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Motivating Students to Participate in the German as a Foreign Language Classroom

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July 15, 2022

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to understand how to motivate students in the German as a foreign language class to actively participate and engage in the learning process. Increasing motivation in students is a struggle with which all teachers are familiar, but teachers of foreign languages have a particular challenge because of the intimidation students feel when faced with producing assignments and content in a new foreign language. This topic is also of particular interest to foreign language educators because student retention is becoming a serious problem, leading many school districts to cut smaller language programs like French and German. Maintaining an engaging classroom environment, where students participate and want to take higher levels of the language is critical in advocating for the existence of language programs. In this paper, I examine various theories of motivation and how most literature on the subject of motivation in the foreign language classroom can be categorized into the three basic needs outlined in Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination-theory – autonomy, relatedness, and competency. I analyze the results of five semi-structured interviews carried out with students in a German I classroom in a Nebraska high school and present a miniature unit plan based on the research in the literature review and the findings of the interviews. Results suggest that students in a German as a foreign language class are most likely to be motivated to participate when the needs outlined by self-determination-theory are considered, specific, time-bound, and measurable goals are set, and students are given ample opportunity for peer interaction through class activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is an elusive force that all teachers wish could be ever-present in their classrooms. Every teacher has the experience of dealing with students who are particularly

unmotivated and most find bringing these students out of their shell a near impossible task. This is even more challenging in foreign language classrooms. Students tend to see learning a foreign language as a daunting, anxiety-inducing, and, most unfortunately, unnecessary task. Students regard foreign language education as irrelevant to their daily lives and language educators must convince already apathetic students of the value of learning another language. These teachers have special need of guidance for motivating their students. Researchers have therefore endeavored for years to find the root causes of motivation in foreign language education and what teachers can do to foster its growth.

Self-Determination Theory and its relation to other motivation theories

One of the most consistently cited psychological theories in research on building motivation in the foreign language classroom is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985 (Deci & Ryan, 1985). While other motivation theories tend to focus on the amount of motivation an individual has, SDT focuses on the type or quality of motivation, claiming that whatever type of motivation a person has greatly influences their persistence and well-being. Research on this subject cites SDT so often because of its profound influence on the theories that followed and even how it connects to prominent theories that preceded it, such as Gardner and Lambert's 1972 theory of integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Self-Determination theory is complex, with a glossary of terms under its umbrella that all affect one another. First of all, there are three types of motivational outcomes in SDT: autonomous, controlled motivation, and then amotivation, which simply means not being motivated at all (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In this literature review, I will focus on the first two types. Autonomous motivation refers to “both intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation

in which people have identified with an activity's value and ideally will have integrated it into their sense of self" (Deci & Ryan, 2008 p. 182). In other words, either someone is pursuing goals they personally set and feel will benefit them, or they believe in the value of a goal another person is setting for them, with no pressure from an outside force. Autonomous motivation tends to lead to greater psychological health. Controlled motivation refers to motivation regulated by an outside source, having nothing to do with a person's personal desires. When someone is controlled, they feel pressure to think, feel, or act a certain way. This type includes both external regulation, in which an individual wishes to gain an award or avoid punishment set by an outside force, or introjected regulation, which essentially means internalized external regulation. This is when an individual pursues a goal set by another person because they want approval or want to avoid shame. Some other important definitions within SDT are cost and attainment values. The cost refers to the effort, or how much the activity at hand limits other activities. Attainment value is the importance of doing well on a specific task. Intrinsic value, as stated, is the enjoyment of the task. Utility value, or usefulness, is how much the task fits into a student's future plans. These all play a part in determining whether a student experiences autonomous or controlled motivation in a given activity.

Autonomous and controlled motivation relate to the framework for Self-Determination Theory that influences much of the rest of research on motivation in the foreign language classroom: the three basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2008) claim that satisfying these three needs predicts greater psychological well-being in a wide range of cultures. In fact, research shows that autonomy, relatedness, and competence are important in both individualist and collectivist cultures. Autonomy of course is understood to mean the degree to which an individual feels they have a say or control in a task or situation.

Relatedness is how much an individual feels a certain task or situation has to do with their personal goals or interests. Lastly, competence is how a task or situation affects an individual's personal beliefs in their abilities. SDT claims that competence, autonomy and relatedness are universal needs that everyone is born with and develops throughout their lives. Therefore, individual differences result from how much these needs are satisfied or thwarted. In evaluating this, SDT measures causality orientations. A causality orientation is "[t]he way people orient to the environment concerning the initiation and regulation of behavior" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p.183). Basically, it is how much a given environment, like a classroom and teacher, satisfies the three basic needs. There is autonomous, controlled, and impersonal orientation. Autonomous is when all three needs are consistently and continuously satisfied. Controlled orientation means that competence and relatedness are satisfied but autonomy is not. Lastly, impersonal orientation is when all three needs are thwarted. SDT clearly attempts to draw a direct line between the type of orientation in the environment (autonomous, controlled and impersonal orientations) and the type of motivational outcome (autonomous and controlled motivation and amotivation.) Deci and Ryan claim that controlled motivation depletes energy, whereas autonomous motivation can energize a person. ["whereas controlled motives drain energy, actions that lead to need satisfaction can actually enhance energy available for self-regulation" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p.184)].

One study on SDT in foreign language classrooms, conducted at a university in Turkey, shows how these three basic needs are important in both individualist and collectivist contexts. This was a mixed-methods study with both qualitative and quantitative components that studied 412 Freshman (65% men) learning English, of which they interviewed 18 volunteers (61% men) to understand how much autonomy affected students' engagement in the EFL classroom. This

article claims that engagement is strongly related to effective learning (Dincer, Yeşilyurt, Noels, & Vargas Lascano, 2019). There are three types of engagement they were measuring: behavioral, emotional and cognitive. (Dincer, Yeşilyurt, Noels, & Vargas Lascano, 2019). Behavioral engagement is active participation in classroom activities, such as asking questions and doing homework. Emotional engagement refers to students' reactions during the learning process. Cognitive engagement is when students develop sophisticated learning strategies, like conceptual understanding over surface knowledge. The results of the study showed that students who saw their teachers as supporting autonomy, or rather, that there was an autonomous orientation in the classroom, experienced higher satisfaction of their basic needs. Those who reported higher satisfaction also had higher engagement in all three areas, as well as higher achievement.

Autonomy and Student Choice

The first of the three basic needs outlined in Self-Determination Theory is the need for autonomy, or the need for an individual feels that they have a say or control in a task or situation. A popular concept in foreign language motivation research to foster feelings of autonomy in classroom populations is student choice. The prominent researcher on motivation in the foreign language classroom, Zoltán Dörnyei, asked two hundred Hungarian teachers of English as a foreign language from various language teaching institutions how important they considered a selection of 51 strategies and how frequently they used them in their teaching practice. (Dörnyei, & Csizer, 1998) With the result he listed “Ten Commandments” for motivation in the foreign language classroom. Autonomy and student choice made it on the list as “commandment” number seven. Usually, this manifests itself during summative projects, where teachers allow students the choice between multiple activities or topics to research and present for summative projects. Thus, student choice is most frequently part of the presentational form of

communication in FL education. One study (Chamot & Genovese, 2009) had 26 English-speaking students of Spanish III make creative presentations based on their personal interests in a way that related to Spanish-speaking culture. The students in the study completed a survey of their favorite subjects, which they then narrowed down to a topic they would like to research. From there they found a connection in their topic to the Spanish-speaking world and created the presentations. This study found that after the project, many students unmotivated to take Spanish for the next year changed their minds, because they appreciated the autonomy they had over their individual topics and “they now saw how developing a higher level of Spanish proficiency could be useful in their future lives” (Chamot & Genovese 2009, p.155). Allowing student choice in this study therefore both lead to a higher sense of autonomy as well as relatedness.

However, research on student choice reveals a pit fall teachers will face if they oversimplify the concept of autonomy and treat student choice like the magic spell for motivation. Student choice does not always lead to higher effort or intrinsic motivation. For example, two studies on essay writing revealed that no-choice participants wrote higher quality essays compared with students who had a choice of topic (Flowerday et al., 2004). The problem lies in how teachers implement choice (Patall, Cooper & Wynn, 2010). The article “The Effectiveness and Relative Importance of Choice in the Classroom” says that “having choice or the act of selecting alone is not enough to support motivation. Rather, choices need to be relevant to student’s interests and goals, provide a moderate number of options, of an intermediate level of complexity and be congruent with other family and cultural values in order to affectively support motivation” (Patall, Cooper & Wynn, 2010, p.896). Without considering these factors and therefore increasing the relatability of the assignment, any choice a teacher provides becomes irrelevant to the students’ current context. The researchers demonstrated how someone

would effectively implement student choice in FL education through a study providing 207 students in ninth through twelfth grade choices for homework (Patall, Cooper & Wynn, 2010). With choices, students tended to complete more homework and scored higher on the unit test. But the researchers behind the experiment cautioned that choice alone did not cause their positive outcome. They stated that students feel autonomous and motivated when they feel like teachers understand and accept them in the classroom, provide rationales, take their perspective, and tailor activities to preferences and interests, and they structured their homework assignments accordingly. Really, the value students find in the learning task may lead to preferable learning outcomes more consistently than choice does.

Finding Value in the task – Relatedness

As stated, students of foreign language must feel that the task they are doing relates to their lives in order for them to put forth effort to complete it. If a class does not pertain to a students' goals or interests, they will not be as motivated. These are the the sixth and eighth "commandments" of Dörnyei's ten commandments for motivating students in the foreign language classroom (Dörnyei, & Csizer, 1998, p. 212). Teachers need to "select interesting tasks" and try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students." As Self-Determination Theory proposes, relatedness is a core need that students must meet in order to be motivated to learn a language. Those who research foreign language acquisition have long attempted to use relatedness to explain variations amongst motivation levels of students, both from the framework of SDT (causal orientations) and based on Gardner and Lambert's framework of integrative versus instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Integrative motivation is a mix of attitudinal, goal-motivated, and other motivational factors (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). It is a more holistic motivation to take a foreign language, where the

goal of the learner is to see themselves in the target culture and to establish a real bond with people who speak the target language. The concept of integrative motivation assumes that second language acquisition refers to the development of near-native-like language skills, which takes time, effort, and persistence. Such an advanced level of language development requires an individual to identify with the second language community on a personal level. On the other hand, instrumental motivation refers to learning a language in order to achieve or gain something. This means that the driving force behind a student's participation in class may be getting a job or looking impressive on a college application. One may notice how integrative motivation, which is based on student desires or connection with themselves and the world fills the need of relatedness more than instrumental motivation, which is based on what society or people in authority over the student deem valuable, not the student themselves. Various researchers of motivation in foreign language acquisition consider Gardner and Lambert's theory, whether a student has integrative or instrumental motivation, to be a key factor to determine their effort and success in a foreign language class. A few articles in my own research that spoke highly of the theory include two by Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 1994) (Dörnyei, 1998) and Simon James Nicholson's article (Nicholson, 2013). Researchers have examined the effect of integrative motivation on foreign language acquisition for years. However, Gardner (2001) suggests that researchers should be careful of how they measure such motivation and to which parts of this motivation they should pay attention. He states that researchers should focus specifically on motivation rather than orientations. There is little evidence that orientations are directly related to success in foreign language education. By orientations, Gardner refers to the initial reasons for which students take a foreign language. If a student's initial reason to take German is that they want to look impressive for future job applications, that does not necessarily

mean they will be less motivated in the class than someone who originally took German to travel and understand another culture. What is more important is that students find integrative motivation and are driven primarily by it during the course. Gardner (2001) also suggests that just because a student is motivated through integrative or instrumental reasons does not mean that they are only motivated in this way. Integrative and instrumental motivation are not mutually exclusive. According to Gardner (2001, p.16), “motivation is a complex phenomenon and though reasons or the goals are part of it, it is the motivation that is responsible for the success. The study on Self-Determination Theory in Turkish English as a Foreign language classes (Dincer, Yeşilyurt, Noels, & Vargas Lascano, 2019) agrees with these findings – that the orientations of the students, or the original reasons the students took English, whether instrumental or integrative, were an insufficient predictor of their motivation and therefore success in learning English.

Furthermore, some research problematizes integrative and instrumental motivation as an ethnocentric way to describe motivation in foreign language classrooms (Syed, 2001). Integrative or instrumental motivation and intrinsic or extrinsic motivation do not provide the full picture of the complex process taking place in foreign language students. Social and cultural contexts must be considered so that non-western mindsets are incorporated in the research (Syed, 2001). In a case study by Zafar Syed, he discussed the cross-cultural benefit of considering the development of “the self and self-concept” (p.129), which is positively linked with academic achievement, instead of just integrative versus instrumental motivation. His study, which included twelve university students studying Hindi (half being heritage learners) detailed four different self-identities a student might be trying to develop through studying a foreign language. These include social, racial, personal and heritage. The thesis of the article was that motivation is

complex, with an individual's "psychosocial and sociocultural history, development and interaction" (p. 131) interacting with their needs and desires, the nature of the course instruction and the individual's on-going "search within" (p. 135). Remembering these factors helps researchers understand motivation in a way that includes minorities rather than excludes them due to hyper-focus on integrative versus instrumental motivation.

Competence – Self-Efficacy and Setting Goals

In *Self Determination Theory: A Macrotheory of Human Motivation, Development and Health*, the introduction to *Self-Determination Theory*, Deci and Ryan propose that the need for competence is basic. It is why people seek out challenging and stimulating tasks (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Completing such tasks is proof to individuals that they are capable. However, this same need can drive students away from challenge, since the fear of proving themselves incompetent could deter them from seeking out anything outside of their comfort zone. This is where the concept of self-efficacy truly helps teachers understand the motivation behind their students' actions. According to *Self-Efficacy and Academic Motivation* (Schunk, 1991, p. 207), Self-efficacy is defined as the "an individual's judgements of his or her capabilities to perform given actions," which Bandura explains as the "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments." (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) In other words, self-efficacy is how much a student believes he or she can accomplish something at varying levels of complexity or difficulty. Self-efficacy is, naturally, a product of a student's backgrounds, desires, world view, and various factors that they carry with them the first day they step into a teacher's classroom. However, self-efficacy is never understood as static, as students re-evaluate their self-image after each new experience they encounter. Students will always hold

the most power over their own beliefs, but teachers still have a great capacity to either build up a learner's self-efficacy or tear it down.

Self-efficacy is also very much task- and situation-specific (Bandura 1997). Students can be confident in their ability to do one activity in a foreign language class, yet still shy away from a different task the next day. Maybe they believe that they can verbally describe a type of German food to their classmate in German, but are hesitant to write the description, for fear of spelling words wrong. Or, a student has high self-efficacy about a task but only in certain situations. Maybe a student could give their opinion about food in German to their friends, but not to a teacher that shames them for small grammar mistakes. Teachers should focus on building high self-efficacy in their students, because it truly is the driving force behind participation and motivation in foreign language learning. If they do not believe in their abilities, students will avoid tasks or not put in necessary effort into a task because they think they will fail no matter how hard they try. Self-efficacy, therefore, influences the tasks that students choose to do, the effort they exert, their persistence, and ultimately their achievement. Students tend to not engage in activities they believe will lead to negative outcomes (Schunk, 1991). The progress language students make on tasks or goals ends up conveying their capabilities to them on a rather personal level, leading to an upward or downward cycle of self-efficacy. Student self-efficacy and goals influence both their engagement in a task and how they evaluate themselves at the end of a task, which again leads to lower or higher self-efficacy, propelling or plummeting their future motivation and achievement.

Considering how influential this cycle is, how do teachers nurture positive self-efficacy in students and therefore increased motivation? As previously stated, students have far more control over their personal beliefs about themselves than their teachers do, but teachers can still

make an impact. A helpful framework to view this influence is motivation levels (Dörnyei, 1994). Dörnyei defined in his article three levels of motivation: language level, learner level, and learning situation level.

The language level has to do with the orientations and motives to take a language. The learner level is the student's personal beliefs about themselves, like self-confidence and influential factors such as L2 anxiety and self-efficacy, and their need for achievement. The learning situation level has to do with whether or not the course and the style of teaching relates to the student and how the teachers structures the environment of the class. This relates to Socio-cognitive Theory, which states that human achievement is dependent on interactions between one's behaviors, personal factors, and environmental conditions. (Schunk, 1991) "To put it simply, the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of L2 motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 275).

The learning situation is the level teachers are most able to affect. It consists of course-specific motivational components, (a student's interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction), teacher-specific motivational components, (including authority type and feedback quality), and group-specific (referring to the culture of the specific group in the classroom). Dörnyei (1994) suggests multiple concrete steps to motivating students based on this research. First of all, teachers should work to create a positive learning environment. They must create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom and develop a good relationship with students. They need to give regular positive feedback and praise so that students do not fixate on what they cannot yet do and thus deteriorate their self-efficacy (Dörnyei, & Csizer, 1998). However, all feedback, no matter students' learning outcomes, is helpful for developing high self-efficacy. Students need to know their progress and self-evaluations spur students on to improve and sustain their motivation

(Schunk, 1991). According to Schunk, self-efficacy and achievement are improved through pedagogy that implements modeled strategies, feedback, goal-setting and self-evaluation.

The first of these ingredients I will discuss is modeled strategies. As one of Dörnyei's "ten commandments" claims, teachers should prepare to be a role-model for students when they face new challenges (Dörnyei, & Csizer, 1998). According to Schunk, modeling is important to promote learning and self-efficacy, since it is difficult to imagine one's self completing or mastering a task if one has never seen someone do it before. Teachers can really prepare students to face challenge if they use both mastery models and coping models in their lessons (Schunk, 1991). Mastery modeling is demonstrating to students what it looks like to do a task perfectly. Coping modeling is demonstrating to students the areas where they could make a mistake or feel confused and what strategies they can use to solve the problem. Modeling like this to students develops their goal-setting skills and helps them more accurately evaluate their progress. Also, the more they see similar peers completing the task at hand, the more likely they are to believe that they are good enough to handle the task. In contrast, teachers, due to race, socio-economic background, age, and other identities, can often differ significantly from students, thus making relationship building a critical part of effective modeling. If there is no relationship between a teacher and their students, the divide between their identities will feel much larger.

The next of Dörnyei's suggestions to analyze is goal-setting. Research on motivation in foreign language learning repeatedly comments on setting goals: how student-set goals help with achieving relatedness, how type or quality of goals affects learning, etc. It is a critical part of contributing positively to student's self-efficacy cycles and ultimately their need for competence. Patall, Cooper and Wynn (2010) define goal-setting as "the process of establishing clear and usable targets, or objectives for learning." There is much emphasis on the "clear and usable" part

in this definition. Most research on goal-setting in the classroom agrees that in order for goals to have any effect on student motivation and achievement, they must demonstrate specificity, proximity and difficulty, and students must receive feedback on the progress on their goals (Schunk, 1991) (Fraguolis, 2009) (Moeller, Theiler, Wu, 2012) (Muñoz & Jojoa, 2014). This means that teachers and students should take care to define exactly what they are going to be able to do (specificity), that they should set short term goals (proximity) – which are more effective than long term goals – and that it is actually better for students to have difficult, or challenging goals rather than easy ones (difficulty). The types of goals teachers should set with their students can be further broken down into learning goals, the knowledge and skills that are required, and performance goals, the task that students must complete (Schunk, 1991). An example for a learning goal would be that students can use knowledge of vocabulary and use direct and indirect objects to give their opinion on food in German. A performance goal would be that students can write a review of a restaurant in German using knowledge of vocabulary and direct and indirect objects. It is important to note that goal-setting alone is not sufficient. The goals must be high quality, set by the student when applicable, and agreed upon by the student and teacher (Muñoz & Jojoa, 2014).

There are multiple helpful theories to think about goal-setting, one of the most popular being the acronym SMART. This stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Muñoz & Jojoa, 2014). Students should know in detail what they are trying to achieve and be able to measure their progress. Even though goals should challenge students, they still need to be within a student's level of competence so as not to discourage them. They must matter to students, actually relate to their learning, and have a specific timeline. If there is no specific timeline, students will have difficulty getting anything done. Muñoz and Jojoa describe a

mixed-methods study of Columbian learners of English, in which researchers used SMART goals to enhance learner's self-efficacy beliefs specifically in listening comprehension. Researchers trained students on goal-setting during one introductory lesson and then gave ten lessons, each one focusing on a different aspect of SMART goals. The pretest of their students showed that no one could effectively set SMART goals according to the criteria they set. Their post test showed that 35% in the seventh grade and 52% in the ninth grade had learned to set these goals. This study showed a positive relationship between improving setting SMART goals and changes in students' self-efficacy beliefs in listening. Locke and Latham (2009) stated in their goal-setting theory that goals and performance have a close relationship. Goals affect performance through four mechanisms: direction, effort, persistence, and strategy development. The ability to set these goals is important because Locke and Latham showed in their (2009) article that when people are trained in goal-setting strategies, as long as they are given specific and challenging goals, they are more likely to use the strategies they learned.

Muñoz and Jojoa also provide five characteristics of successful goal-setting: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. Clarity means that the "goals are measurable and unambiguous" (Muñoz & Jojoa, 2014, p. 44). Challenge of course refers to difficulty. Commitment means that students must stick with the goal, which becomes more important based on how hard the goal is. Feedback allows students a chance to feel accomplishment or redirect for the next task. With task complexity, Locke and Latham assert that students who agree to complicated tasks probably already have a high level of motivation. There are also five steps to outline how the metacognitive process students go through during a task should look so that students get the most out of the goals that they set. Step one is preparing and planning for learning. Step two is selecting and using learning strategies and step three is

monitoring strategy use. Step four is the actual implementation, orchestrating the various strategies that the students chose. As always, the final step, number five, is evaluating one's learning and the strategy used to learn.

There are a couple pitfalls teachers must keep in mind when setting goals. Firstly, the reasons driving the targets teachers set are as important as the targets themselves. Goals need to inform students about their progress rather than judge them. This is called task and ability forced goals (Moeller, Theiler & Wu, 2012) Task-forced means students show what they have learned through the mastery of tasks. (For example: I can describe my best friend in German.) This is associated with a positive learning environment. Ability-forced goals mean that students are judged based on their performance of criteria. Example: I can list twenty adjectives in German. This is associated with failure and avoidance. Task-forced goals should encourage the intrinsic motivation to learn, whereas ability-forced goals put emphasis on the extrinsic motivation to perform (Moeller, Theiler & Wu, 2012). Teachers should also be aware that students are not automatically experts at setting-goals. They need to be trained how to do so effectively. The study on Columbian students' self-efficacy in listening activities supports how much of a difference it can make to actually educate learners in goal-setting strategies (Muñoz & Jojoa, 2014). In Zoltán Dörnyei's ten commandments for motivating students in foreign language, his third suggestion is that teachers should give clear instructions and reasons for a task, which he expands upon in his ninth commandment, that goals help students develop realistic expectations about their learning (Dörnyei & Cziser, 1998). If students know what to expect, they are less likely to become discouraged and disappointed in themselves or in the teacher (Fraguolis, 2009). A study on project-based learning in an English as a foreign language classroom in a Greek primary school supports the importance of goals through the efficacy of project-based learning.

Project-based learning encourages students' interests, it is an authentic task, and it is dependent on the target language. Encouraging students' interests and the incorporation of authentic tasks speaks to the R, relatedness, in SMART goals. The fact that projects are dependent on the target language means they are task-forced; they are about the intrinsic motivation to learn. In the study, the English as a Foreign Language teacher said English was not interesting to her students before the study, but after the study they were more engaged, more easily manageable and they used more English. They also improved their understanding of the target culture as well as their own. This shows how task-forced goals such as projects enhance students' self-efficacy, fulfilling their need of competence.

Summary

The basic needs outlined in Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory are a useful way to categorize much of the research on motivation theory in the foreign language classroom. Students are more motivated to participate in class when they feel that teachers support autonomy and they are given meaningful, well-structured opportunities for choice. They put forth effort in subjects and classes that relate to their interests and expand on their personal journeys of self-improvement. Whether a student is motivated with integrative motivation or instrumental, or a mix of both, it is as important as the type of motivation itself that the class content relates to their goals and motivation for being in the class. And students will have little desire to participate in a class that lowers their feelings of competence. If a teacher builds self-efficacy through clear goal setting that is specific, time-based, and challenging, it will contribute to the development of positive self-efficacy and students who are ready to put forth the effort in the foreign language class, regardless of how daunting it may be.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study in which I interviewed five students in the German I class in which I student taught during the spring semester of 2022 about what motivates them in German. The interviewees volunteered to participate. They were semi-structured interviews, in which I prepared questions beforehand. I then planned and conducted a lesson which lasted about three days drawing from both the research in my literature review and from the answers my students gave in the interviews.

Protocol

The title of the study is “How to Motivate Students to Participate in the German as a Foreign Language Classroom.” First, literature was researched and written while at the same time, questions for a qualitative interview with five students were developed and the interviews conducted. Afterwards, a three to four day-long lesson was developed and implemented based on the research of the literature review and the qualitative interviews. The rationale for this project was to better understand how motivation works and what students’ views on motivation are, as well as practice implementing research-based practices that lead to increased motivation. The objectives were to create a lesson plan based on research and on the qualitative study. Students were briefed on the interview and then five volunteered to participate. The students who participated were two females and three males, which reflects the slightly male-heavy demographics of the class. The participants were also white, which also reflects the racial make-up of the class. The interviews were recorded then transcribed to find common themes. The recorded interviews were then deleted and aliases were used to protect students’ privacy.

Qualitative Interviews

Question	Person	Details
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Do you think it is important to learn a language—why or why not?	Martin	-Yes: communication with more types of people -Yes: opens future opportunities
	Louisa	-Yes: learning new language skills -Yes: requires you to think in new ways -Yes: opens up/ enriches future travel opportunities
	Hans	-Probably: helps one get into college and spend less money on college courses -It is kind of fun, too
	Martha	-Yes: unique opportunity to learn about different places and cultures, not given in other school subjects -Yes: exposes students to entirely new content
	Henning	-Yes: enriches future travel opportunities
Why did you take German? --special reason? --family/friends	Martin	-Had difficulty with Spanish and French sounded too difficult. -Wants to travel to Europe one day
	Louisa	-Parents and brother took German; wanted to communicate with brother -Father lived in Germany and has German-Russian heritage -Would like to travel to Germany one day -No specific goal other than wanting to learn the language
	Hans	-Would like to be accepted into a college
	Martha	-Wants to communicate with brother outside of school, who also took German -Pursuing a career in criminal investigation and learned that German may help with international CI opportunities
	Henning	-German seemed like the most interesting language -Would like to travel to Germany one day
Will you continue taking German after this year? Why or why not?	Martin	-Yes: it is easy to understand and build skills with German
	Louisa	-Yes: likes the language and does not want to stop at level 1. -Yes: it is fun to be able to speak in another language
	Hans	-Yes: finds the language and class environment fun -Yes: Likes his classmates; thinks they are nice
	Martha	-Yes: the language is interesting

		-Yes: the more interesting, complex cultural and linguistic knowledge comes with higher levels of German.
	Henning	-Yes: it is a fun class to be in.
In which subject in school do you put forth the most effort and time? Why?	Martin	-German because it challenges him and peaks his interest -Harder classes because it takes more effort
	Louisa	-AP courses, because they cost money -Music and German because she finds intrinsic enjoyment in the subjects
	Hans	-Algebra, because it is a difficult course
	Martha	-History because it is a difficult course -Science because she finds intrinsic enjoyment in the subject.
	Henning	-Puts forth effort in all of his classes fairly equally. -Pays special attention in classes with homework
	-What do you enjoy doing in German class? Why? What motivates you to participate?	Martin
Louisa		-Likes learning how to build sentences and articulate her thoughts -Motivated by wanting to get her ideas across; by wanting to be heard. -Enjoys writing assignments because they are a low-anxiety way to express herself
Hans		-likes talking to others because it is more engaging -likes creating projects because it is more engaging
Martha		-likes hands-on, social activities -enjoys when everyone is engaged because then she feels more engaged as well. -enjoyed specific subjects that related to her life
Henning		-enjoys projects and social interaction because it gives him German practice and social interaction is fun
Which learning tasks did you enjoy the least and why?		Martin
	Louisa	-Info-gap activities because the social interaction increases anxiety

	Hans	-Does not like homework, because it takes away his time.
	Martha	-did not enjoy activities at the beginning of the year, because of their simplicity
	Henning	-dislikes individual assignments because he feels he is not learning as well and it is boring to be alone.
Do you feel you have opportunities to choose what you want to learn? Or how you want to demonstrate what you have learned?	Martin	-Yes: one can branch off to other specific interests, especially since we use DuoLingo.
	Louisa	-Yes: because she can sometimes choose specific things she wants to learn about and there is opportunity to go off on tangents and learn about things that interest her.
	Hans	-Yes: You can focus more on topics that interest you.
	Martha	-Yes: there are many opportunities to learn new things and try new things.
	Henning	-To a certain extent; because they get to be in charge of themselves when they are working on projects.
how would describe the learning environment in your class? Do you feel a level of anxiety, or are you comfortable to participate actively without worry?	Martin	-Yes: He is comfortable because no one is judgmental and everyone can be themselves
	Louisa	-can be awkward when students do not want to respond, but fun when everyone is excited about something together
	Hans	-He is comfortable in class. It is a low-anxiety atmosphere.
	Martha	-Middle anxiety level, towards low-anxiety. The more people she meets the less anxiety-inducing the class is.
	Henning	-It is a low-anxiety environment because it is not like a regular school environment. He can be himself and feel relaxed.
How would you describe your relationship with your classmates? With your teacher?	Martin	-Good relationship with peers: is friends with most people -Good relationship with teachers because they are nice
	Louisa	-Good relationship with peers. They accept her and she knows some of them from other classes. -Good relationship with teachers. She appreciates that they can go off on fun tangents but still keep students focused; think they are fun.
	Hans	-Good relationship with peers because they all respect each other.

		-Good relationship with teachers; he has not had problems in the class yet.
	Martha	-Good relationships with peers because they are nice and help figure out questions with each other. -Good relationship with teachers because she understands their activities and explanations in class and she can always come in after school to finish work or ask questions.
	Henning	-Good relationships with peers because he knows all of them by now and can easily talk with each of them. -Good relationship with teachers because he feels like he learns a lot from them.
Do you feel you are challenged in your classroom? Do you have to work hard to be successful in this class?	Martin	-Sometimes. Feels less difficult after reviewing material. -Yes, he has to work hard, but only when he is not paying attention in class.
	Louisa	-To some extent. It is not a heavy amount of work and is manageable for people of various levels.
	Hans	-Occasionally challenged and feels he has to work hard to be successful.
	Martha	-Definitely challenged in the class; learning a new language is difficult and her other friends are all in Spanish.
	Henning	-Yes: he sometimes makes mistakes that he has to figure out and learn from.

RESULTS/ FINDINGS

The majority of students interviewed in this case study believed that it is important to learn a second language, mainly for integrative reasons such as being exposed to new content and ideas from a different culture, plus it opens future travel opportunities. Yet they also conceded that it is important for them too because it can help them get into college or help them in their future careers. These students had diverse reasons for taking German specifically. Some needed a language credit for college or heard it could be helpful for their future career goals and other students wanted to travel or learn more about their German heritage. All students were

motivated to take German II next year, mostly because they thought the language and the learning environment were fun and low-anxiety. In accordance with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985) students said they put forth the most effort in classes that are difficult or have a heavy amount of homework. This is partly because they wanted to achieve a grade-point average of which they could feel proud, but it is also because the challenge satisfies their basic need for competency. If this was not the case, they would not have bothered trying harder or at all in difficult classes. When discussing specific class activities, they said they enjoy activities with speaking and when everyone is participating together. The common theme was that social interaction and group activities were preferable. Also, in line with the need for competency as well as autonomy is two students who gave answers which expressed a preference for small projects, since they were self-directed. Interestingly, when asked if they felt they had opportunities to choose what they learned or how they demonstrated what they learned they all responded yes or yes to a certain extent, but gave reasons to support their answer that had more to do with relatedness than autonomy. One student said he can “focus more” on topics that interested him, instead of saying he had opportunities to choose topics that interested him. The fact that they all responded positively to the question supports the research that attributes much of the success of student choice to curriculum that relates to students’ lives (Patall, Cooper & Wynn, 2010). Somewhat different than the research presented in the literature review, students emphasized the role of relationships with their peers and teachers. They stated that everyone “can be themselves” in this classroom environment. They spoke positively of the relationships with their peers because it was a nonjudgmental environment and they spoke positively of the relationships with their teachers because they were willing to answer any questions the students had. This relates to motivation theory because the students were experiencing motivation due to a positive learning situation

(Dörnyei, 1994). The learning situation can open up or close students off to class material, effecting their motivation to participate.

After conducting research and interviews, I conducted a short unit on international food in Berlin. The learning goals of the unit were “I can describe the diverse international food scene in Berlin,” “I can describe and compare the international food scene in Lincoln,” “I can describe my needs (“I have hunger”/ “I have thirst”),” and “I can explain why there are so many different types of food in Berlin and what the population of Berlin is like.” Students then completed a small presentation comparing the menu of an ethnic minority restaurant in Berlin to a restaurant representing the same ethnic minority in Lincoln. They completed and presented the project in groups of four. All groups used the time allotted for the project and finished the presentation on time, either somewhat or sufficiently meeting the requirements. Some students felt anxious and barely spoke during the presentation, which was the purpose of letting them work in groups. After the presentations, students completed self-evaluation forms about their performance so that they could reflect on what they did well or can improve throughout the unit. Students were relatively engaged through the entire unit and some of the students who usually have trouble turning in their assignments on time or at all turned in their assignments.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the students interviewed in this German I class gave answers that were consistent with the research on motivation theory in foreign language education. They also noted the important of a friendly and nonjudgmental learning environment and how this motivated them to sign up for German the following year. Should anyone replicate this case study in their own foreign language classes, it would be beneficial to randomly select interviewees rather than

relying on volunteers, so responses can better reflect all students with diverse levels of motivation. The implementation of motivation theory into the miniature unit on international food in Berlin had a noticeable effect on the students and learning environment. The entire time, students were laughing and making comments about the content that was surprising to them. Every student participated in and turned in a final project that effectively compared international food in Berlin and Lincoln and most turned in the supplementary materials, including the mandatory notes on each other's presentations and the self-evaluation form. A couple groups also broke the norm set by the majority of the class and explored non-western food traditions in their presentations, such as Indian, Brazilian, and Vietnamese. Creating a curriculum that utilized motivation theory is simple to do and effective, if a teacher relies on the basic needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competency (also known as the acronym ARC), use peer interaction in lesson activities, and sets goals which students can revisit and evaluate themselves on as they advance through the material.

MATERIALS

Language & Level/ Grade:	German Level 4 Grade 9-11	Approximate Length of Unit:	3 Days
Performance Range:	Novice-Mid	Approximate Number of Minutes/ Day:	50 minutes/ day
Theme & Topic: Food: International Food in Berlin		Essential Question: What is the international food scene like in Berlin in comparison to my hometown?	
Unit Goals			
Learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the diverse international food scene in Berlin • Describe and compare the international food scene of their hometowns • Use the food vocabulary they have learned to describe individual dishes from actual restaurants in Berlin and Lincoln • State their needs (“I am hungry”/ “I am thirsty”) 			
Tasks for Assessment			
Interpretive			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and respond to short, daily warm-up journals in order to ease them into using German at the beginning of class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was ist dein Lieblingsessen, das nicht Amerikanisch ist? Was ist dein Lieblingsr , das nicht Amerikanisch ist? (<i>What is your favorite food, that is not American? What is your favorite restaurant, that is not American?</i>) Was ist deine Lieblingsspeise? Welche Zutaten gibt es in der Speise? (<i>What is your favorite dish? What ingredients does the dish have?</i>) Was war dein Mittagessen von gestern? Was war die Zutaten? (<i>What was your lunch from yesterday? What were the ingredients?</i>) “Around the World” game to review essential food vocabulary terms 		
Interpersonal		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think-pair-share to answer questions about the introductory presentation on international food in Berlin conducted in 90% German Recipe jumble of Currywurst and Dönerkebabs. With their table partners and the help of online dictionary Linguee.com, students divide the jumble of ingredients into two separate recipes: one for Currywurst and one for Dönerkebabs based on what they know about each street food. 		
Presentational		
<p>In a group of four, prepare a multimedia presentation comparing two dishes from an international restaurant in Berlin and two dishes from an international restaurant of the same cuisine in Lincoln. List at least four ingredients per dish using vocabulary you know and include the price. Present the presentation to the class. Everyone in the group must speak (in German) at least once. Must take and turn in notes on provided note handout for every other presentation besides their own.</p>		
Can Do Statements:		
Interpretive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can describe the diverse international food scene in Berlin. I can describe and compare the international food scene in Lincoln. I can describe my needs (“I have hunger”/ “I have thirst”). 	
Presentational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can work in a group to create and present a PowerPoint in German on international restaurants in Berlin and Lincoln. 	
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With my partners’ help, I can identify and categorize ingredients using the food vocabulary I have learned this unit. 	
Intercultural Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain why there are so many different types of food in Berlin and what the population of Berlin is like. 	
Supporting Functions	Supporting Structures/ Patterns	Priority Vocabulary
Describing international foods in Berlin Comparing international food in Berlin and Lincoln	Using complete sentences Using the accusative case to describe ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ich habe Hunger (<i>I am hungry</i>) Ich habe Durst (<i>I am thirsty</i>)

<p>Giving opinions on favorite types of food or restaurants</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In das Restaurant gibt es... (<i>In the restaurant, there is...</i>) • In der Speise gibt es... (<i>In the dish, there is...</i>) • Die Speise (<i>the dish</i>) • Die Zutaten (<i>the ingredients</i>)
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Key Learning Activity	How does this activity support the unit goals?	Mode of Communication
<p>Introductory presentation of international food in Berlin given in 90% German</p>	<p>Introduces the topic</p>	<p>Interpretive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think-pair-share to figure out what event is taking place in the picture (Street Food Thursdays in Berlin) 	<p>Practices interpreting topic information given in German</p>	<p>Interpretive/ Interpersonal</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together as a class to decipher the Facebook announcement about the upcoming street food vendors. What words and nationalities do you recognize? 	<p>Uses authentic text to describe international food scene in Berlin</p>	<p>Interpretive/ Interpersonal</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion: what kinds of international restaurants are there in Lincoln? 	<p>Compares international food scene in Berlin and hometown (relates to personal experience)</p>	<p>Interpretive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short presentation of Currywurst and Dönerkebabs, including information on the founders of these iconic Berlin street foods 	<p>Example of international cuisine influencing Germany</p>	<p>Interpretive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a partner (your choice), find an example of an international restaurant in Lincoln, Nebraska using google maps and write down two of the menu items one can buy there and what the ingredients are. 	<p>Compares international food scene in Berlin and hometown (relates to personal experience)</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using google maps to research, get in a group of four (your choice) and spend 35 total minutes (plus time at home) making a 	<p>Practices interpreting German websites and creating</p>	<p>Interpersonal/ Presentational</p>

presentation on an international restaurant in Berlin and in Lincoln	product as a group to compare international food in Berlin and in hometown	
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