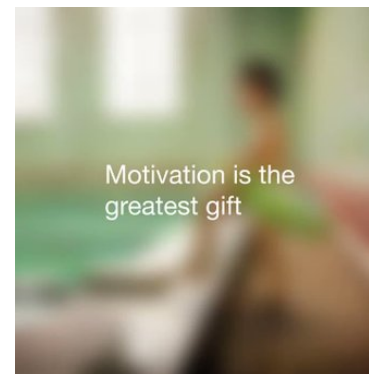


Motivation is the
greatest gift

Motivation in English
Language Learning

Stephen Ryan
Waseda University, Tokyo
NUFS Workshop 2018, November 10, 2018



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Motivationally speaking?

Outline

- Think about what we mean when we use the term 'motivation'
- Look at current thinking about motivation and English learning
- Discuss the role of teachers in motivating learners of English



What is motivation?

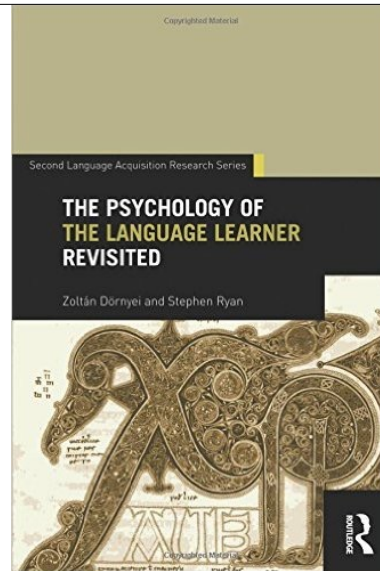
- Motivation is a word we all know and understand
- To 'motivate' = *(to)stimulate (someone's) interest in or enthusiasm for doing something: it is the teacher's job to motivate the child at school.* (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary)
- Why we do what we do (Deci & Flaste, 1995)
- Motivation in language learning ... "provides the primary **impetus** to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to **sustain** the long, often tedious learning process" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 72)

Why is motivation important?

- "given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data" (Corder, 1967, p.164)
- How true is this?

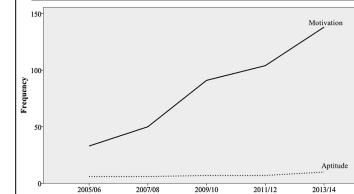
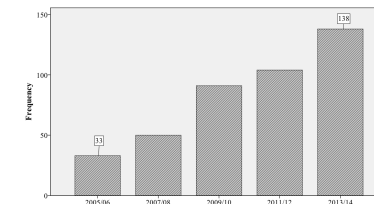
L2 motivation

A surge in interest and output



In numbers

Frequencies of publications on L2 motivation



Published works researching learner motivation and aptitude

More numbers

National setting	Number	Percentage
Japan	38	11.34
US	30	8.96
China	25	7.46

Geographic distribution of L2 motivation studies

Why do so many people do motivation research in Japan?

What do we really mean by the word 'motivation'

IMAGINE YOU ARE THE PARENT OF A YOUNG BOY BEGINNING TO LEARN THE PIANO.
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK ARE LIKELY TO BE MOTIVATING?

1	... offering a reward or treat each time he performs well	YES	NO
2	... not allowing him to play with his friends until he has completed his daily practice	YES	NO
3	... adopting a policy of constant praise and encouragement, regardless of actual performance	YES	NO
4	... striking his fingers with a stick each time he makes a mistake	YES	NO
5	... boosting his self-esteem by encouraging him to believe that he is more gifted than those around him	YES	NO

The Cobra Effect

- *The law of unintended consequences*
 - The government in Delhi wanted to reduce the number of snakes in the city. In order to do this, they encouraged people to kill snakes by offering a monetary reward. What do you think happened?
- Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise and other bribes.*

Changing thinking about motivation



- Understand motivation, not 'impose' it
- Long-term motivation is internal, not external
- Motivation connects to other aspects of learner psychology
- Motivation can only really be understood in relation to specific contexts
- Motivation fluctuates over time and in response to situations

Understanding goals and behaviour

Let's think about two individuals who are behaving in very similar ways. What is the key difference between them? Is it important?

- A young person stays up late into the night playing games because she is so absorbed in the game that she has lost track of time.
- A young person stays up late into the night playing games because he is determined to become the top scorer on display.
- **Mastery goal orientation:** An orientation to learn through a desire to develop competence or mastery of a particular task. Within education, this usually reflects an interest in the subject and in learning itself.
- **Performance goal orientation:** An orientation to engage in tasks to demonstrate one's competence or ability in relation to others. (Williams, Mercer, & Ryan, 2015, pp. 153-4)

Think of a random student you are currently teaching. Now picture a particular lesson you may teach with that student. How would the L2MSS apply to that individual in that specific situation?

Current thinking about language learner motivation

Dornyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009)

Ideal L2 self

- Visions and aspirations of a desired future self.

Ought-to L2 self

- Responsibilities and obligations to others as a language learner.

L2 learning experience

- Interpretations of language learning experiences.

L2MSS in the classroom

- The self-system across the lifespan.
- What do we do when students do not have powerful visions of themselves as L2 users?
- What do we do when students do not feel a sense of responsibility to learn the language?

Teachers as motivators

- The motivation literature deals with inspiring critical events. In other words, great stories.
- It can be uplifting, optimistic, and inspiring
- Motivation affords teachers an empowering role, far more exciting than the technical role proscribed in earlier models of language teaching
- Teachers can make a lasting difference to people's lives

"If you think back to your language learning at school, you might remember specific tasks or projects you did, but, for certain, you will remember your teachers." (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018, p. 18)

What can, and should, teachers do about learners who appear to lack motivation to learn English?

Do we have the right to motivate unmotivated learners?

How do teachers motivate learners?

- In many, unpredictable ways
- Motivation in the classroom tends to be bi-directional
- Teachers direct motivational impact may be less powerful than we like to believe

Think back to your own your own schooldays. Was there a teacher —not necessarily a language teacher— that you found particularly motivating? What do you think it was about the teacher that motivated you?

Indirect ways teachers affect motivation

- Learning materials and tasks
- Classroom management
- Interactions with individual learners

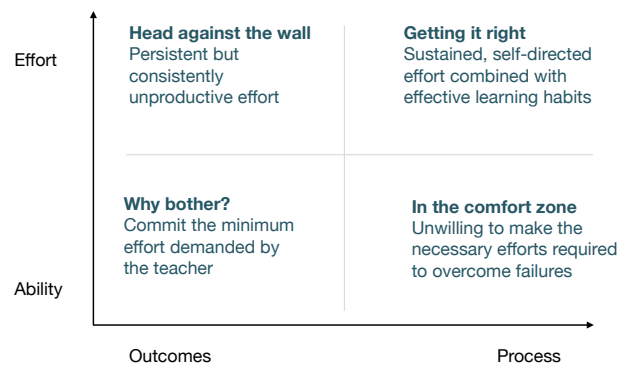
Other learners in the classroom

- **Forming**
 - A number of people start to become recognizable as a group
- **Storming**
 - Group members feel more secure and start to disagree openly with each other
- **Norming**
 - Cohesion develops based on shared norms and goals
- **Performing**
 - The group is highly motivated, interdependent, and productive
- **Adjourning**
 - The group stops being effective and begins to dissolve

Interacting through praise

Ability praise	Effort praise	Outcome praise	Process praise
Praising abilities or qualities within the individual	Praising the efforts a learner has on a particular task	Praise that focuses on the results or outcome of an action	Praise identifying steps a learner has taken towards a particular goal
"Wow! You're really good at this."	"Great job! You did your best."	"Well done! That's another gold star for you."	"That was a smart way to check what she was saying."

Long-term effects of feedback



Concluding remarks

- Think carefully about what motivation means to you
- Think carefully about how you use rewards in order to enhance motivation
- Think about how learners are motivating each other
- Think carefully about how you use praise and feedback in the classroom
- Be aware of your own enthusiasm and passion as a teacher

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Why we research motivation (6)

- To understand individual learners
 - The surge in motivation research is connected to shift to a learner-centred view of language education
 - Learners are unique individuals with their own goals and experiences that shape their learning