrinsic motivation is the result of

several external factors" these factors include rewards and punishments. Extrinsic motivation does not mean that students will not derive pleasure from learning or completing assignments. It means that the pleasure they anticipate from some external reward will continue to be a motivator even when the task has little or no interest. Second Language Learning (SLL), often also called Second Language Acquisition (SLA), is an interdisciplinary field that examines how individuals acquire and develop competence in a language other than their first language (L1). It differs fundamentally from first language acquisition in children, which is generally a subconscious process and without significant effort. In contrast, SLL often involves cognitive and conscious effort, especially in formal learning environments (Saville-Troike, n.d.). The term "second language" (L2) is widely used to refer to any language learned after the first language, no matter the order. The L2 often has an important social, cultural, or institutional role in the learner's community, serving as the primary means of communication in a given context.(Thohir, 2017).

METHOD

Comprehensive literature review to identify and synthesize theories and research findings related to motivation in second language acquisition. This review will serve as the theoretical foundation for our empirical findings. Qualitative data from the interview transcripts will be analyzed using thematic analysis methods. This process includes familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme searching, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. The results of this analysis, supported by direct quotes from learners, will be integrated with findings from the literature review. In this way, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic role of motivation in learning English as a Second Language.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Personal Motivation in Language Learning: All three participants: Utin, Tiwi, and Ranga emphasized the importance of personal motivation in their journey of learning English as a second language. Utin highlighted that her initial interest in Western culture, particularly movies and music, fueled her desire to learn English from a young age. As she grew older, her aspiration to become an English teacher further strengthened her motivation. Similarly, Tiwi expressed that her personal goal of being able to speak English made the learning process exciting for

her, while Rangga noted that his curiosity about English songs and films drove him to understand the language better. This intrinsic motivation appears to be a common theme, illustrating that personal interests significantly enhance engagement and commitment to language learning. Influence of External Support and Strategies: The participants also discussed the impact of external factors, such as inspirational teachers and supportive peers, on their motivation levels. Utin mentioned her favorite English teacher as a role model who inspired her to pursue her language goals. Tiwi underscored the importance of instilling a success-oriented mindset, while Rangga highlighted the supportive environment created by friends who study together. Furthermore, all three shared effective strategies for maintaining motivation, such as watching English films and listening to music, which made learning enjoyable. They acknowledged that moments of frustration, particularly related to grammar, can lead to temporary dips in motivation; however, taking breaks and returning with a fresh perspective helped them regain focus and progress. This combination of personal drive and external encouragement illustrates a holistic approach to maintaining motivation in language learning. In summary, the interviews with Utin, Tiwi, and Rangga highlight that personal motivation is vital for learning English as a second language. Their intrinsic interests and goals drive their desire to learn, while support from teachers and peers enhances their motivation. Effective strategies, such as engaging with English media and maintaining a consistent study routine, further contribute to their progress. Despite occasional frustrations, their ability to overcome challenges underscores the importance of both internal and external factors in successful language learning. Motivation is a fundamental component of the learning process, particularly in language acquisition, where it significantly influences learners' engagement and success (Harmer, 2001). The interviews conducted with Utin, Tiwi, and Rangga provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of motivation in learning English as a second language (ESL). Their experiences align with existing literature, underscoring the critical importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in shaping learners' attitudes and behaviors. Intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal interests and enjoyment of the subject matter, has been highlighted throughout the interviews. Utin's passion for Western movies and music and Tiwi's admiration for the ability to communicate in English exemplify how personal goals can drive language learning. As Dörnyei (2008) points out, intrinsic motivation fosters deeper engagement, facilitating a more profound understanding of the language. This

is echoed by Rangga's curiosity about English media, which further enhances his learning experience. Such findings reinforce the idea that when learners are genuinely interested and invested in the language, they are more likely to pursue their studies with enthusiasm and commitment. On the other hand, the interviews also reveal the significant role of external support in maintaining motivation. The influence of inspirational teachers, as mentioned by Utin, and the camaraderie of study groups, as highlighted by Rangga, demonstrate that a supportive environment can enhance intrinsic motivation. Kaboody (2013) emphasizes that intrinsic motivation levels in classroom settings greatly affect students' engagement and learning outcomes. Therefore, educators play a pivotal role in cultivating a positive learning atmosphere that encourages students to explore and enjoy the language. Moreover, the dynamic nature of motivation was evident in the participants' reflections on moments of frustration. Both Utin and Rangga acknowledged times when they felt demotivated, particularly when facing challenges like grammar. However, their ability to take breaks and return with renewed focus illustrates the adaptive process of motivation. This aligns with Rismayanti et al. (2023), who note that motivation is not static; it evolves in response to various experiences and challenges. By recognizing this fluidity, educators can better support learners through tailored strategies that address their individual needs and experiences.

CONCLUSIO

In learning English as a Second Language (ESL), motivation has proven to be a key factor influencing student success. The interviews conducted with Utin, Tiwi, and Rangga illustrate that intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal interests and enjoyment of the language, plays a significant role in driving student engagement. Their love for Western culture, music, and films not only ignites their enthusiasm for learning but also deepens their understanding of the language. Furthermore, external support, such as the influence of inspiring teachers and a collaborative learning environment, also plays a crucial role in maintaining students' motivation. This highlights that a combination of intrinsic motivation and external support can create a more holistic and effective learning experience. However, motivation is not a static attribute; it is dynamic and can change in response to the experiences and challenges faced by students. In certain situations, students may feel a loss of motivation, especially when they encounter difficulties or obstacles in their learning journey.

Therefore, it is essential for educators to understand and adapt teaching strategies that can meet the individual motivational needs of students. By doing so, we can create a more supportive learning environment that facilitates a more effective language acquisition process. This research aims to provide deeper insights into the role of motivation in ESL learning, with the hope of enhancing teaching practices and support systems for learners. With a better understanding of motivation, it is expected that students will achieve greater success in mastering English and find fulfillment in their learning process.

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