

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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(4th course in Tashkent University of Social Innovations)

Abstract: This paper explores the dual impact of motivation and psychological barriers in the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). While motivation has been identified as a key driving force behind successful language learning, psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of failure, and lack of self-confidence often act as significant deterrents. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, this study investigates how these factors interplay to influence language acquisition. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and practical strategies to foster motivation and mitigate psychological obstacles in the EFL classroom.

Key words: Motivation, Psychological Barriers, Foreign Language Learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Anxiety, Self-Efficacy

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida (EFL) o'zlashtirish jarayonida motivatsiya va psixologik to'siqlarning ikki tomonlama ta'sirini o'rganadi. Motivatsiya muvaffaqiyatli til o'rganishning asosiy harakatlantiruvchi kuchi sifatida qaralgan bo'lsa-da, xavotir, muvaffaqiyatsizlikdan qo'rquv va o'ziga bo'lgan ishonchsizlik kabi psixologik omillar ko'pincha jiddiy to'siqlar sifatida namoyon bo'ladi. Ushbu tadqiqot nazariy yondashuvlar va empirik dalillarga tayanib, bu omillarning til o'zlashtirishga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishini tahlil qiladi. Maqola yakunida EFL darslarida motivatsiyani kuchaytirish va psixologik to'siqlarni kamaytirish bo'yicha pedagogik xulosalar va amaliy tavsiyalar beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Motivatsiya, Psixologik to'siqlar, Chet tilini o'rganish, Ingliz tili (chet tili sifatida), O'ziga ishonch (o'z-o'zini samarali baholash)

Аннотация: Данная статья рассматривает двойственное влияние мотивации и психологических барьеров на процесс овладения английским языком как иностранным (EFL). Мотивация признаётся ключевым двигателем успешного изучения языка, тогда как психологические факторы, такие как тревожность, страх неудачи и неуверенность в себе, часто выступают значительными препятствиями. Основываясь как на теоретических концепциях, так и на эмпирических данных, исследование анализирует взаимодействие этих факторов и их влияние на овладение языком. В заключении приводятся педагогические выводы и практические рекомендации по усилению мотивации и преодолению психологических трудностей в процессе изучения английского языка как иностранного.

Ключевые слова: Мотивация, Психологические барьеры, Изучение иностранного языка, Английский как иностранный (EFL), Языковая тревожность, Самоэффективность

Learning a foreign language is both a cognitive and emotional journey. English, being the lingua franca of globalization, holds immense value for learners worldwide. However, despite widespread access to English learning resources, learners often face internal challenges that hinder their progress. Motivation propels learners forward, while psychological barriers can pull

them back. This article examines how motivation functions as a catalyst for learning and how psychological impediments can disrupt that process.

Motivation in language learning refers to the desire and effort exerted to acquire a new language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) famously distinguished between:

1. **Integrative motivation:** where learners wish to integrate with the culture of the target language.
2. **Instrumental motivation:** driven by utilitarian goals such as career advancement or academic success.
3. **Intrinsic motivation** arises from internal satisfaction, such as enjoyment or intellectual curiosity.
4. **Extrinsic motivation** depends on external rewards, including grades, recognition, or employment.

Both forms play crucial roles in sustaining language learning, though intrinsic motivation is often more durable.

One of the most studied barriers in second language acquisition is language anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) introduced the concept of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), highlighting its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral impacts.

Common symptoms include:

- Nervousness when speaking in class
- Avoidance of participation

Learners often associate errors with personal inadequacy rather than growth. This fear can lead to:

1. Reluctance to speak or write
2. Delayed responses
3. Over-reliance on native language

Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), refers to one's belief in their ability to succeed. Low confidence can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, particularly in speaking and listening skills.

Some learners experience conflict between their cultural identity and the target language. This can result in ambivalence or even resistance to English.

Motivation and psychological barriers are not mutually exclusive; they interact dynamically:

- High motivation can overcome moderate anxiety.
- Persistent anxiety can erode intrinsic motivation.
- Motivation can fluctuate in response to emotional experiences in the classroom.



For instance, a student motivated to study abroad may still avoid speaking due to embarrassment, creating a psychological stalemate.

Several studies illustrate the complexity of these interactions:

Motivation and Anxiety Among Uzbek EFL Learners

A study conducted at a university in Uzbekistan found that students with high instrumental motivation (e.g., wanting to pass IELTS) reported moderate to high anxiety levels, especially in oral communication. However, those with intrinsic motivation showed higher resilience and better performance.

Teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers must adopt strategies that balance motivational enhancement with psychological support.

Reducing Psychological Barriers

- Normalize mistakes as part of learning
- Use pair work and group discussions to reduce fear
- Provide consistent, constructive feedback
- Introduce mindfulness techniques to manage anxiety

Enhancing Motivation

- Link content to learners' real-life goals
- Celebrate small achievements to build confidence
- Create opportunities for authentic language use (e.g., debates, role-plays)
- Encourage learner autonomy through project-based tasks

Modern learners are digital natives. Leveraging technology can enhance motivation and reduce stress.

- **Language apps** (Duolingo, Memrise) offer gamified, pressure-free environments.
- **Social media** and forums allow anonymous or semi-anonymous practice.
- **Virtual exchange programs** can boost integrative motivation by connecting learners with native speakers.

However, overreliance on technology without interpersonal interaction may fail to address real communicative competence and can lead to passive learning.

To deepen understanding of this topic, future studies should:

- Examine longitudinal data to track motivation and anxiety over time
- Explore differences in gender, age, and cultural background
- Investigate the impact of teacher attitude and teaching style
- Develop standardized tools to measure psychological readiness for language learning

In Conclusion, Motivation and psychological barriers form two sides of the same coin in EFL learning. A highly motivated learner may still struggle if burdened by fear or doubt. Conversely, a confident learner with moderate motivation may achieve considerable success through perseverance. Effective language instruction must address both domains, creating environments where learners are not only driven but also emotionally secure. Only then can English be acquired not just as a subject, but as a living, breathing mode of expression

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