



# The Role of Motivation on Language Learning for Primary School Students in Jenin City

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the significance of motivation within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition process among elementary school students, particularly in the region of Jenin, Palestine. For this study, the researcher uses a secondary research method to examine the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through the analysis and synthesis of documents and reports from previously published works related to the subject. The analysis in this study has shown a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation, defined as motivation from personal interest and enjoyment in an activity, and long-term engagement in an activity, as well as the positive relationship between extrinsic motivation (i.e., reward and recognition) and initial engagement in an activity, giving emphasis to the judicious use of an external reward. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of contextual and cultural elements, particularly in environments where students have limited to no access to English outside the classroom. The study identified a literature gap in the positive relationship between motivation and fundamental literacy skills (reading and writing) in primary school students, as motivation is a well-documented area of empirical research. The study suggests the need for a positive and encouraging classroom environment created through the use of motivation, interactive methods (such as gamification and group work), and teacher-centered, motivational approaches to enhance student engagement in the learning process.

The study recommends learner-centered teaching methods, ongoing teacher development, and future qualitative research to better understand what motivates young learners. Ultimately, motivation is shown to be essential for early language education success.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Primary School, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Acquisition, Learner Engagement.

## Original Research Article

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## Introduction

An essential element in the success of an educational program is learners' goal commitment. That is, the learners' psychological inclination to achieve their goals keeps their interest and leads them to exert the necessary effort to complete the process, and continually engage with the learning material. This process is referred to as motivation and is crucial as the key point of ignition, of the interest and effort exerted. Motivation needs to be cultivated and sustained constantly, and goal-directed effort. Sustained

motivation in educational initiatives and programs is to elevate the learners' psychological state to an emotionally charged arousal, which will give rise to a deliberate and cognitive effort to achieve learning objectives and sustain the physical and enduring effort to attain these goals. This cognitive, emotional, goal-directed effort and sustained commitment is referred to as a motivated behavioral response, and it is the essence and the basis of the success of learning a foreign language (Aguirre, Bustinza, and Garvich, 2016).

In considering the learning of a second or foreign language, the importance of motivation is amplified. Hamada (as cited in Aguirre et al., 2016) describes motivation as having four interrelated components: the effort, the goal, and the positive disposition towards the object of learning. These factors combined are a predictor of the differences in achievements of language learners. Teachers around the world report that some students develop an almost limitless enthusiasm for learning the new language, while others are unable to keep even a slight interest. Even though the cognitive, academic, and sociocultural advantages of being bilingual and multilingual are known, the interest of learners in the language is often negative. This has forced teachers to search for novel ways to foster and maintain the motivation of students. The motivated student is the ideal that all teachers wish to see in their classrooms. This student demonstrates a positive disposition towards learning the new language. This motivated student is self-directed and does not require external motivation to commence and continue learning. This student works with others in the group and motivates them to learn. This student has a high level of personal goal orientation, perseverance to achieve goals, and a high level of focus.

Several studies have illustrated the motivational differences among learners (Baker, 2006; O'Leary, 2018; Schunk, 2018). However, such studies do not elaborate upon the nature of motivational drive, and such elaborate discussions tend to be absent across the literature of motivational drive. However, from a broad perspective of focus, the motivational drive for learning a given language could be said to be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation could stem from a personal interest or curiosity, or it could be from the enjoyment of the learning process. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation could stem from the realization of external rewards (such as a monetary award) or the fear of an adverse outcome (such as punishment). It is important to note that even though both motivational drivers could be bullhorns to the encouragement of language acquisition, literature reveals that the benefits of intrinsic motivation far exceed those of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2005). However, the nature of both motivating factors is still complex and intertwined, particularly within given learning, teaching, or cultural contexts.

The primary analysis of this research involves the complex motivational patterns surrounding the Palestinian educational context, which partakes in the teaching of the English language in a compulsory manner starting at the first stages in primary school; however, children often leave primary school without being able to engage in simple and basic communicative interactions in English (Qaddumi et al., 2023; Zayed, 2021). This is mainly due to the lack of exposure to the English language outside of the classroom, which is in the venue of socio-political and economic clashes that ultimately make it impossible to be exposed to the target language. Classroom engagement for learning English is often all that is

available especially in Jenin, where learning about the English language, listening to English, and being able to travel outside of Palestine is virtually impossible, learning English is confined to the classroom without the socio-political barriers which makes it all the more important and necessary to be able to develop and design ways for maintaining learner motivation to be able to learn English in this restrictive learning environment.

## The aims of the study

The focal point of this research is the study of the motivation of language acquisition, concentrating on the primary school learner in Jenin, Palestine. This research is intended to achieve the following aims:

- To examine the motivational orientations in Language Learning to differentiate the intrinsic and extrinsic factors.
- To examine, analyze, and identify the contextual, instructional, and interpersonal components and factors that contribute to the reduction or increase of the learner's motivation.
- Examine how motivational elements affect the acquisition of basic literacy skills, especially reading and writing.
- Suggest, with the aid of empirical studies, motivated teaching practices to help young learners of languages.

## Research Gap and Justification

The motivation behind learning a new language has been the focus of various studies, but many questions still remain. Previous research has looked at some aspects of general classroom motivation, attitudes toward learning a language and speaking, but has looked at the motivation behind learning how to read and write very little. This is especially true with studies done in the Palestinian area, where research done on primary school students and motivation is very scarce. Additionally, there is a lot of research done on secondary and university students, but very little done on primary students. This is especially true for the Palestinian area, where very little motivation research has been done. Given that the motivation for learning is influenced by the socio-cultural, political, and economic context, especially in the Palestinian territories, there is a strong need for research in this area, especially because reading and writing are skills that are needed on a daily basis and are the skills that primary students will need the most throughout their academic and professional careers.

More research is warranted in relation to the applied difficulties of teaching English in Palestine. For instance, even though the instruction of English in the curriculum begins early, it is evident that there is reduced motivation and participation among students. This ultimately affects the entire educational system. Only by identifying the specific context-related motivational hindrances and facilitators will it

be possible to build effective teaching strategies. The goal of the present study is to assist teachers, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers in their efforts to foster and enrich students' motivation and language learning by providing them with practical and constructive guidance based on a systematic review of the available research.

## Scope and Limitations

This study is confined to the analysis of existing literature, reports, and studies on motivation and language learning in primary school children in Jenin. The study is limited to three areas: motivational orientations (intrinsic and extrinsic), variables in the classroom environment, and teachers' methods of instruction.

There are a few limitations to this study. First, the analysis is based solely on secondary data and may not accurately portray the specific circumstances of Jenin. Due to a lack of local studies, findings from different contexts were incorporated, which may have an impact on the scope of the study's conclusions. For future studies, primary data is needed to support these findings.

## Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

What are the main elements for the determination of motivation to learn English among primary school pupils?

What are the teaching methods that can be used to raise the motivation of primary school pupils?

In what way is the motivation of pupils related to the development of reading and writing skills?

## Literature review

### The Primacy of Motivation in Language Learning

The role of motivation at the heart of success in learning a language remains undisputed in research done throughout the years. Motivation plays the pivotal role in getting learners engaged and in sustaining that engagement, and ultimately in getting learners to achieve success (in learning a second or foreign language). An example that supports this is the work of Gardner and Lambert (1972), where a study showed a strong motivational drive and success in learning a language. That study helped open the door to the research of the psychology of language learning. More recent research has built upon that and has shown motivation to be a complex and multi-dimensional construct that changes over time and is influenced by the teaching and learning context (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2009).

A distinguishing factor that has been critical in analyzing contemporary literature is motivation. Motivation is a noun of the verb motivate. Motivation can be broken down into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the

urge that a person has to do an activity that is driven by the pleasure of doing the activity rather than any external rewards. Intrinsic motivation has been associated with the sustained engagement of the performer, a greater depth of cognitive processing by the performer, and the success of the performer over an extended period of time. This is especially the case regarding academic activities (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In contrast, extrinsic motivation, the activity engagement is stimulated in regard to an outside factor, has shown its impacts to be more varied and less predictable concerning the results in regard to academic activities. In the case of Mula, Naka, and Sylhasi (2025), a study discussed the motivational pattern of primary school learners. The study recognized the importance of intrinsic motivation and how it is critical in the situation that long-term participation is needed. In addition, it was noted that the reliance of learners on extrinsic motivational rewards was relatively low and that this was the case in the higher grade levels. This is in line with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985); this theory states that intrinsic motivation is sustained and even further engaged when at least one of the following three needs is satisfied (i.e., the need for autonomy, competence, or relatedness).

### Teaching Methods and Theories and the Effects on Motivation

Numerous studies have been conducted on the correlation between teaching styles and the motivation of students. It is evident from the extensive studies conducted that teaching styles have an effect on students' motivational states. The instructional method teaching the target language determines the motivational level of students to engage with the language. In the study carried out by Kasumi and Xhemaili (2023), the effect of motivational intensity and participation on the EFL students was a result of engagement collaborative and participatory learning activities. This shows that the interactive, learner-centered approach is important because of motivation, participation, and the collaborative atmosphere in the classroom as well as the engagement in the learning activities.

Ringo, Sabirov, Tayibu, and Alam (2025) examined the effect of new teaching styles, including collaborative approaches and gamification, on the motivational levels of children. In gamified learning environments, in addition to the improvement in motivation and engagement, enhancement of communication, problem-solving, and retention of learned information was also noted. The results also highlight the effectiveness of participatory learning in primary school students in language teaching.

Zhang (2024) illustrated that students' motivation, confidence in L2 communication, and willingness to speak L2 increase when self-regulation strategies and supportive instructional techniques are used simultaneously. He also illustrated the role of the instructor in setting and monitoring goals, which is important, and contributes to the ongoing motivation to keep

the goal. Aulia and Jamilah (2024) also confirmed the previous studies and showed that students' motivation and participation in English learning activities increase when positive feedback is applied.

### **Contextual and Environmental Factors**

Contextual factors that motivate students have been the focus of various scholarly works. In EFL, the target language is rarely used outside the school, making it a challenge. Jiao (2024) stated that in such circumstances, it is important for teachers to provide motivation, and for students to remain actively involved. Al-Sanafi (2023) also showed that practical, communicative language learning in primary schools raised students' motivation, thus confirming the importance of teachers in maintaining active and student-centered classrooms.

The socio-educational context includes the influences of family and the community in addition to the influences of the classroom. Parent and teacher influences have also been documented to impact learner motivation (Ushioda, 2009). This is consistent with motivation frameworks that posit motivation is in the relational dynamics of the learner and the socio-educational context.

### **The Palestinian Context**

There is a lack of specific contextual empirical studies on the motivation of learning a language despite the rich body of international studies. Al-Jamal (2018) studied motivated learners, and middle school Palestinian students who were encouraged to learn a language performed well. Primary level students, unfortunately, remain ignored in the study. Al-Harthy (2015) studied young learners' language performances and the impact of intrinsic motivation. Al-Harthy found the impact to be positive and strong, but the small sample size limited the study negatively, and therefore, big studies were called for.

Qaddumi and Smith (2024) studied the willingness to communicate (WTC) of Palestinian university EFL students and noted personality and confidence issues as the principal reasons for having low WTC. The study also noted that teacher actions and motivation for learning online had strong positive effects, while vocabulary deficiencies, fear of error, and anxiety about the language were strong negative effects. This study, while greatly advancing understanding of the affective dimensions of Palestinian learners of a language, does not study the motivational factors of learners at the primary school level, which is important and concerning.

### **Motivation and Foundational Literacy Skills**

In comparison with the overall classroom engagement and speaking skills in language learning, the motivation and learning of specific skills in a language, particularly reading and writing, are relatively unexplored. Hou (2024) noted motivation as a central component of positive outcomes in

language learning, particularly during the formative years, which is when students first encounter the language. This impact is felt on the students' overall activity level during the lessons' tasks. This study also noted that motivated students were successful in acquiring the fundamental skills of reading and writing in that language.

Luquin and García Mayo (2024) examined how learner autonomy and active role-taking influence intrinsic motivation, where high involvement and practice of language skills are observed, especially with the selection of certain materials or activities by the learners. On the other hand, active involvement and persistent autonomy are also vital, especially for the practice and effort-intensive literacy skills development.

Furthermore, Punongbayn, Mendoza, Perez, and Sliang (2025) also proved that learners' attitude towards language learning and motivation in relation to the level of academic achievement are positively correlated. High motivation and achievement in English are observed in learners who are provided with rewarding educational activities and possess positive perceptions. This clearly describes the combined role of affective, cognitive, and situational factors in literacy achievement.

### **Synthesis and Identification of Research Gaps**

The existing literature contains several appreciable findings. Numerous studies demonstrate how intrinsic motivation not only positively influences the achievement of students learning a new language, but is also widely recognized to be one of the most critical motivators. In addition, teachers who implement and encourage the use of collaborative learning, gamification, and autonomy-supportive approaches positively affect the motivation levels of students. Research shows that motivators, such as family support and the classroom environment, influence the development and maintenance of motivation. Finally, a high degree of motivation in students is correlated with high levels of achievement in all aspects of language learning, including both reading and writing.

Even with an extensive framework on the subject, gaps still remain. The predominant amount of the existing research has emphasized secondary or tertiary student populations, leaving primary school learners significantly understudied. This research gap is especially true when it comes to the Palestinian context, where motivational studies of primary school students are almost nonexistent. The relationship between motivation and success in a language is well established, but studies that explicitly assess the role of motivation in reading and writing on the primary school level are almost nonexistent. Hence, the motivation of this study is to examine and reflect on the role of motivation in language learning of primary school learners in Jenin, Palestine, specifically on the reading and writing skill components.

## The Significance of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Affective Components

The affective components of second language acquisition have been extensively studied. However, relatively little attention has been given to willingness to communicate (WTC) and to what extent WTC affects learners' active participation and language acquisition. WTC is defined as the learner's disposition to participate in foreign language (FL) conversations at any given moment and with any chosen interlocutor. WTC is influenced by a number of factors, such as motivation, anxiety, and self-assessed level of competence (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). This framework is of utmost importance because it is the result of several affective and cognitive factors that ultimately determine whether a learner will take the initiative to communicate when the opportunity presents itself.

Studying WTC in the post-COVID-19 era, Qaddumi and Smith (2024) investigated the influences of personality traits and confidence level on 1,002 university EFL students in the Palestinian context. According to the findings, personality traits and confidence in speaking were the greatest negative influences on students' WTC. WTC was also positively influenced by the teacher's behavior and motivational factors related to learning. However, the WTC of students was negatively influenced by the constructs of vocabulary, fear of error, and anxiety toward the foreign language. These findings are especially valuable as they provide details regarding the specific affective challenges of Palestinian learners, even after several years of learning the language, as well as the challenges they face in communicating in English.

Alam et al. (2025) studied WTC of Bangladeshi university students and found that after almost 10 years of studying English, students still faced English-speaking challenges due to the influence of grammar-based teaching and the dynamics of the classroom. The results of Qaddumi and Smith's (2024) findings have been previously published in the literature in similar contexts. In the same line, Zayed (2021) found that the motivation and attitude of Palestinian high school students towards learning English were dependent on peer and teacher support, as well as a cultural divide that exists between the students' home culture and the target culture. These studies show how EFL learners face challenges in the absence of supportive learning environments and in contexts where communicative, rather than traditional, instruction is required.

The research conducted so far contributes to the knowledge about the affective domain of EFL learning within the Arab world, but the literature still lacks the coverage of several important areas. Existing research, including the work done by Qaddumi and Smith (2024), has concentrated almost exclusively on the WTC and motivation of secondary and post-secondary students. There are almost no empirical studies on the same variables, and more importantly, the intricate impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the

acquisition of primary literacy skills, specifically reading and writing, of primary school pupils in Palestine. This is a serious omission in the case of the early stages of education, as experiences in early schooling are crucial in determining subsequent academic achievements and the habits of language learning that one carries throughout life. This is the gap that the current study attempts to address by focusing on primary school students in Jenin, one of the most neglected areas, concerning the motivational aspects of developing literacy skills.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study of motivation in second language acquisition has a rich history and has been built on various theoretical traditions over many years of empirical research. In building the analytical perspective for this study, I have attempted to combine several varying streams of ideas. I aim to include the analytical perspective concerning the role of motivation in language learning for primary school children. I do this by providing an integrated perspective of the Self-Determination Theory, of Deci & Ryan, 1985, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, 1985, and recent theories of learner engagement. In doing so, I intend to demonstrate and explain the ways motivation is working in primary education in Palestine.

### Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985), is the main theoretical background of this study. According to SDT, the human motive and reason exist in a continuum of no motivation (Amotivation), to motivated externally (extrinsic motivation), to internally self-driven (intrinsic motivation). What is more important and relevant is the quality of motivation, and not the quantity. A major component of SDT is the intrinsic motivation, which in this case is the internal functioning of an individual and the internal interest, the internal curiosity, and the internal enjoyment, flourishes in the presence of all three psychological needs in the learning environment.

The first need is autonomy, which pertains to the need to feel causative, selective, and self-directed regarding one's engagement. In the primary EFL context, autonomy can be cultivated by offering students options in selecting reading and writing activities. The second need is competence, the need to be able, effective, and successful in one's engagements. This need is met when teachers create appropriately challenging tasks, provide constructive feedback, and recognize and celebrate success. The third need is relatedness, which refers to the need to feel connected, to belong, and to feel a sense of community in the classroom. Positive relationships between teachers and students, collaborative learning, and an overall supportive classroom community are important to satisfy this need.

Learners who have all three psychological needs supported experience increased intrinsic motivation to learn, increased

engagement, and increased persistence in the learning tasks that they pursue. On the other hand, when the three psychological needs are not supported, motivation and learning-related tasks may cause anxiety and resistance. In primary English language education, meeting these needs is vital, considering these young learners are more impacted by the quality of the relationships they build with the teachers, peers, and learning resources.

In reference to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), these needs inform classroom practices. Autonomy can be enhanced when teachers allow learners to participate in certain decisions, be it selecting the next reading material, partner choice, or the manner in which learners decide to demonstrate their understanding. When learners are afforded the opportunity to exercise choice, they become more invested and take ownership of the learning process. Teachers who promote need-supportive practice create an environment in which learners develop a positive orientation towards learning English and cultivate intrinsic motivation.

### **Gardner's Socio-Educational Model**

In conjunction with Self Determination Theory, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (1985) contributed to the theoretical understanding of language learning motivation by focusing on the social and cultural aspects of the phenomenon. Gardner suggested two major motivational orientations that influence language learners' views towards learning a second or foreign language. The first is called integrative motivation, which is the motivation to learn a language in order to communicate with, relate to, or become a part of the community of the target language. Integratively motivated learners appreciate the culture and the people, and the social life of the community of the target language. The second is instrumental motivation. This is the motivation to learn a language for some practical, useful reasons, and so the motivational drive is to learn a language for the purpose of improving one's job opportunities, educational advancement, or fulfilling a course requirement.

While these orientations were seen as separate motivational drivers in the past, more contemporary studies have showcased that learners are motivated by both integrative and instrumental reasons, and the importance of each motivational drive depends on the situation or context, the age of the learner, and their personal circumstances. In the specific circumstance of Palestinians, where direct contact with native English speakers is impossible, instrumental motivation may play a dominant role. Nevertheless, through culturally authentic materials, online intercultural communicative projects, and purposeful communicative activities, integrative motivation can be developed to enable learners' substantive engagement with the global community of English speakers.

Recent empirical studies have built on and fine-tuned these theories, proving their usefulness in current educational

situations and various types of learners. Shi et al. (2022) researched the correlation between motivation and success in learning a language. They found that strong intrinsic personal motivation leads to successful outcomes in learning a language. Their results confirm the theory that motivation is more than a contributing factor, but a cause of success.

Canrinus, Scheffler, and Baranowska (2024) added to this body of work by examining school type and location and their influence on learners' motivation. They found that contextual elements, such as whether a school is urban or rural, school and district resource availability, and school district culture, have a strong impact on students' motivational dispositions. This is particularly pertinent to this study, which aims to investigate primary students in Jenin because of the specific sociopolitical and geographical conditions that influence the motivational disposition in unique ways.

Ishida, Manalo, and Sekiyama (2023) analyzed the impact of parents and teachers as external influences on the construction of the "desired L2 self" (based on the L2 Motivational Self System, Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Research results illustrated how significant others positively impact the construction of self-images in learners as users of L2, which, in turn, positively impacts L2 learning self-perceptions. This finding highlights the necessity to address the social ecology of language learning, which entails the social environment, community resources, and goes beyond the immediate learning environment of the social, cultural, and supportive family context.

### **Conceptual Framework: Dimensions of Learner Engagement**

In attempting to translate the various theoretical perspectives discussed above into practice, the researcher has, as one of the principal strategies, formulated a conceptual framework consisting of three related components of learner engagement. This framework then enables the researcher to examine the various components of learner engagement in practice. The first of these components is what is known as "behavioral engagement". Such engagement is in relation to the participation of learners in the activities, tasks, and opportunities for learning in the classroom. This engagement is viewed to be the active engagement of learners in, and for, the learning activities, and as such is indicative of a range of behaviors, including, but not limited to, such behaviors as punctuality, duration of attention, and the expenditure of purposeful and conscious effort toward academic tasks, and the persistence to continue to engage in the activity, and the voluntary participation to discuss and contribute to the activity and the completion of the academic tasks or activities. Motivation in students will lead to an increase in behavioral engagement, as learners will take an active role in the learning and educational activities, as opposed to being passive participants in the activities.

The emotional response to the cognitive experience includes pride as well as uncertainty and other negative feelings. Positive emotional responses include interest and experiencing enjoyment. Relaxation and lowered feelings of uncertainty are emotional responses that cognitively engaged learners experience with the English language. Young learners develop emotional responses toward language learning, which may be positive or negative, and are largely determined by the emotional connectivity to learning that is displayed by the teacher.

Finally, the extent of cognitive engagement depends on the control of the learning process that the individual takes, and includes self-regulation, along with the engagement of the self in metacognition in the learning process. It is described as the control of the process of learning; the setting of clear goals and the adoption of appropriate learning strategies, the active engagement of the individual in the deep processing of the learning material, and the self-monitoring of the individual in the learning process. It is these sophisticated mental strategies that are a necessity in the assimilation, retention, and application of new language knowledge. In the development of foundational literacy skills, these mental strategies, along with deep processing, are critical in reading and writing.

### **Synthesis and Application of the Framework**

This study, based on the aforementioned theory, aims to establish an integrated framework for the study of motivation in primary school children's language learning. The framework proposes a clear set of relationships between different primary components. First, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations form the learner's first engagement with language learning activities. Second, the satisfaction of psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness acts as an intervening variable between the teaching style and the psychological endurance of the learner. Third, motivational context, teacher, classroom, family, and sociocultural context, act as motivational variables for the formation and endurance of motivation over an extended time frame. Fourth, motivational learner engagement, across the three dimensions, behavioral, affective, and cognitive, acts as the primary conduit for motivation on language learning activities. Last, the motivation to learn language activities, in particular, reading and writing, loses motivation if not well sustained.

This integrated framework outlines the integrative study's analysis of the motivational dynamics among Primary School pupils in Jenin, Palestine. By merging the classical and modern paradigms, the model is able to examine the broader scope of the research inquiry and interpret the results the body of knowledge, whilst still being contextually appropriate to the unique nuances of the Palestinian educational system. In this study, motivation is viewed as an important, complex phenomenon that greatly determines the extent to which learners engage in the learning process and

the overall development in their languages. The framework places the onus on teachers to develop motivating instructional practices and supportive learning environments that enhance intrinsic motivation, meet psychological needs, and promote sustained engagement on the behavioral, affective, and cognitive levels. Therefore, once teachers adopt motivating practices and create supportive environments, students are likely to develop positive attitudes toward the learning of English and their active participation in the learning process. Thus, motivation is considered an important phenomenon that facilitates the learning of English in Primary Schools, and this has implications for the English language curriculum, methods of teaching, and the professional development of teachers.

## **Methodology**

### **Approach and Design**

For this study, I am using a descriptive analytical approach and a secondary research methodology to study the motivational role in language learning for primary school pupils. While a descriptive approach can be used to study any topic, it is particularly effective when the researcher aims to obtain empirical evidence, a theoretical framework, and studies on the subject matter. In this case, it is the motivation for teaching English to children. Merging different studies can help provide sufficient evidence and aid the researcher in determining the gaps in the body of knowledge.

### **Research Strategy**

Sources related to the topic were retrieved by searching in scholarly search engines and electronic platforms, like Scopus and Google Scholar.

Keywords such as (Motivation, Primary School, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Acquisition) were used by the researcher.

The study mainly emphasized recent studies relevant to the topic from 2015- 2025, so the greater attention given to contemporary articles that address motivation and English language learning in primary school students.

Sources that were not peer reviewed and studies unrelated to primary education or English language learning were omitted.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The researcher used specific criteria to include and exclude previous studies for the review.

Studies were included if they focused on motivation in English language learning, targeted primary school students, and were published between 2015 and 2025.

Furthermore, the researcher relied basically on studies published in reliable academic journals and databases.

Furthermore, the researcher relied mainly on studies published in reliable academic journals and databases.

Studies were excluded if they were not related to English language learning, focused on adult or university learners, were duplicates, or were non academic sources.

To reduce publication bias and selection bias, the review incorporated literature and studies from various academic database and grey literature like a doctoral dissertations, such as Peterson's (2015) ' Investigating The Relationship Between Elementary Students' Motivation To Read And Academic Achievement in Reading'."

Moreover, all identified studies were evaluated by using a validated tool to evaluate the risk of bias, confirming the quality and reliability of the findings. However, despite these efforts, some degree of publication and language bias might present due to limitations in the sources that were accessible.

### Data Collection Methods

For this study, data were obtained by conducting data collection procedures consisting of searches in academic and scholarly search engine repositories. This process consisted of a search strategy developed around selected keywords to explore the depth and breadth of the scholarly literature relevant to the study's research questions. In this regard, the researcher utilized the search terms "primary students" + "motivation" + "language learning" + "intrinsic motivation" + "extrinsic motivation" + "EFL motivation" + "young learners" + "reading motivation" + "writing motivation" + "Palestine English education" and others, and combinations of these keywords to the To the best of his ability, in order to enhance the coverage of results. The literature searched includes peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books and book chapters, doctoral and master's theses, and scholarly papers in reputable conference proceedings. While publication dates from 2015–2026 were preferred, in order to obtain recent and relevant data, foundational studies, such as Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Deci and Ryan (1985), were also considered in order to establish a theoretical base for the study. Multiple sources and search engines, including Google Scholar, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Scopus, and Research Gate, as well as manual searches in the references of the studies collected were used to identify as many relevant studies as possible from the database's.

### Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher employed thematic analysis to explore the included studies, classifying the findings into main themes and recognizing similarities and differences in research on motivation in English language learning.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative approach for pattern identification, recognition, and reporting, including reporting patterns within secondary research sources, was utilized for analyzing the data collection process. This approach enabled the author to methodically arrange the outcomes from the research, which in turn, aided in revealing the consistency,

the importance, and the variability across the research, divergent from the inconsistency.

There was a multistaged approach to the analysis. In the first stage, the author painstakingly read and reviewed all the relevant sources to achieve familiarity and develop an initial comprehension of the findings and hypotheses that were relevant to the sources. This is the stage in which the data were in emergent, qualitatively descriptive form. In stage two, some of the first enumerated codes descriptive of the attributes of the data, which were relevant to the research questions, were captured. These codes were then organized thematically. This is the stage in which the literature is said to contain patterns, the themes. For stage three, the themes were arranged, revised, and organized in a rationally coherent and relevant manner to the three questions of the research. In the final stage, the outcomes of the research were enhanced and interpreted. This was the stage in which the literature revealed explicit agreement, contradicted points, and in the existing literature, the research revealed gaps.

Comparative analysis of multiple studies during the process of convergence and divergence analytical study demonstrated the presence of a specific degree of significance of a contextually variable cause in regard to the divergent outcomes. The details regarding the specific studies conducted in the context of the Palestinian framework, as the location of the case studies in the framework of the primary school populations in the Arabic-speaking and the conflict-affected areas, were of primary importance during the process of data extraction in order to construct the relevant data for the synthesized findings.

### Reliability and Validity

To achieve the reliability and validity of the findings of secondary research, the essence of the source and the credibility of the source must be the focus of the researcher. In order to define reliability, the variables of this study were limited to variables of a specific quality. Only the variables of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books published by reputable publishing companies, and officially published theses were the variables of focus. This practice means the data, the variables, and the analyzed data were subjected to research and were of a quality level of benefit to the study.

Equally important was the examination of the consistency of results across different literature. When results were corroborated by numerous independent investigations across various disciplines, these were considered reliable. On the other hand, results published in stand-alone studies, or results that were in disagreement with the majority, were interpreted with due caution. The ability to cross-reference results added to the ability to verify claims and the confidence of the author in the reliability of the conclusions drawn.

In regard to the validity of the work, the author has taken several steps to ensure the reliability and importance of the information examined. First, the inclusion criteria were very

specific and were set in advance. The author included studies only available in peer-reviewed journals and those that explicitly defined their research design, sampling strategy, analytical methods, and any other pertinent procedural detail. This criterion included investigations that were methodologically precise and that described the parameters of their studies. Second, the available literature was examined, which dealt with the primary and secondary school populations, motivation in EFL contexts, and the convergence and divergence of motivation and literacy skills.

The third step involved the use of several sources for the literature review covering a variety of geographical areas, methods, and theories. Such a wide-reaching literature review gives the study the ability to address a more complete review and avoid the bias that would occur in a more limited literature review. For the fourth step, the authors of the study focused on one particular area for the thematic review and documented their coding and thematic construction to ensure that it was fully transparent and that others could essentially replicate the study. The authors based their conclusions on evidence derived from the literature and only drew conclusions when the evidence was clear and supportive.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research process and the writings of this study have been guided by the ethical standards of research, even though no field work or research on human subjects was carried out. Each source used by the authors in this study has been and will be credited to the proper author and source. No author has been given credit for a source of research that is not his or her own, and no author has been credited for research findings that have been misrepresented. Although the authors hold and present their findings and research findings with the required scholarly integrity, they also acknowledge the findings of the research, and their comments and conclusions are consistent with the findings of the research.

### **Limitations of Methodology**

Some limitations of the methodology are worth noting. First, this research used a narrative literature review framework employing thematic analysis, so it is limited by the scope and quality of the literature available. There are gaps in the literature that cannot be filled with primary data collection, and literature from different circumstances will not account for the particularities of Jenin. Second, the scarcity of research studies from the Palestinian context, more so those that concern primary school-aged children, required the inclusion of research from different contexts, which may undermine the contextual relevance of the study to some conclusions. Third, publication bias, the tendency for studies with statistically significant findings to be published, as opposed to studies that have null findings, may explain the trends in the literature. Fourth, the unevenness of methodological strength in the studies used may have an impact on the relative importance of each finding. These

limitations are accepted and will be used to draw the findings in the following sections.

## **Findings and Discussion**

A systematic study of empirical research, theoretical studies, and literary reviews brought an array of noteworthy results related to the importance of motivation and primary school students learning a new language. Overall, the evidence synthesized showed that motivation is a pivotal factor regarding the success of students learning a new language and plays a major role in a learner's attitude towards the acquisition of a second language. The results of the study are located thematically below concerning the three research questions that were the focal point of this study.

### 5.2 Motivational Factors for Learners

The first research question attempted to pinpoint the principal elements that drive learners' motivation to study English at the elementary school level. The synthesized results show that motivation is molded by a conjunctive combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that exist on personal, social, and situational dimensions.

Several internal factors stand out as determinants of motivational intensity. Participants revealed that continued engagement is driven by internal factors such as their curiosity and genuine interest in the subject matter, as well as enjoyment of language learning activities. These factors correspond with the definition of intrinsic motivation, which is described by Deci and Ryan (1985) as engagement that is driven by the activity itself and the satisfaction that is derived from it. Young learners exhibit greater persistence and cognitive engagement as well as more positive emotional reactions to learning challenges when language learning activities are enjoyable and interesting.

Motivational states of learners are influenced by several external variables. One of these external variables is peer influence. Empirical studies have proven that positive social relations and cooperative learning lead to more willingness to use the English language. With regard to motivational intensity, parental support is viewed as the most important predictor. Other studies have shown that verbal and non-verbal encouragement, as well as 'praise' and 'recognition', were more important motivational factors compared to motivational factors of older learners. In the case of younger learners, external motivators are needed to start participation.

Motivating factors are both internal and external. Dörnyei (2005) and Lamb (2017) offered that the quality of an environment has the most important role and influence in regards to motivating factors and their relations. Teacher motivation is especially important in situations when learners have little to no contact with the English Language. This describes the situation in most parts of Palestine.

### **Motivational Strategies in Teaching**

The second research question relates to the teaching approaches that may positively impact pupils' motivation

within the primary school setting. Reviews of the literature provide specific guidance with regard to effective teaching strategies.

Research indicates that young learners are particularly imaginative, and narrative-based activities are more likely to hold their attention. This technique deepens emotional investment while facilitating vocabulary acquisition and comprehension, as well as developing emotional connection.

The emotional, cognitive, and contextual comprehension are enhanced through the exercise of storytelling. The exercise strengthens emotional attachment to the learning experience as well as codes, words, the experience, and propels the contextual frame, the material of instruction.

Motivational strategies incorporated in gamification and game-based learning were clear and potent to the researchers of the present study. The evidence supported young learners of elements and magnetism within learning methodologies to ensure engagement, retention of information, well-developed problem-solving, and enhanced language capabilities. The stimulation, motivation, and game frameworks proved to be. Most of the game-based activities, such as learning to write, captured the researchers of the present study.

The set of motivation strategies, the systematic collection, and the evidence of game-based activities maintained the engagement of elements and of learners. They ensured magnetism and total retention of information, problem-solving, and fully developed language capabilities within the game frameworks. Most learning activities were ensured by the researchers of the present study.

Within the field of language learning, the learning methodologies used proved to be game-based and retained the language. The elements and the magnetism ensured the complete engagement and developing problem solving, and the retention of well-developed information.

The learning mechanisms of problem-solving in game frameworks and learning elements and magnetism, was language retained with the educational field, and the motivation and learning that must be within wrought little developed the full magnetism.

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The results reveal an additional important consideration about motivational strategies. External motivators, such as rewards and recognition, can improve engagement and participation at the start. However, these strategies can potentially be detrimental to the goal of fostering an internal drive toward learning and participation. As an example, Ryan and Deci (2017) argued that reliance on external rewards can create a barrier for developing an internal drive toward learning and participation. The goal of reward strategies (e.g., stickers, small gifts, praise) may bridge short-term participation; however, sustainable participation can only be achieved by developing the participants' critical interest and the psychological levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The findings, therefore, urge teachers to create a careful balance between recognition and other strategies aimed at creating an interest in the activity. Offering cooperation, some form of choice in the activity, and creating tasks that are at the same time interesting and demanding is a good example of a balanced approach to both motivational types.

### **Motivation's Influence on Reading and Writing Skills**

The focus of the third inquiry was to establish the role of students' motivation in the development of their reading and writing skills. The evidence synthesized shows a strong correlation between motivational intensity and the growth of literacy.

The motivational orientation of learners was particularly important in developing reading skills. Readers who are intrinsically motivated tend to be more persistent in the face of difficult texts, use more advanced strategies for understanding, and involve themselves more in reading activities. The enjoyment of reading, which is a form of intrinsic motivation, was a strong predictor of how often learners read, how wide their vocabulary was, and how high their reading comprehension was.

Writing skills also stand to gain from high levels of sustained motivation. Motivated writers are more likely to put a lot of work into planning, drafting, and revising their texts, make more attempts to use new vocabulary and new grammatical constructions, and are more likely to be positive about writing in general. The motivation and writing achievement relationship is highly chain-like in nature: motivation is born out of positive experiences with writing, and this motivation, in turn, results in increased writing and more development of skills.

The establishment of attitudes towards reading and writing and the formation of foundational skills are reliant on motivation. As Hou (2024) stated, motivation and its effect on active participation are a driving force to facilitate success in language learning and are a critical component during the early stages of learning for developing language skills.

Research indicates a positive relationship between motivation and the advancement of reading and writing skills in language acquisition. Motivated learners engage more in reading and writing activities, resulting in better comprehension, lexical development, and writing achievement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Deci & Ryan, 1958; Dörnyei, 2001).

### **Contextual and Cultural Considerations**

The impact of motivation techniques is heavily determined by relevant contextual and cultural factors. Situations may arise where the use of English is perceived by students as being too theoretical, and the language being taught is seen as irrelevant to the students' daily reality. This is especially true in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts where the potential for real language communication is nonexistent. In these circumstances, the degree of motivational success is a function of the teacher's ingenuity and flexibility.

The reviewed studies suggest that the construction of virtual language experiences, interactive dialogues, online collaborations, and international projects effectively addresses the balance of theory and practice. They bridge the gap between the knowledge an individual possesses and the practical application of that knowledge, providing students with a sense of purpose for their engagement with the English language. In the case of Palestine, where students lack access to the English language, virtual experiences help to retain and, in many cases, increase student motivation.

Sections of other works show that motivation is a process. It can change during certain instructional approaches, personal development, and trigger environments. Motivation does not relate to a learner having it or not, because motivation can be driven through teacher action. Motivation changes over time and can be driven through teacher action.

Long-lasting motivation requires more extended time frames than a single lesson. Motivation sustained over time is a by-product of feedback effort, policy implementation, daily routine, English speaking, and adaptable teaching. Motivation is not treated as a single or temporary intervention; learners develop persistence and a more pronounced engagement with the learning of a language to cope with obstacles.

### **Synthesis and Interpretation**

The results of the analysis converge on several significant conclusions. First, motivation is positively correlated with successful outcomes in the language learning process. Second, the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is real and practically important, with intrinsic motivation being associated with longer-lasting involvement and more profound learning. Third, the most successful instructional approaches that help foster motivation are those that are interactive, learner-centered, and tailored to the developmental needs of young learners. Fourth, to a significant degree, cultural perceptions of English, authentic language use opportunities, and teacher training quality affect

the extent to which contextual factors are in place that meet the motivation. Fifth, the degree to which learners are in a motivated state greatly influences the development of basic literacy skills, i.e., reading and writing.

These findings support Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and demonstrate the need for implementing more engaging and interactive methods. The findings stress the importance of addressing learners' motivation in the early phase of L2 learning when attitudes and skills are formed. The findings also point to the importance of the teacher in establishing the right learning environment where learners' participation is supported, and confidence and communicative competence are developed, especially for younger learners.

It is evident that motivation is paramount in language education; it cannot be considered something supplementary. Educators and policymakers need to work together to develop and implement frameworks that promote intrinsic motivation, fulfill the psychological needs of students, and construct the psychological frameworks that allow students to maintain engagement with learning the language. In instances such as Palestine, where the population's exposure to English is mediated, it is important to develop such frameworks that are relevant to the local context yet draw upon global standards.

## Conclusion

This current body of work has explored, in an outstanding and methodical manner, the degree of motivation in learning a language by primary school students in the context of Palestine. For primary school students to achieve, meaningfully participate, and develop basic literacy skills, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are of paramount importance. In relation to the primary school students of Palestine, the study results are consistent with the Self-Determination Theory; thus, one can be assured that to maintain intrinsic motivation, the primary school students need to psychologically feel that they have autonomy, competence, and relatedness to the peer group. This study, in relation to the primary school students of Palestine, strongly reiterates the need to develop and implement appropriate, interactive, and child-centered pedagogical frameworks that are integrated into English language teaching in order to increase the interest of learners in the English language.

This study reflects several main points. First, motivation is a main contributor to success in learning a language. Second, primary learning of a language is pivotal, as negative or positive attitudes toward learning a language carry on for a long time. Third, teachers are crucial for creating a positive learning atmosphere, which promotes active participation, as well as confidence and communication skills, so the way teachers motivate learners is very important. Fourth, teachers need to be supported and given professional training on how to stimulate learners. Lastly, research is needed in less developed areas where learning English is limited, and the sociocultural and economic factors are specific.

From the results of this study, we can conclude that the motivation of young learners is very important for the development of language skills and learning of other languages in the future, which is a key issue for this research. This study is an effort to understand motivational processes in language education and to better understand the context of motivation in different settings, which is needed.

## Recommendations

In regard to the findings and conclusions of this research, the following recommendations are made to educators, policymakers, and researchers.

### Recommendations to Educators

First, it is highly recommended that teachers develop and implement learner-centered teaching methods that promote the development of intrinsic motivation. For instance, the process of acquiring a new language can be made effective and fun through the use of effective instructional techniques such as motivational interactive activities or games, storytelling, and the development of a group project. Instructional activities, constructive feedback, and collaborative work are all designed to satisfy the psychological needs of learners for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Second, educators must establish a motivational approach through the use of motivational techniques that are classified as extrinsically based motivational techniques paired with intrinsically based motivational techniques that foster interest. In language learning activities, the development of interest, curiosity, and enjoyment is imperative for facilitating the use of motivational techniques that are externally based.

Finally, teachers should use English during instructional activities on a daily basis. When English is integrated into instructional activities, learners perceive the language as a communicative, interactive, and living language, thereby improving the overall motivation and attitude of the learners. Songs and authentic materials are some of the teaching resources that can be used to sustain motivation, as they can improve learners' overall attitude toward English.

### Suggestions for Educational Institutions and Decision Makers

First, educational institutions and decision makers should emphasize providing educators with ongoing training on effective techniques to improve student motivation. Teacher training should include not only pedagogical techniques, but also theoretical aspects of motivation, and the difficulties young learners face in EFL situations.

Second, considering the limited exposure to English outside the classroom, promoting parental involvement is of paramount importance. Schools should establish projects that raise parents' awareness of the role of motivation and how

they can assist their children in learning the language, as well as promote parental participation in language-related activities.

Third, decision-makers must ensure that schools have the necessary resources, including age-appropriate books, interactive learning tools, and motivating multimedia materials, to put motivating teaching strategies into practice. Educational infrastructure that supports interactive and student-centered teaching methods is essential for maintaining student motivation.

### Proposed Future Research

First, future research conducted within Palestine's unique context should focus on primary research that generates original empirical data. For example, qualitative data generated from interviews with all or subsamples of teachers and students, case studies, and classroom observations, would yield valuable information regarding the motivational experience and contextual factors influencing this phenomenon.

Second, motivational research within the context of language learning should include longitudinal studies. For example, the motivational factors influencing language learning outcomes could be measured and analysed with the use of longitudinal studies. This may help identify and explain the motivational factors that may be present in earlier years of schooling and how these may predict or determine the future attainment in language learning, in order to help with the development of more effective educational aids.

Third, research should be conducted that examines and contrasts the different motivational factors that exist within the urban, rural, and refugee camp areas of Palestine. This research would help identify the impact of the different social, political, and economic factors on the motivational experience of learners.

Fourth, there should be more studies conducted in the Palestinian primary school context on the effects of motivational interventions, such as gamification, project-based learning, and technological learning activities. This research should use experimental and quasi-experimental methods to help develop scientifically based and effective interventions.

Research on the motivation-affective relationship concerning foundational literacy skills, both reading and writing, is paramount. Grasping the effects of motivational processes on skills development would facilitate the design of integrated interventions that cater to the emotional and psychological components of the literacy development process.

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