

A PROCESS-ORIENTED MODEL OF LEARNING MOTIVATION IN A HIGH APPLIED STUDIES L2 CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The question of how to motivate students in ESP teaching is one that does not have a single and simple answer because motivation is an extremely broad and complex construct. This paper relies on Zoltan Dörnyei's definition of motivational strategies and his process-oriented model of learning motivation in the L2 classroom. It presents the results of a survey aimed at obtaining classroom data on motivational strategies: 111 students of the Academy of Applied Studies Šabac who had all studied and passed English (L2) as an obligatory first-year subject were asked how important they considered a selection of motivational strategies and to what extent they found the application of these strategies effective in creating, generating, maintaining and protecting their motivation for learning L2. Based on their responses, I try to identify the strategies that work best in the described learning/teaching environment and to single out strategies, if any, that tend to be underutilized in the L2 classroom. In addition, I identify whether the motivation orientation that drives the students' actions is integrative or instrumental.

Keywords: motivation, motivational strategies, L2, classroom, process-oriented model.

INTRODUCTION

Among numerous factors that have an impact on the success in foreign language learning, motivation is definitely one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most complex. Dörnyei broadly defined motivational strategies as motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect (2001, p. 28). His approach is based on the process-oriented model whose components are: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

The first component, creating the basic motivational conditions, must include three conditions are naturally interrelated: appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students, a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

When the basic motivational conditions are in place, teachers need to try and actively generate initial motivation. The simple truth expressed by Dörnyei and confirmed by Hornjak (2012), Despotović (2018) and thousands of English teachers all over the world is that 'unless you are singularly fortunate with the composition of your class group, student motivation will not be automatically there'. For this reason, generating initial motivation is indispensable and includes the following conditions: enhancing the learners' language-related values and attitudes, increasing the learners' expectancy of success, increasing the learners' goal-orientedness, making the teaching materials relevant for the learners and creating realistic learner beliefs.

A teacher's motivational agenda is not successfully completed without maintaining and protecting the generated motivation. Dörnyei finds the spectrum of motivation maintenance particularly rich: making learning stimulating and enjoyable, presenting tasks in a motivating way, setting specific learner goals, protecting learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence,

allowing learners to maintain a positive social image, promoting cooperation among the learners, creating learner autonomy and promoting self-motivating learner strategies.

The final component of the model is encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. This rounding off of the learning experience includes the following motivational areas: promoting motivational attributions, providing motivational feedback, increasing learner satisfaction and offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner.

Therefore, in Dörnyei's process-oriented model, the focus is on the temporal structure of motivation: it is not seen as a static notion, but rather as a dynamic process that changes over time. Dörnyei & Ottó (1998) recognize three phases in this temporal structure: *preactional phase* – the creation of motivation which further leads to the choice of a goal or task someone will achieve or perform, *actional phase* – the created motivation must be maintained and protected while a certain task is being performed, and *post actional phase* – this is an evaluation of the performed task which serves as a guideline for the future motivation.

Later, the author added the socio-dynamic perspective to the process-oriented model, trying to also include intrapersonal, social and contextual factors which have proven to be so important in foreign language learning over the decades of research on motivation. Indeed, decades ago Gardner and Lambert (1972) made a distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the genuine and personal interest in people who speak target language and their culture, encouraging students to integrate in the culture of the target language and become similar to its native speakers. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is directed towards some kind of practical goal, such as, for example, learning the target language in order to improve one's employment prospects or get a promotion at work. In this way, instrumental motivation reflects practical benefits of foreign language learning.

In today's complex world, however, students simultaneously develop multiple identities, related to their profession, gender, culture, etc. so it is correct to say that integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation are very closely related and also, that the clear-cut division between the 'ideal me' (integrative dimension) and 'desirable me' (instrumental dimension) no longer exists (Đurović et al., 2014). The results of the research presented in this paper provided enough evidence for recognizing a type of motivation orientation at work in students of the Unit for Agriculture, Business and Tourism of the Academy of Applied Studies Šabac. The value of identifying such orientation is its practical pedagogical implication for designing and improving teaching materials.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this paper, I examined students' attitudes to 33 motivational strategies formulated by Dörnyei (2001: 137-144), which I pre-selected and slightly modified to better fit the higher education vocational situation and also to become completely suitable for the questionnaire filled in by students, not fellow-teachers or methodology experts. The instrument was a questionnaire that consisted of two parts: general information about the student (gender, the total number of years spent studying English, grade in English, the year of passing the exam: 2019/20, 2018/19 or 2017/18) and the 33 motivational strategies the 111 respondents were asked to evaluate using a five-point Likert scale: Very Unimportant; Unimportant; Neither Important or Unimportant; Important; Very Important. The questionnaire was handed out both physically and via e-mail and it was anonymous. The students attended the first year of studies at the Unit for Agriculture, Business and Tourism of the Academy of Applied Studies Šabac either in the school year 2019/20 or up to two years before. The questionnaire was written in Serbian.

Out of 33 motivational strategies, 32 had been used to a greater or lesser extent and with a lower or higher frequency during the students' first year in English (L2) classes, so the assumption was that students were able to identify them and express their attitudes towards them, including the one that had not been used in our context but were clear enough and possibly used in their previous, secondary or even elementary education. This strategy, not used in the English classes taught by the author of this paper to the students who responded to the questionnaire at the Academy of Applied Studies Šabac, was formulated by Dörnyei: *Use contracting methods with your students to formalise their goal commitment*, and further elaborated: *Draw up a detailed written agreement with individual*

students, or whole groups, that specifies what they will learn and how, and the ways by which you will help and reward them (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 141). On top of that, some strategies such as *Developing a collaborative relationship with the students' parents* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 138) were regarded as inapplicable to the tertiary level of education and were thus excluded from the questionnaire.

The research questions formulated before and during the research were: (1) to what extent do students find the application of these strategies effective in creating, generating, maintaining and protecting their motivation for learning L2, (2) is there a stage of the process-oriented model that students value more in comparison to the rest of the stages, and (3) are there strategies that tend to be underutilized in the L2 classroom?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the questionnaire was distributed to the students who took and passed the English exam in 2019/20, 2018/19 or 2017/18, they were asked about the grades and these were as follows:

Table 1. The percentage of students having grades 6-10 in the subject English language (L2)

Grade	Percentage of students (%)
10	18.2
9	27.3
8	18.2
7	27.3
6	9.1

As mentioned, it was assumed that the majority of respondents would recognize the importance of a great deal of motivational strategies since all of them obviously have a positive effect on motivation. Although the responses came up to this expectation, it turned out that the group of motivational strategies that work towards creating the basic motivational conditions and generating initial motivation, the first two components of the process-oriented model, were valued exclusively as either very important or important by all respondents. Conversely, the motivational strategies belonging to the third and fourth stage – maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation – were considered less important by the respondents.

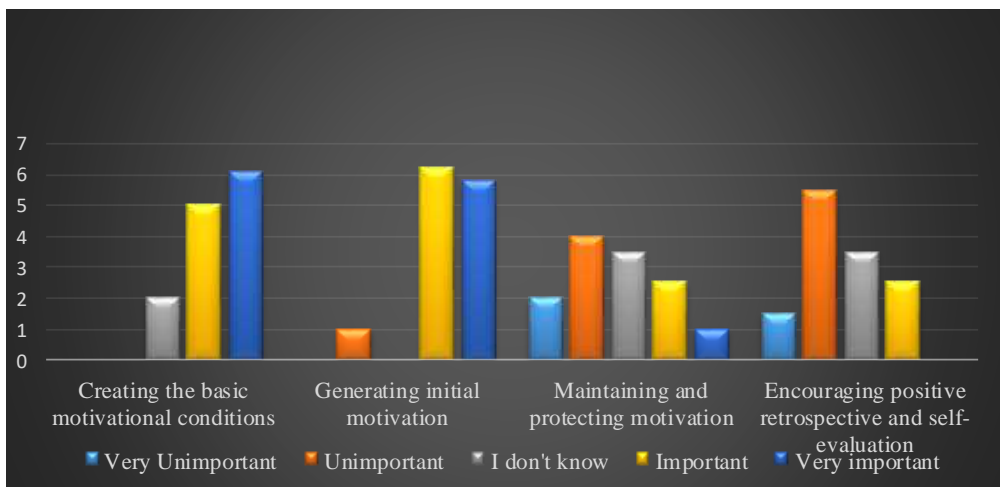


Figure 1. Respondents' value attitudes towards each of the four stages of Dörnyei's process-oriented model

If we go back to the four components of the process-oriented model and their corresponding motivational areas stated in the Introduction of this paper, we realize that the third component mainly deals with the psychological categories such as students' self-esteem, their self-confidence, self-motivation, learner autonomy and a positive social image. Similarly, the fourth component is focused on the students' appraisal of and reactions to their own past performance. Two immediate implications can be made from these findings: (1) more attention in the classroom should be given to students' so called 'self-' issues (self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-worth) which were particularly sensitive areas in primary and secondary school learning and possibly were not effectively resolved in the past, and (2) students should be given help to deal with their past performance, taking into account the fact that students' appraisal of their past performance does not only depend on the level of success they have achieved in the form of grades, but also on how they interpret their achievement. Finally, the noticeable difference between the first two components, on one side, and the third and fourth one, on the other, is the fact that in the former, the focus is very much on what the teacher does to make students feel a certain way, whereas in the latter, the focus is inevitably more on how students' feelings are shaped by their previous experiences.

However, somewhat surprisingly, the results indicate that the strategy that is valued by students as rather important, but somewhat underutilized in the classroom is the increase of the students' self-motivating capacity.

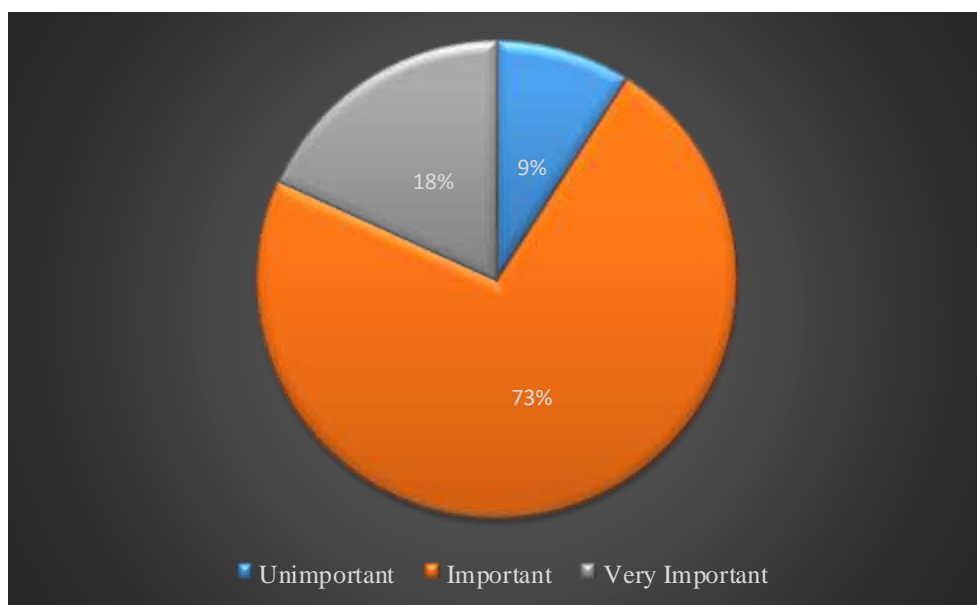


Figure 2. Respondents' attitudes towards the motivational strategy 'Increasing the students' self-motivating capacity'.

The fact that students have high awareness of the importance of self-motivation capacity is the evidence of the existence of integrative motivation. When this finding was further examined, it turned out that this kind of awareness increases with students' age i.e. year of study. Namely, the strategy *Increasing the students' self-motivating capacity* was rated as Very Important by 94.5% of the students who passed the English exam in 2019, and by 97.3% of the students who passed the English exam in 2018. This can be explained by the fact that students, as they make progress in their vocational studies, realize how important it is to learn how to motivate oneself and maintain the high level of motivation for improving English even after the exam has been passed.

Similarly, the typical strategies that reflect students' values regarding integrative and instrumental motivation, presented in Tables 2. and 3., also show that integrative motivation is

slightly stronger in the students of the final year of study, while instrumental motivation is a little bit stronger in the students of the first year:

Table 2. Students' attitudes towards strategies that promote integrative values

The strategy (in the questionnaire)	Rated as 'Very Important' by 1 st year students (%)	Rated as 'Very Important' by 3 rd year students (%)
The teacher raises the learners' intrinsic ¹⁰⁹ interest in the English learning.	66.8	74.3
The teacher encourages a positive and open-minded disposition towards English and its speakers, and towards foreignness in general.	75.4	89.3

Table 3. Students' attitudes towards strategies that promote instrumental values

The strategy (in the questionnaire)	Rated as 'Very Important' by 1 st year students (%)	Rated as 'Very Important' by 3 rd year students (%)
The teacher regularly reminds students that the successful mastery of English is essential to the accomplishment of their valued career goals.	91	87
The teacher often reiterates the role the English plays in the world, highlighting its potential usefulness both for themselves and their community.	92.5	92.5
The teacher encourages the students to apply their English proficiency in real-life situations.	94.6	91.3
The curriculum and the teaching materials are relevant to the students' chosen field of studies and their future career.	94.6	93

CONCLUSION

In summary, the research provided enough findings for answering the three research questions formulated before its conduct:

(1) To what extent do students find the application of these strategies effective in creating, generating, maintaining and protecting their motivation for learning L2?

(2) Is there a stage of the process-oriented model that students value more in comparison to the rest of the stages?

The results show that students highly value the selected strategies, but that they have stronger inclinations towards the strategies that belong to the spectrum of motivation creation and generation, while those belonging to the spectrum of motivation maintenance and protection and positive retrospective self-evaluation were lower at their value scale. The possible causes of this effect and their direct implications for the classroom learning situation were discussed in the previous section of the paper.

(3) Are there strategies that tend to be underutilized in the L2 classroom?

¹⁰⁹ The term 'intrinsic' was explained to students both in the questionnaire and orally (to those who filled it in in the classroom rather than via e-mail), since the author was aware that many of them might not be familiar with this psychological term or might have misconceptions about it.

It turned out that the strategy that is not sufficiently employed in the English classroom of the Unit for Agriculture, Business and Tourism of the Academy of Applied Studies Šabac is the one that refers to the increase in students' self-motivating capacity. Dörnyei believes that the possible ways for achieving this specific goal are raising the students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation (which turned out to be quite high in the students who responded to the questionnaire), sharing with each other strategies that you have found useful in the past and encouraging students to adopt, develop and apply self-motivating strategies (2001, p. 143). The idea is to try and test these guidelines in a daily practice in the English classroom.

Although the author of the paper did not intend to specifically examine integrative and instrumental motivation, the students' responses clearly indicate that both types of motivation are present in students in a high degree and that there is a trend of integrative motivation being slightly stronger in students who passed the English exam last year or two years ago, i.e. in older students.

Possibly, some strategies need to be modified so that they better correspond with the high education and vocational-specific learning environment. Some of the pedagogical implications that arise from the results of the research can be summarized in the following way:

- the course book should include both texts about professional and general topics, to support further development of the two components of motivation – instrumental and integrative;
- the content that reflects cultural differences between our and British/American culture should become part of the syllabus;
- consider the launching of some kind of an English course in the final (third) year of studying, perhaps elective, since students show negative attitude towards the fact that English is taught only in the initial year in some studying programs.

The findings open up numerous possibilities for improving the implementation of motivational strategies, particularly those for maintaining and protecting once established motivation and for encouraging positive self-evaluation. These possibilities are closely related to the need for deeper psychological understanding of students' self-issues and a psychological attribution theory, which once again confirms how important it is for English teachers to have solid and updated (through regular trainings) knowledge of this particular area of psychology.

LITERATURE

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PROCESNI MODEL MOTIVACIJE ZA UČENJE STRANOG JEZIKA NA VISOKIM STRUKOVNIM STUDIJAMA

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APSTRAKT

Pitanje kako motivisati studente za učenje engleskog kao stranog jezika nema jedinstven i jednostavan odgovor jer je motivacija izuzetno širok i složen pojam. Ovaj rad se oslanja na definiciju motivacionih strategija Zoltana Dornjeija, kao i na njegov procesni model motivacije u učenju stranog jezika. U radu su predstavljeni rezultati ankete čiji je cilj da se prikupe podaci o motivacionim strategijama u učionici: studenti Akademije strukovnih studija Šabac koji su učili i položili predmet Engleski jezik (L2) kao obavezan predmet prve godine studija svih studijskih programa ocenjivali su koliko su im važne izabrane motivacione strategije i u kojoj meri smatraju primenu ovih strategija uspešnom u stvaranju, održavanju i očuvanju sopstvene motivacije za učenje L2. Na osnovu odgovora, autorka rada pokušava da prepozna strategije koje najbolje funkcionišu u opisanom nastavnom okruženju i da izdvoji eventualne uspešne, a nedovoljno zastupljene strategije. Pored ovoga, istraživanje je pokazalo i koja vrsta motivacije, integrativna ili instrumentalna, dominira kod studenata.

Ključne riječi: motivacija, motivacione strategije, strani jezik, učionica, procesni model.