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LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

TO LEARN VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH

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Abstract
Current motivation research defines online motivational possibilities and self-motivational elements. In the present paper I describe the constituents of language learners' motivation in primary education in three age groups. The self-motivational elements, which have been obtained from interviews conducted on young learners' vocabulary learning habits, can be discussed as having two distinctive functions. Based on the interviews, the results of a multi-layered research allow us to gain insights into the role of initial motivation, which includes treatment of difficulties and anxiety, and the function of the elements of motivational outcome, such as rewarding, efficacy and satisfaction. The study, through the analysis of the components of motivation, highlights the apparent areas of development.

1 Introduction

Experts in language education have examined learners' foreign language motivation from several perspectives. However, emphasis is increasingly being put on online motivational possibilities and inner drives instead of putting basic motivational tendencies in focus. Although principal motivation is an important drive, it cannot be accountable for maintaining working motivation during the long-term learning activity. Therefore, motivation should be discussed from a different viewpoint, which underlines learners' behaviour during the language learning process.

2 Motivation

Motivation is a multidimensional concept which changes constantly with time and energy input. Motivation can come from outside and inside (Gardner, 1985), but it is inner drives which enable language learners to maintain their motivation in the lengthy and exhaustive process. The behaviours of language learners are influenced by self-motivating strategies which build up a dynamic system by managing psychological control processes that help concentration. Since language learning and thus vocabulary learning takes an extended period of time, a convincing pedagogical model has to account for learners' constantly fluctuating motivation (Tseng & Schmitt, 2008). For that reason, Tseng and Schmitt created a motivational vocabulary learning model whose elements were negotiated based on recognised traditional concepts of motivation (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Dörnyei, 1994). In the new construct the categories of 'Initial Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Experience' (IAVLE) and 'Post-Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Tactics' (PAVLT) were integrated.

Initial Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Experience includes the constituents of self-confidence. Since learners' self-confidence plays a vital role in the language learning process

(Dörnyei, 2005), its constituents, self-efficacy and anxiety, are involved in the dynamic motivational model. A further element of IAVLE is attitude, although it can also be considered as a primary drive which is in charge of principal motivation. Self-efficacy has been discussed by Gardner (1985) and vocabulary learning anxiety by Horwitz et al (1986). The Post-Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Tactics includes the items of satisfaction, skilfulness and helplessness in the motivated vocabulary learning model. These elements indicate learners' self-reflection and critical retrospection which, based on language learners' accumulated experience, can contribute to the elaboration of internal standards (Dörnyei 2001).

Since self-motivational strategies enable learners to control their affective conditions and experiences, the components of Initial Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Experience and Post-Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Tactics present an elaborate view of learners' innate motivational condition. Tseng & Schmitt's model (2008) elicited the elements of self-motivational behaviour in terms of initial and post-appraisal aspects in order to make the recursive nature of motivated language learning visible. The initial motivation of language learning can be used as an assisting factor during the process, while the post-appraisal stage adds to the revitalisation of preliminary conditions.

3 Method

In this study motivation is addressed from both traditional and dynamic perspectives. Proceeding from the elements of the model of motivated vocabulary learning described above I examine young learners' (grades 3-8) difficulties, anxiety, self-rewarding strategies, self-efficacy and satisfaction. These elements were elicited by open-ended interviews (N=27) and were further investigated by the means of structured interviews (N=12) and questionnaires (N=331). The data are taken from a large-scale investigation of young learners' self-regulated vocabulary learning. For more details see the author's unpublished PhD dissertation on the topic of young learners' self-regulated vocabulary learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Hardi, 2014).

4 Results

The results are presented in the order of elicitation. First, data elicited by open-ended interviews are presented and discussed, then the results of structured interviews are demonstrated. Structured data make qualitative analysis possible. Finally, questionnaire data are analyzed by qualitative means. The qualitative data allow analyses by age-groups (1. grades 3-4, 2. grades 4-5, 3. grades 6-7) which provides a better understanding of young learners' motivation.

4.1 Results of the open-ended interviews

In this subchapter, first, learners' principal motivation is illustrated in terms of extrinsic, intrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivation, and after that self-motivational strategies are presented and analyzed.

> *Excerpt 1: Intrinsic motivation: interest/challenge + external factor (Interview 1, grade 3, female)*
> 'I love new things and so I'm interested {in learning words}, and I feel more like it than those who don't {feel like it}. And, at us, in our family, everyone learns English…'

Although the girl in this excerpt says she likes new things, a strong external motive that 'everyone learns English in the family' is mentioned. This suggests that she may get help with language learning which might support her in taking up new challenges.

> *Excerpt 2: Extrinsic motivation: agreement on using the computer*

(Interview 17, grade 4, male)
'Having learnt everything, my mum lets me play on the computer.'

Using the computer is a kind of external rewarding. If it is internalized by the language learner, it can function as a self-rewarding strategy, which truly facilitates motivation.

Excerpt 3: Instrumental motivation: utilitarian reasons
(Interview 2, grade 3, female)
'It's good, to my mind, because it can be used in a lot of fields.'

Excerpt 3 is a typical example of instrumental motivation, which assists language choice, but does not substantially help during the language learning process.

Excerpt 4: Instrumental motivation: career-orientation
(Interview 13, grade 4, female)
'I'd like to pass the advanced language exam and I'd like to be a dentist.'

Excerpt 5: Instrumental motivation: passing the language exam (Interview 6,
grade 7, female)
'…there should be something in life, not to get a bad profession… and to pass the intermediate language exam.'

Excerpt 6: Instrumental motivation: travelling
(Interview 8, grade 4, male)
'This summer we're travelling to Canada, too. We've been to England twice. My grandparents can't speak English. I almost took them around in London. For example, I asked for a coffee, because my grandma likes coffee, or when we went to the shop, I understood that… well the English lisp a bit… that 'sixteen'… because something cost that much.'

Career-orientation (Excerpt 4) and thus passing a language exam (Excerpt 5) are forms of instrumental motivation and a further instrumental factor in language learning is travelling (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 7: Integrative motivation: cultural-merging
(Interview 15, grade 4, female)
'My mum told me to choose German, because there are a lot of such factories… or a lot of foreigners come here, because then I would get jobs more easily, and I said that I wanted to learn English, because there are kinds of celebrities whom I like and then I don't know what they sing in songs and those I like are English and that's why I chose English.'

Cultural-merging, which is a form of integrative motivation, as illustrated in the above example (Excerpt 7) may strongly influence young learners' language choice. This intrinsic drive emerged at the age of 9 or 10 in learners' responses in my data and is typical of the young learner's view. The elements of integrative motivation emerged later in learners in Nikolov's study (1999), where the integrative elements appeared together with classroom-related motives. Unfortunately, the motivational elements enlisted in this chapter do not inspire children in classroom activities and do not help them pay more attention.

Self-motivational strategies

Self-motivational strategies function as Initial Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Experience or Post-Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Tactics (Tseng & Schmitt, 2008). Learning anxiety and self-efficacy are the indicators of IAVLE since they comprise learners' self-confidence. Although

anxiety can have a facilitative effect on general learning activities, it has a negative correlation with language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Therefore, it is important to recognise the reasons for anxiety and reinforce strategies language learners use to lower it. In previous studies the author (Hardi, 2010; 2013) identified adult language learners' reasons for anxiety, which resemble young learners' reasons. Both adults and young learners feel anxious about taking vocabulary tests, getting bad grades, making errors, learning something in the wrong way, or engaging in oral conversation. The excerpts below (Excerpts 8-12) present young learners' views on anxiety.

> *Excerpt 8: Lowering anxiety: Asking for help – Test anxiety (Interview 1, grade 3, female)*
> 'I feel very nervous when we write tests, because I have to learn everything alone, but my mom quizzes me on the words quickly in the evening.'

Although the language learner in the above excerpt (Excerpt 8) feels test anxiety, she can lower it with the help of her mother. This support makes her feel more self-confident, which factor is in reciprocal proportion with anxiety. The following two excerpts indicate further types of test anxiety.

> *Excerpt 9: Anxiety: getting low grades – Fear of negative evaluation (Interview 3, grade 3, male)*
> 'I feel anxious, especially when we write a test, because I am afraid that it will be 3 or 4. For me only 5 or 5 with a star are the best.'

> *Excerpt 10: Anxiety: Test anxiety/ Fear of negative evaluation (Interview 13, grade 4, female)*
> 'Interviewer: Are you anxious about learning words?
> Interviewee: Only when we are writing a test, for it won't be successful.'

Unfortunately, in the excerpts above (Excerpts 9-10) the learners only report what they are anxious about, but do not mention ways to lower or eliminate their anxiety. Even in a relaxed classroom environment, learners feel that tests are indicatives of threat, and test anxiety develops gradually during the school years (Nikolov, 1999). Therefore, it is important to use strategies that help learners override this detrimental condition. The following excerpts are also related to test anxiety. Learning something in the wrong way and fear from communicative apprehension are common sources of fear when somebody learns a language and does not get enough help.

> *Excerpt 11: Anxiety: learning in a wrong way (Interview 16, grade 4, female)*
> 'I feel anxious a bit… because of, for example, if I learn something in the wrong way, confuse words, then I'm nervous a bit.'

> *Excerpt 12: Anxiety: speaking – Communicative apprehension (Interview 11, grade 8, female)*
> 'I can't dare to speak English…, so as not to speak it in the wrong way.'

Self-motivation can be shaped by learners' self-efficacy because it denotes their belief to be able to cope with specific difficulties. Young learners face various kinds of difficulties when learning a new language, and their ability to solve these is the indicator of their self-efficacy. In the following excerpts (Excerpts 13-15) learners report how they locate and override difficulties in pronunciation. The pronunciation of English words is difficult for a number of learners. It is also clear from the excerpts that someone's assistance can help overriding this difficulty.

> *Excerpt 13: Self-efficacy – Locating difficulty in pronunciation (Interview 1, grade 3, female)*

'When we say it, it is very strange, because it is different from Hungarian, so it must be seen very well, whether there is an r in it, because the difference cannot be heard well.'

Excerpt 14: Self-efficacy – Locating and overriding difficulty with pronunciation (Interview 1, grade 3, female)
'There are easy and difficult words… but if my mother thinks I don't know one of them, she helps me with sounding it out and this way it becomes easy.'

Excerpt 15: Self-efficacy – Overriding difficulties with pronunciation (Interview 13, grade 4, female)
'For me, it's easier if I first memorise how it is written. If I cannot pronounce it, then I learn it only as it is written. Then mom corrects me a lot. It is told to me so many times that I'm able to learn it.'

Although the learner in the above excerpt seems to successfully apply the strategy of learning the phonetic pronunciation of English words, this strategy may considerably delay learning the right pronunciation of words. If help arrives in time it can help learners acquire truly helpful strategies for learning vocabulary.

Besides pronunciation another area of difficulty young learners face is orthography. Since they have to write the unknown words in their vocabulary and following the common assessing practice they have to take immediate vocabulary tests, young learners may feel that learning the right orthography is especially important.

Excerpt 16: Self-efficacy – Difficulty with orthography (Interview 22, grade 8, female)
'Well…, may be writing is a bit more difficult. I know it better in speech.'

Further types of self-motivational strategies are satisfaction, skilfulness and self-rewarding. Since they provide motivation after having learnt the words, they belong to Post-Appraisal of Vocabulary Learning Tactics. Skilfulness means the ability to learn a lot of words at a time, and to remember them for a long time.

Excerpt 17: Skilfulness in retaining words (Interview 11, grade 8, female)
'Interviewee: I don't like learning words… because it takes time, and I like to be outside and then I'm closed.
Interviewer: But, do you think, you learn words effectively?
Interviewee: I hope so. They are retained…'

In the excerpt above (Excerpt 17), besides feeling skilful, the eighth-grader learner demonstrates a high degree of self-regulatory control, since she is able to set up the order of importance and is determined to learn vocabulary even though she would prefer doing something else.

Another component of motivation is satisfaction. When learners are satisfied with their learning outcome they are motivated to continue learning. Satisfaction has a positive effect on self-evaluation, therefore it functions as a self-motivating strategy. Excerpt 18 shows learners' satisfaction after having learnt the vocabulary. However, as Excerpt 19 indicates, not every learner is satisfied with their learning strategies.

Excerpt 18: Satisfaction after learning (Interview 5, grade 7, male)
'After learning it is a better feeling, I don't have a guilty conscience…, and I have learnt, I'm over it, I'm relaxed to learn for the next day.'

Excerpt 19: Satisfaction with strategy use

(Interview 13, grade 4, female)
'Interviewer: Are you satisfied with the way you learn words?
Interviewee: No, I'm not, because I can't memorise a lot of words at the same time.'

It is clear from the next excerpt (Excerpt 20) that the girl from third-grade has not been aware of using strategies for vocabulary learning. This underlines the importance of strengthening young learners' metacognition and strategic thinking.

Excerpt 20: Satisfaction with strategy use
(Interview 2, grade 3, female)
'Interviewer: Would you like to know a new method for learning words?
Interviewee: Well… I haven't yet thought about it.'

The next two excerpts (Excerpts 21-22) illustrate that learners are mainly satisfied with their word retention. However, learners seem to be aware of the limitations of their memory. This points to the importance of long-term revision.

Excerpt 21: Satisfaction with word retention
(Interview 5, grade 7, male)
'Interviewer: Do you remember words once you have learnt them?
Interviewee: Well…, I remember a bit. It's like a text of a song. I remember it.'

Excerpt 22: Satisfaction with word retention
(Interview 3, grade 3, male)
'I remember for a long time. If a word occurred, let's say, 5 months ago, it's very difficult to remember.'

Self-rewarding is a further form of self-motivation, which has a supportive effect on language learning. It is a form of extrinsic motivation, which has an immediate effect that help sustain learning motivation in the short run. Self-provided extrinsic rewards (Wolters, 1999) help students regulate their motivation. Rewards reinforce learners' desire to reach a particular goal associated with completing a learning task. They can be concrete, such as eating an ice-cream, or subtle, such as making self-praising verbal statements (Wolters, 2003). Below there are examples for both types of self-rewarding.

Excerpt 23: Self-rewarding: eating (Interview 10, grade 5, male)
'Interviewer: When you have learnt English words well, do you reward yourself?
Interviewee: Yes. I eat some chocolate.'

Excerpt 24: Self-rewarding: relaxing (Interview 11, grade 8, female)
'Interviewee: After having learnt all the words, I start to learn the text.
Interviewer: And what is the reward then?
Interviewee: Relaxing, there is little from it…'

Excerpt 25: Self-rewarding: feeling happy
(Interview 13, grade 4, female)
'Interviewer: Do you reward yourself after having learnt the words?
Interviewee: No…, I just feel happy.'

Based on the data gained from open-ended interviews a structured questionnaire was developed which made gathering more data possible. In the next subchapter the results of the structured interviews concerning young learners' motivation are presented.

4.2 Results of the structured interviews

In this part young learners' answers to the structured questionnaire are enlisted. Although the structured interviews provided more data on motivation, the most typical answers cited below highly resemble the answers given in open-ended interviews. For that reason an in-depth analysis is not provided here.

1 Why do you think it is important to learn English words? (instrumental motivation)
Because it is a world language and we will be able to speak English.
If I go abroad, it will be useful to make myself understood.
We can go to other countries and understand what people say.
I can choose a job that needs English.

2 What is difficult for you in learning words? (initial appraisal: self-efficacy, difficulties)
Nothing.
To learn the meaning of a word.
The pronunciation of some words is difficult.
It is difficult to write the words correctly.
There are more difficult words, for example, with two or three vowels or consonants.

3 If you feel anxious about whether you can learn words, how do you lower your anxiety? (initial appraisal: lowering anxiety)
I don't feel anxious.
I read the words till I do not forget them.
I do something else, for example I play, and then I turn back to it.
I eat some chocolate.
I speak with my mom and she helps.
I believe I will succeed, and it will be even worse if I'm anxious.

4 Having learnt the words, how do you reward yourself?
(post-appraisal of vocabulary learning: self-rewarding)
I eat come chocolate.
I fell happy.
With a 5 on a test.
I'm allowed to watch TV for a long time.
I listen to music.
I beg my mom for a horse-riding.
I stroke my head.

5 How can you make learning words more effective?
(post-appraisal of vocabulary learning: efficacy)
It is good as it is.
By reading a book or listening to English texts.
By learning more.

6 What would you change in your method of learning words?
(post-appraisal of vocabulary learning: satisfaction)
Nothing, it is good like this.
I would pay more attention to it.
I would learn more words.
I would learn continuously, more times but fewer words.

Among the answers there are examples for instrumental motivation. Moreover, young learners, as well as in the open-ended interviews, identified the most difficult aspects of vocabulary learning in English, which are learning the meaning, pronunciation and orthography of words. They apply different strategies to reduce their anxiety, and they also mention strategies for endurance, postponing the action of learning, self-rewarding, asking for help, and thinking positively. Among the ways of self-rewarding there are concrete and subtler solutions. Some of the answers illustrate how much learners feel effective in learning words. They seem to be aware of the ways they can improve their vocabulary learning. Moreover, young learners have specified strategies which can help them improve their language learning.

The answers to the structured questionnaire fall in line with the answers given to the open-ended interviews, and thus they support the initial results. In order to further investigate young learners' motivation and self-motivation, based on the results of the structured questionnaire, a four-point Likert-type questionnaire was created, which made qualitative data analysis possible. In the next subchapter I share the results of this qualitative research.

4.3 Results of the questionnaires

In Table 1 the elements of young learners' motivation and self-motivation are presented. For data elicitation a 4-point Likert scale was developed and used in the main study (Hardi, 2014). The data gained by the quantitative questionnaire have been further analysed to get more refined information on young learners' motivation. The highest means in the table denote items of instrumental motivation, on which young learners seem to agree completely. In the case of self-motivating strategies there is a higher deviation but young learners with a mean of 3 or higher seem to agree on 6 of the 14 items. They agree that using the computer and watching TV (M=3.50) are used as rewarding strategies in vocabulary learning. They are satisfied with the methods they use (M=3.15) and agree that they should learn more (M=3.00). Although they have difficulties with pronunciation (M=3.10), they feel efficient (M=3.07) in vocabulary learning. They agree that they can reduce their anxiety if they learn more. The mean scores of the rest of the self-motivation strategies fall below 3 with quite high deviations which means that young learners do not completely agree with the use of these strategies.

Table 1. Young learners' motivation and self-motivation to learn English vocabulary

Item	MEAN	SD
Motivation (world language)	3.72	0.51
Motivation (foreign country)	3.60	0.55
Rewarding (computer, TV)	3.50	075
Satisfaction (method)	3.15	0.84
Difficulties (pronunciation)	3.10	0.85
Self-efficacy (efficiency)	3.07	0.70
Anxiety (learning more)	3.00	0.82
Satisfaction (learning more)	3.00	0.84
Anxiety (no anxiety)	2.94	0.93
Satisfaction (reading, listening)	2.85	0.91
Difficulties (meaning)	2.72	0.87
Anxiety (positive thinking)	2.71	1.00
Rewarding (eating)	2.69	1.06
Satisfaction (new methods)	2.68	1.05
Anxiety (put away - return)	2.66	1.04
Difficulties (orthography)	2.55	0.86

N=331
4=completely agree, 3=agree, 2=partly agree, 2=not agree

More information can emerge from examining age differences in self-motivation. Table 2 shows age-related differences in young learners' self-motivation in vocabulary learning.

Table 2. Differences in young learners' self-motivation in vocabulary learning

Self-motivation	Age groups			
Anxiety	2**	2.68		
no anxiety	3*		3.03	
	1*		3.25	
Anxiety	3*	2.53		
positive thinking	2*	2.65		
	1**		3.12	
Anxiety	3*	2.78		
learning more	2*	2.99		
	1**		3.40	
Self-efficacy	3	3.01		
efficiency	2	3.02		
	1		3.29	
Satisfaction	3*	2.74		
learning more	2*		3.04	
	1**			3.37
Satisfaction	3*	2.73		
reading, listening	2*	2.76		
	1**		3.23	
Satisfaction	2*	2.54		
new methods	3*	2.57		
	1**		3.10	

**P < 0.001, *P < 0.005
Age groups: 1: grades 3-4, 2: grades 5-6, 3: grades 7-8

Table 2 contains only significant differences between the age groups in young learners' motivation. It can be seen that it is age group 1 that behaves differently. Learners belonging to this age group are the less anxious about vocabulary learning and they report that they can reduce their anxiety with positive thinking and learning more. They agree that they are efficient in vocabulary learning. Also, they are satisfied with vocabulary learning and they think they can learn more. They also agree that they can improve their vocabulary with reading and listening more and would like to try new strategies for vocabulary learning.

The differences in motivation between young learners' age groups highlight very important issues in vocabulary learning. The results indicate that the youngest learners are the most motivated for learning vocabulary. This can be due to various reasons. Foreign language education seems to be different at the beginning of primary school language learning from later educational practices. Teachers, materials and requirements can motivate learners in the lower primary more than in the upper classes and the youngest learners may get more help when they start learning a language. Moreover, they have to cope with much less vocabulary than their older mates. All this implies that good practices introduced at the beginning phase of language teaching should be kept, although they should be altered to fit the needs of learners in the upper classes.

5 Conclusions

The examination of young learners' self-motivation and motivation to learn vocabulary in English enables us to conclude a number of things. First of all, young learners should get more help with learning vocabulary. This help should mainly come from language teachers and the family. Learners should deal with the foreign language more, in more realistic environment, which

provide them with more possibilities for practicing. Practice should happen in various forms inside and outside school. Furthermore, learners should be introduced and use more effective strategies. Language educators should prefer long-term revision instead of short-term repetition. Taking vocabulary tests not only forces learners to acquire false ways and strategies for learning vocabulary (Budai, 2013), but also provides no long-term positive effects, and it can be harmful if test anxiety is taken into consideration. What should really be welcome in vocabulary teaching is maintaining young learners' interest and motivation, developing their metacognition and introducing them to new and useful strategies, which make their vocabulary learning easier and more rapid. These practices can help learners become more self-confident and thereby more effective in vocabulary learning.

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