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Learning Motivation and Function of Pronunciation for Students in German and English Classes

Motivation, a complex concept, is defined on multiple levels and within the context of specific fields, making a concise summary of an economical definition challenging. The basic function we refer to is: "Motivation is the impetus that gives purpose or direction to behavior and operates in humans at a conscious and unconscious level." (American Psychology Association). This definition was chosen because the research goal is directly related to conscious and unconscious motivation and aims to analyze its role in the development of students' academic motivation. Additionally, it attempts to explain the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and comments on motivation from both the teacher's and student's perspectives.

It is important to note that motivation encompasses multiple aspects and effects. Motivation can signify a person's willingness to exert physical or mental effort towards a goal or result (American Psychological Association). This aspect can be interpreted as the motivation or will that a student must express to attend classes and learn the presented material. Numerous factors play a role in this. On the one hand, this may include grades, which motivate students either as the grade itself or as a factor of recognition and status it provides. Another possibility is that these grades bring a sense of achievement, further fostering motivation. Relationships with parents, teachers, and classmates also play a significant role, as well as the feeling that the acquired knowledge is enriching, important, and applicable (American Psychological Association).

A crucial distinction must be made between internal forces that drive motivation and external factors, such as rewards or punishments, which can either support or deter certain behaviors. External motivation is an external stimulus to engage in a particular activity (American Psychological Association). In other words, external motivation arises from the expectation of punishment or reward. This punishment or reward comes from an authoritative figure. In the case of a student, these could be parents who set household rules or provide allowance, or teachers who assign good or bad grades.

On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is the drive to engage in an activity, stemming from the pleasure derived from the activity itself (American Psychiatric Association).

In other words, genuine interest in (in this case) learning foreign languages, uninfluenced by external factors, such as grades or money. Although both forms of motivation have positive and negative aspects, intrinsic motivation can be described as more effective. It can also be said that individuals who work and are intrinsically motivated report a greater sense of happiness. Intrinsic motivation is considered optimal motivation (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 251).

Similarly, the act or process of motivation can inspire others to strive towards a collective or organizational goal. It can be the ability to motivate followers, which is an important function of leadership (American Psychiatric Association). This typology can also relate to a teacher, as they act as the leader in the classroom, directing and organizing the group's learning process while serving as a motivator and leader directing motivation. At the same time, they are also leaders when motivation is lacking, but students still need to achieve results.

What is interesting, is that intrinsic motivation can be described as goal-oriented towards learning or mastery goals, while extrinsic motivation is described as goal-oriented towards performance or outcome goals. Strong arguments exist for both directions of motivation to be described as optimal, as their purpose of use is different. From a multi-goal approach perspective, this means, instead of supporting the mastery goal perspective, in which optimal motivation stems from the exclusive pursuit of mastery goals, the finding of Sansone and Harackiewicz (2000) offers a strong support for a multiple goal perspective, in which mastery goals and performance goals can both promote optimal motivation.



Fulfilling homework assignments and subsequent academic success are unlikely without intrinsic motivation, described as an internal motivational factor, or without extrinsic motivation, such as parental influence, grades, or choice of study. Another contributing factor is the attention that students devote to academic material both during and outside of class (Knörzner, p. 139; Liu et al., 2024). Experimentally confirmed correlations exist between the level of attention and academic achievement (Entwisle, 1961; Loh et al., 2023). Students with higher levels of attention tend to achieve better academic outcomes. Baker and Madell (1965) also corroborated this finding: college students with high grades exhibit fewer errors than those with lower grades. A similar finding was made by the University of Chicago (2017).

Another perspective, crossing disciplinary boundaries, distinguishes between primary and secondary motivation (Correll, 1961; Yeung et al., 2011). Primary motivation is thought to occur when an individual engages in an activity for the activity's own sake. Motivation that arises to fulfill primary needs is described as follows: "An innate need that arises out of biological processes and leads to physical satisfaction, such as the need for water and sleep." (American Psychological Association). Secondary motivation arises when an individual actively pursues something externally associated with the activity. This type of motivation does not satisfy primary needs, but rather develops personal initiatives: "Secondary motivation is motivation that is created by personal or social incentives rather than by primary or psychological needs." (American Psychological Association).

Although Correll's definition and the American Psychological Association (APA) definition may seem different at first glance, they are semantically similar. The need for water or sleep is a motivation necessary for survival and should be systematically pursued. Similarly, various academic subjects, which are essential components for future work, must be approached in the same manner. Furthermore, motivation can be driven by the necessity of completing a task, rather than the desire to do so. Secondary motivation shows a convergence between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, as both define personal or social initiatives.

Consequently, students not only require optimal intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but also need to direct their attention during class and extracurricular activities to minimize distractions and enhance academic performance. Achieving this is a challenging task that is difficult to accomplish without professional pedagogical assistance. Therefore, the emphasis on motivation lies with teachers, who must be aware of this complexity and guide the learning process to optimally integrate and consider all factors.

From this conflict of interests and perceptions of what and how to motivate, arises the question: Do teachers and students have different conceptions of what motivates students?

The presented analysis and description of the conducted research attempt to find a correlation between high school students' academic motivation and teachers' perceptions of academic motivation, specifically addressing the central question: Do teachers and students have the same perception of what motivates students? A quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted through surveys and interviews at high schools in northeastern Slovenia, with the survey results compared to teachers' responses in interviews to determine whether there is a connection in the perception of academic motivation.

Modern life elements such as media, multiculturalism, linguistic diversity, and population densification not only influence people's lifestyles, but also impact students' development. The multifaceted density of extracurricular obligations and related life decisions burdens students. Therefore, having a precise understanding of motivation is crucial to facilitate and optimize students' life directions.

To assess the hypothesis that teachers and students have different perceptions of what motivates students, claims about students' academic motivation must be compared with teachers' observations and perceptions to evaluate whether both groups have a similar or comparable view of what motivates students. Students primarily cite the potential need for future use (76%) and personal desire (69%) as the main reasons for learning foreign languages, particularly English. Similarly, the potential future need (62%) is the primary motivator for learning German, followed by compulsory requirements (44%) and

personal desire (34%). It is evident that in both cases, the majority of students are motivated by future needs and a personal desire to learn a foreign language.

Teachers mainly emphasize that students are motivated to learn languages because they want to find work abroad, have relatives abroad, are ambitious and wish to study something with enrollment limitations or study requirements, such as passing the DSD exam for German. Another motivational factor are grades. Finding work abroad, ambition, and obtaining a language diploma can be classified as future needs. Having relatives abroad could be considered a personal desire. Motivation through grades is an external motivational factor that students did not mention as a motivational reason. However, other external motivational factors were mentioned: 20% of participants in the DaF survey claim to learn German because of parental desire, and 3% claim the same in the EFL survey.

The hypothesis stemming from the question can be considered rejected, as teachers identified the main reasons for students' motivation to learn foreign languages. However, they emphasize motivation through grades as one of the reasons, which can be classified as an external motivational factor, similarly to parental desire, which, although more pronounced in the DaF survey, was still cited by a relatively large proportion of participants.

The answer to the question of whether teachers and students have different perceptions of what motivates students is that teachers identified the same or similar reasons for motivation as students. Hence, teachers have a clear understanding of motivational factors, which can be categorized into two groups:

- Potential future needs for knowledge of the German and English languages.*
- Personal desire to learn the foreign languages German and English.*

The only deviation from teachers' and students' identical perception of students' academic motivation is on the teachers' side, particularly the motivational factor of grades, which students do not mention.