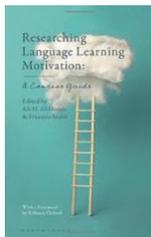


Researching Language Learning Motivation: A Concise Guide

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In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), the psychological construct, motivation, has been a locus of inquiry since the 1950s (Gardner, 2019). As motivation has been employed in SLA to understand the language-acquisition processes, Al-Hoorie and Szabó's 2022 edited volume, *Researching Language Learning Motivation: A Concise Guide*, attempts to capture the diverse array of literature centered on this topic that could be applicable to novice researchers, classroom teachers, as well as any scholars who are interested in this area. A central aim of this volume is to provide an approachable text that could be considered a "soft opening" or a launching pad into the more comprehensive *Palgrave Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning* by Lamb et al. (2019). Owing to the influential SLA motivation scholar, Dr. Zoltán Dörnyei, the chapters in this volume engage with Dörnyei's scholarship as they seek to revisit and contribute to further directions in motivation-related research in SLA.

The volume opens with a foreword containing a tribute to the late Dörnyei and discusses the considerable influence of his work on the field. Following the foreword, the introduction illuminates how the volume seeks to provide a manageable entry point into SLA motivation with a summary of the five parts: general reflections, language engagement, selves approaches, emotions and affect, and emerging topics. In the volume's afterword, Ortega highlights Dörnyei's "prognostication" for future second language (L2) motivational research, reiterating

three “territories” identified by Dörnyei’s scholastic endeavor: unconscious motivation, roles for vision, and motivational endurance.

In this review, we consider the three areas that Dörnyei identified in his contribution to the Lamb et al. handbook as a framework to evaluate Al Hoorie and Szabó’s volume and which overlap with the “territories” illuminated by Ortega. Dörnyei claimed “the exploration of L2 Learning perseverance is a debt... still owed to the teaching profession” (p. 61). As such, Dörnyei emphasized that further studies in student perseverance are the necessary next steps towards providing practitioners with tools to encourage sustained learning behaviors amongst L2 learners. Furthermore, Dörnyei developed three pillars to guide our understanding of L2 learning perseverance (i.e., motivational endurance): self-concordant goals and vision, directed motivational currents (DMC), and student engagement. As Dörnyei identified these areas as critical the forward advancement in the field of L2 motivation research, we now examine how Al Hoorie and Szabó’s work addresses this call.

In viewing each pillar individually, we are able to evaluate Al Hoorie and Szabó’s volume related to engaging with and advancing conversations on L2 learning perseverance. Thus, we begin with the first pillar, *self-concordant goals and vision*. Dörnyei described self-concordant goals as particularly potent goals because they specifically embody a person’s “enduring interests and passions” (p. 58) and are reflective of core values and beliefs. According to Al Hoorie and Szabó, including a mental image or visualization of the self-concordant goals can contribute to one’s persistence and effort towards goal achievement. In Al Hoorie and Szabó’s endeavor, then, Part Three, *Selves Approaches*, directly aligns with the pillar of self-concordant goals and vision.

Within Part 3, there are four chapters. MacIntyre’s chapter centers on the merits and the challenges of understanding the self and self-visualization as a motivational system, while Papi addresses activating the L2 self within the classroom. In two separate chapters, Gonzalez-Mujico and Thompson consider how technology can contribute to new ways of exploring L2 self-identity, particularly for those in rural communities with limited resources. While outside of the *Selves Approaches* section, Henry’s chapter is also relevant to pillar one as it promotes L2 perseverance through personally meaningful goal creation and future visualization. The order of these chapters first demands that we think critically about the field’s tendency to rely on visualization of self as a centerpiece to language learning theory, followed by tangible suggestions on how practitioners might implement self-visualization in diverse classroom contexts. In sum, offering a critical perspective as well as an applied approach indicates that this text is a versatile resource that demands critical evaluation of the topic(s) at hand.

Moving to the second pillar, DMC, Maher and King’s, as well as Muir’s chapters in Part 4 directly engage with the aforementioned topic. As Dörnyei described, DMC is defined as “a powerful motivational drive which unfolds over time and impacts its participants in a significant way” (p. 59). As such, Maher and King’s as well as Muir’s scholastic endeavors specifically consider group dynamics. Moreover, the centrality of the concept of motivation contagion purports that teachers, learners, and communities of practice can influence each other’s motivational drive. Thus, these chapters could be viewed as a specific response to Dörnyei’s call

to action as classroom motivation, broad social context, and learner group dynamics have been overlooked in L2 motivation research related endeavors.

Finally, the third pillar is student engagement, which is addressed specifically in Part Two of the volume in relation to language engagement. The three chapters explicitly discuss L2 perseverance in addition to Henry's work mentioned previously. Mercer describes L2 perseverance through a tripartite model of classroom engagement, while Hiver's chapter centers on teaching for engagement. Finally, Oga Baldwin and Hirosawa emphasize self-determination and higher self-efficacy through engagement. As Dörnyei noted, involving students actively in learning is becoming increasingly challenging as the demands and distractions of social media intensify. It is our challenge, then, as researchers and educators to ensure students have the desire to prioritize their L2 pursuits.

Al-Hoorie and Szabó's volume is relevant to the complexity of measuring the dynamic nature of motivation as it is realized in social and instructed contexts. The chapters align with calls for action across the field as viewed through the framework set by Dörnyei. As the central aim of the text was to offer a comprehensive engagement with various aspects of motivation that were inspired by Dörnyei's work, this volume addresses that aim. Moreover, for junior scholars or practitioners for whom motivation may be a relatively new concept, Al-Hoorie and Szabó's collection encapsulates the most pivotal aspects of motivation.

In conclusion, Al-Hoorie and Szabó's volume is a poignant tribute to the late Dr. Zoltán Dörnyei, who contributed incalculably to the field of motivation in SLA. This inspired volume was intended as a 60th birthday gift, but Dr. Dörnyei passed away at the time of publication. As such, this volume is a noteworthy acknowledgement of his leadership in the field and will continue to inspire robust investigations in SLA related to motivation, the L2 self, and language engagement.

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