STRATEGIES FOR MOTIVATING LEARNERS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

STRATEGII DE MOTIVARE ÎN ÎNVĂȚAREA LIMBII ENGLEZE: PERSPECTIVELE PROFESORILOR ȘI ALE ELEVILOR

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Abstract: *Motivation is very important nowadays. Without a clear understanding of motivational processes, it is difficult for educators to design instruction that effectively engages learners. This paper shows the importance of motivation in the process of learning English as a foreign language and the role of motivational strategies in developing student performance. This study examined the main sources of student motivation, as well as the strategies used by teachers to keep students active during the lesson. The study was conducted with 5th- and 6th-grade students and is based on questionnaire data and classroom observations. The results demonstrate that students are motivated, especially by grades, encouragement, and interactive activities. Also, the teacher-student relationship and the emotional support provided by teachers and parents have an important role in maintaining interest in learning. At the same time, the research showed that motivation is not the same for all students, as they demonstrate diverse goals, ranging from achieving high grades to developing language competence. Therefore, teachers need to use different teaching methods to keep students focused and engaged in the learning process.*
Keywords: *motivation, students, English, teacher, teaching strategies*

Rezumat: *Motivația este foarte importantă în zilele noastre. Fără o înțelegere clară a proceselor motivaționale, este dificil pentru cadrele didactice să proiecteze instruirea într-un mod care să implice eficient elevii. Acest articol evidențiază importanța motivației în procesul de învățare a limbii engleze ca limbă străină și rolul strategiilor motivaționale în dezvoltarea performanței elevilor. Studiul examinează principalele surse ale motivației elevilor, precum și strategiile utilizate de profesori pentru ai menține activi în timpul lecției. Cercetarea a fost realizată pe un grup de elevi din clasele a V-a și a VI-a și s-a bazat pe date colectate prin chestionare și observații la clasă. Rezultatele arată că elevii sunt motivați în special de note, încurajare și activități interactive. De asemenea, relația profesor–elev și sprijinul emoțional oferit de profesori și părinți au un rol important în menținerea interesului pentru învățare. În același timp, cercetarea a evidențiat faptul că motivația nu este aceeași pentru toți elevii, aceștia având obiective diferite, de la obținerea unor note bune până la dezvoltarea competenței lingvistice. Prin urmare, profesorii trebuie să utilizeze metode de predare variate pentru a menține elevii concentrați și implicați în procesul de învățare.*
Cuvinte-cheie: *motivație, elevi, limba engleză, profesor, strategii didactice*

Motivating students in learning English as a foreign language is very important because it helps them become more active, confident, and successful in the classroom. English is one of the most widely recognized languages internationally, and it can be used in education, work, communication, technology, and travel. This suggests that learning

English has become an essential skill for students who want better opportunities for the future. But learning a language is not always easy. It requires a lot of time, effort, and patience.

Many students learn with enthusiasm and, after a period of time, lose interest or become less motivated. Therefore, motivation is considered one of the most important factors in learning a foreign language. It influences how much effort they put into the learning process, how they behave in class, and how successful they are. Motivation can be seen as the inner or external force that pushes a student to learn, continue learning, and achieve their goals. Without motivation, even students who have great learning abilities do not reach their full potential. On the other hand, motivated students are usually more active, more confident, and more eager to respond in class.

The objectives of this research were to examine the types of motivation that influence students in the learning process, to identify the factors that contribute to student motivation in the classroom, and to analyze the methods teachers use to increase student motivation. Additionally, this study aimed to measure the level of students' motivation through a questionnaire and to analyze the factors that influence it in the learning process. In the theoretical part of the paper, the concept of motivation is presented from the perspective of several researchers. Motivation is explained as a psychological process that determines the initiation, maintenance, and direction of behavior in achieving a goal. Regarding education, motivation plays an important role because it directly influences students’ involvement in learning activities. Therefore, the main types of motivation are analyzed, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors and refers to situations in which students learn out of personal interest, curiosity, or the pleasure of discovering new things. The learning process here is a source of satisfaction in itself, without the need for rewards. Extrinsic motivation arises from external factors and occurs when students are influenced by factors such as grades, teacher appreciation, rewards, or parental pressure.

Another type of motivation is instrumental, which refers to learning English for practical reasons, such as passing exams, getting a better job, traveling abroad, or studying in another country. Integrative motivation is related to the desire to learn English in order to communicate with people from other cultures and to become part of an international community. It is associated with cultural understanding and communication with native speakers. All of these important types of motivation work together and influence how students learn and develop their language skills. The teacher’s role is very important – the teacher not only transmits information but also guides and supports students. When the teacher creates an atmosphere of support, students are more likely to understand and be more motivated to reach their potential.

The practical part of this research is based on classroom observations and a questionnaire administered during teaching practice with 5th and 6th-grade students. The research aimed to identify what motivates students in English classes, analyze how different teaching methods influence their level of participation and interest, and determine which type of motivation predominates, intrinsic or extrinsic. During the observation process, several types of classroom activities were used, including group work, pair work, reading comprehension tasks, games, storytelling activities, and speaking exercises. Students were more active and involved when the activities were interactive and practical.

Group work helped students feel more relaxed and less afraid of making mistakes, and games created a more enjoyable learning environment. However, the speaking activities were more difficult for some students, especially for those who were shy or afraid of making mistakes, but encouraged by the teacher, many of them tried to participate and respond by

the end of the lesson. The results of the questionnaire revealed important information about students' motivation. The data showed that most students were primarily motivated by extrinsic factors. Specifically, 62% of students indicated that external factors, such as grades and assessments, were their main source of motivation, while 38% reported intrinsic motivation, meaning they learn English out of personal interest or curiosity. This indicates that extrinsic motivation is currently stronger among students, especially in the school environment, where assessment plays an important role.

Further analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that 40% of students considered grades and assessment as the most important motivational factor in learning English. This shows that students' success has a strong influence on their behavior and effort. In addition, 25% of students highlighted teachers' praise and feedback as an important source of motivation, which emphasizes the emotional impact of encouragement in the classroom. Approximately 20% of students indicated that interactive activities made them more motivated, showing that practical and engaging tasks are highly appreciated. Additionally, 15% of students selected rewards and prizes as a motivational factor, suggesting that external rewards have an influence, but are less important compared to grades and teacher support.

The last section of the questionnaire focused on what helps students stay motivated during the learning process. The results showed that 40% of students reported that encouragement and feedback from the teacher were the most important factors. About 29% of students emphasized the importance of clear, detailed explanations of both in-class and homework assignments, while 17% said that fewer assignments would increase their motivation. Finally, the remaining students (14%) considered rewards a good and useful source, but not the most essential. These results indicate that students value understanding, support, and clarity more than pressure or a large workload. Classroom observations highlighted that most students try to continue learning even when they face difficulties, which reflects their persistence and determination. However, one of the main barriers was the fear of making mistakes. Many students avoided speaking or answering questions in English because they were afraid of making mistakes or being judged by their peers. This fear can greatly reduce participation and limit language development. Therefore, creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment is essential for increasing motivation.

The findings of this research clearly suggest that motivation plays a primary and central role in learning English as a foreign language. The findings demonstrate that motivation influences students' participation, behavior, and academic success. There are different types of motivation that influence students in different ways, but all are important. While extrinsic motivation, especially grades, has a stronger impact, intrinsic motivation is essential for long-term learning and personal development. The teacher plays a key role in maintaining and increasing motivation through encouragement, feedback, clear explanations, and new and interesting teaching strategies. The inclusion of engaging activities and emotional support creates a more effective learning environment and helps students become more confident, active, and successful in learning English.

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