

## A hitchhiker's guide to motivation

Éva Mák

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

Dörnyei, Zoltán & Ushioda, Ema (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow: Pearson Education. 326 pages, ISBN 978-1-4082-0502-0

### Why is it a must-have?

This book is part of the series entitled *Applied Linguistics in Action* by Pearson Education and conforms to the general concepts and layout requirements of the editors, Candlin and Hall. It is the second, revised and updated edition of Dörnyei's *Teaching and researching motivation*, originally published in 2001. This edition is co-authored by Ushioda.

In the cyclical structure of practice-theory-practice, the authors introduce and explain the main theoretical concepts connected to second language motivation and share relevant complementary issues and unsolved questions in a comprehensible manner. The design of the book and the writers' attempt to include an explicit research guide of case studies and various other resources successfully maintain readers' long-term attention and supply them with tools for carrying out their own practice-related research. All in all, the combination of effective form and updated content, written in a reader-friendly style, make this work a must-have guide for various participants of education (e.g. teachers, administrators, education experts) and even novice researchers in various fields of applied linguistics.

### What is in there?

Revisiting the topic of motivation research has resulted in the creation of new content. The decade that has passed since the first edition with the same title brought about changes in the area that made the inclusion of motivational strategies and their classroom application as a new focus possible while the authors also retained the relevant issues of de-motivation and teacher motivation in this book.

In Section I, Dörnyei and Ushioda introduce the basic concept of motivation by exploring its challenging perspectives and theories in connection with motivation in psychology. They also include a historical overview of the motivational aspects of SL/FL language learning and the current socio-dynamic perspectives related to learning another language. In Section II, they connect the concept of motivation with language learning. In doing so, they describe several practical strategies and approaches towards motivation, warn against the de-motivating influences of various contexts, and highlight the aspect of teacher motivation as a major contributing factor in investigating learner motivation.

Section III focuses on researching motivation. The authors explain the theoretical aspects and methodological decisions about the types of research that may prove to be essential for novice students in the science of education research. In Section IV, the writers locate their specific interest

in motivation research among other disciplines and introduce the up-to-date areas of sources and resources for novice researchers, thus creating a wider context of further relevance in the fields.

### **What are the strengths?**

The formal characteristics include a short introductory list in each chapter with the appropriate operational goals in focus: an idea that makes short-term reading achievement possible. Also, the key concepts, quotes and supplementary examples can be viewed as integral parts of the main text. Furthermore, the complexity of some theoretical concepts is illustrated in diagrams. Finally, the general formatting approach, highlighting the main points, makes the text transparent and helps render this extensive reading experience easy.

The balance between theory and practice approaches makes it possible for a wider audience to learn about the motivation factor. The background concepts are described in a simple and comprehensible manner and the displayed research findings illustrate these concepts in a context-specific manner. A more thorough look at how a chapter is structured can demonstrate how the intricacies of the issues under investigation are presented in a very clear but nonetheless complex manner.

The main sections of the book are further divided into chapters. In Chapter 7 (Section II), the connection between teachers' commitment and their learners' motivation is made explicit from the start. After reviewing the relevant literature and clarifying the main motivational aspects, the authors discuss each of these in detail. The intrinsic components of teaching are related to the basic human needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence. The critical issue of the teacher's sense of efficacy also becomes relevant. The social contextual component of teacher motivation includes the importance of school-based extrinsic factors and societal-level factors in connection with organizational psychology. The temporal dimension of teacher motivation refers to the traditional concept of teaching as a lifelong career and compares the concept of career and contingent path. Furthermore, the authors discuss potential threats to teacher motivation: stress, restricted autonomy, insufficient self-efficacy and the lack of intellectual challenge. Then the major research findings are introduced in connection with L2 teacher motivation, from Pennington's focus on work satisfaction and motivation to Kubanyiova's study of teacher development. Furthermore, the writers revisit the concepts of teacher enthusiasm, passion for teaching and intrinsic commitment and draw the reader's attention to the Pygmalion effect.

Reading through Chapters 8 and 9 (Section III) will be useful for novice researchers because of the section's pragmatic approach. In Chapter 8 the writers, who are both accomplished researchers in this field, guide their reader through the main issues of selecting the area of focus, the variable and the method of inquiry. Chapter 9 is dedicated to the introduction and research-based illustration of the main quantitative motivation research methods: for instance, questionnaire survey, correlation, factor analysis, structural equation modelling, and experimental studies. Then the focus turns towards qualitative, mixed-method and complex dynamic system approaches.

Section IV provides resources and further information in connection with related disciplines in social sciences. It lists journals, databases, Internet sources, and publications containing method-related findings. This part will also be useful for those devising their own research instruments because the writers provide several designs for questionnaires.

This book about motivation is highly inspiring. The reviewer, being a practicing language teacher and also a researcher, was certainly able to connect to several aspects of the book.

**Any weaknesses?**

The weakness of the book may only come from its strength. By providing a comprehensive guide for a general audience interested in motivation, the two writers, with their quantitative research backgrounds, did not intend to cater for a more specific audience looking for an exploratory approach in motivation research and thus in need of in-depth knowledge of the qualitative research paradigm: for example ethnography or action research.

**Conclusion**

The pragmatic relevance of education research goes beyond everyday pedagogical practice. Professional training in the area of motivation should be compulsory for trainee teachers while further self-advancement for teaching professionals with extensive experience is also essential in the long run. Furthermore, novice researchers in need of a guide to basic education research methods and statistical procedures will find this book equally indispensable.

*Proofread for the use of English by: Christopher Ryan, Department of English Language Pedagogy, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*