



Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó

ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study was to explore intrinsic and extrinsic motivations toward learning Spanish, French, and Mandarin as foreign languages. Also, this study investigates which are the main factors that influence the learners' motivation of the L2, focusing on two specific aspects within the classroom: the materials used in this learning process and the teacher's behaviors. A sample of 173 high school L2 students (9-12) was selected. The results showed that among the top 10 reasons that justified their L2 learning process, 6 were based on intrinsic factors and 4 on extrinsic ones. Also, these results showed that the most preferred materials by the students to learn are those related to audio-visual resources. Lastly, regarding the teachers' motivational practices, the results showed that learners value as the most important motivational factors some teacher's personality traits.

KEYWORDS:

Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation; motivational learning factors; L2 learning, L2 teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a key factor in learning an L2. Learning an L2 requires a demanding amount of time and effort. This is an investment that must be sustained throughout a period in which learners must cope with challenges to develop their abilities to communicate using the L2. In this context, motivation helps learners to remain consistent, giving them energy, direction, purpose and perseverance.

Due to the many benefits with which motivation contributes in learning an L2, this study investigates which type of motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic) is predominant in the learners' desire to develop their L2 skills. Also, this investigation focuses on two main factors and their repercussions on motivation in this learning process: materials used in the classroom and teacher as a motivator agent.

There are different approaches regarding L2 motivation which can be divided into three different periods: 1) The social psychological period (1959-1990), which stresses the importance of the learner's social context and social interactions (Gardner, 1985; 2010; Gardner & Lambert, 1972); 2) The cognitive-situated period (1990's), emphasizes the influence of the learner's mental processes on

their motivation. During this period important developments were made by Noels (2003), Ushioda (2001) as well as Williams and Burden (1997). 3) The process-oriented period focuses on the dynamic character of motivation which varies throughout time (Dörnyei, 2005; Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 1996).

In this article, motivation will be approached from the perspective of self-determination since the main foundation of this theory lies on finding out the true motives by which an individual decides to execute action toward their decided target (Deci et al., 1991).

1.1. Self-determination theory (SDT).

One of the main pillars of the SDT is the differentiation between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). These two types of motivation serve as a precursor of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which we will discuss below. Autonomous motivation implies an independent volition in our actions. Thus, not dependent on external sources to act. Intrinsic motivation constitutes an example of autonomous motivation. Controlled motivation seems to require some external action. Autonomous and controlled motivation are intentional. Amotivation is a lack of intention and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Corresponding Author: Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó

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1.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning

Ryan & Deci, (2000), define intrinsic motivation as “the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges; to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn”, (p. 70). Applying this definition to language learning, an intrinsically motivated learner is the one who is learning an L2 for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. Intrinsic motivation is an essential type of motivation. However, it is not the only type of self-determined motivation that exists. Most of the actions taken by most people are not intrinsically motivated.

The term extrinsic motivation “involves doing an activity to attain a separable consequence, whether tangible or otherwise”, (Deci, E., Olafsen, A. & Ryan, R., 2017, p. 21). Thus, extrinsic motivation implies instrumental or external behaviors. In this sense, the motivation of learning an L2 lies in external factors outside the inherent fulfillment of the learning process that is taking place.

1.3. Motivation in second-language learning

Noels, K., Clement, R., & Pelletier, L., (2003) investigated the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and language learning, considering an integrative orientation. 59 French students were part of a summer English immersion course. The results showed that the integrative orientation correlated strongly with the intrinsic motivation.

Pae (2008) found in his study that intrinsic motivation was the most influential factor in L2 learners’ self-confidence and willingness regarding their desire to improve their L2 skills.

Comaranu & Noels (2009) investigated the motivation of 145 Chinese learners considering the self-determination theory. A correlation was found between a personal meaningful reason to study the L2 and the engagement in the learning process.

Lucas, R., Pulido, D., Miraflores, E., Ignacio, A., Tacay, M., & Lao, J. (2010) conducted a study that involved 240 freshman college students about their learning process intrinsic motivational factors. They found that the students based their intrinsic motivation on two factors: knowledge and accomplishment. The more they knew and accomplished, the more intrinsically motivated became.

Kreishan & Al-Dhaimar explored the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of 166 undergraduate Jordanian L2 learners of English, French, and German. Their results did not show a correlation among orientation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and achievement.

1.4. Motivational teaching strategies.

Dörnyei (1994) distinguishes three different levels of foreign language learning motivation: language level, learner level, and learning situation level. In terms of how to motivate

L2 learners from a teacher’s standpoint, we must focus on the learning level which is divided into three types of motivational components: course-specific motivational components; teacher-specific motivational components; and group-specific motivational components. Dörnyei (1994) cites six different teacher’s strategies to motivate students in a foreign language classroom: adopt the role of a facilitator; promote learner autonomy; model student interest in L2 learning; introduce tasks in such a way as to stimulate intrinsic motivation and help internalize extrinsic motivation; and use motivating feedback.

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) adopted a different perspective regarding the motivational strategies to be applied in the classroom by asking two hundred Hungarian teachers of English as an L2 “how important they considered a selection of 51 strategies and how frequently they used them in their teaching practice”, (p. 203). The results of this study show the top ten macro strategies named the “Ten commandments for motivating language learners”, (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998, p. 215).

Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) conducted a modified replication of the previous study (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998) asking 387 Taiwanese L2 English teachers two questions: 1) How important were those 51 motivational strategies, and 2) How often they were using them in their lesson plans. The results collected reveal some resemblance regarding the most preferred strategies and some dissimilarities related to the different cultures in which both studies took place.

Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) investigated the relationship between 27 teachers’ motivational strategies and their 1300 learners’ L2 learning motivation. The results demonstrate that there is a relation cause-effect between the teachers’ motivational practices and the students’ motivational state.

Ölmezer Oztürk & Ok (2014) carried out an investigation where 314 pre-intermediate college students of the English preparatory program were given a questionnaire regarding the motivational behaviors of their teachers. Also, 19 of those students were interviewed about the same topic. Results showed the 15 most motivating teacher behaviors according to students after answering the questionnaire and the 10 most motivating teacher behaviors after interviewing the above-mentioned 19 students. 62 different motivational behaviors were used in this study, divided into five categories: teacher’s lecturing style; teacher’s personal features; teacher’s rapport with students; teacher’s error correction and evaluation techniques; and teacher’s giving and evaluating homework. In both cases, the teacher’s personal features were the most influential regarding the attained students’ motivational levels.

Alqahtani (2016) and Cordova (2018) conducted their studies based on the teachers’ own opinions and practice regarding their motivational behaviors in the classroom.

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants and setting

173 L2 learners in a secondary school in the United States participated in this study. Each of these students were part of one of the three foreign languages offered in the institution that they currently attended: Spanish (102), French (48) and Mandarin (23). The age of the students ranged from 14 to 18. The proficiency level of the participants ranged from beginners to advanced, being most of them intermediate second language learners.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Students questionnaire

A "motivational factors questionnaire" was developed to elicit information regarding the research questions described in section 2.4. This questionnaire was divided into two sections: section 1 aimed to gather some demographic information about the participants. The section 2 contained the following three questions:

- Choose your 10 favorite reasons why you are learning an L2.

This question presented 31 options to choose from. The options were an adaptation of the ones presented in the Attitude Motivation Test Battery, (Gardner & Smythe, 1981). 15 of those options targeted intrinsic motivation and the other 15, extrinsic motivation. One of the options contained an open answer in this format: "other". This question aimed to gather information about the source of the L2 learners' motivation in the classroom.

- Choose your 5 favorite materials with which to learn an L2.

The design of this question contained 15 options to choose from. The materials presented included five categories: 1) Paper-based materials; 2) Audio-based materials; 3) Audio-visual based materials; 4) Technology-based materials; 5) Games-based materials. One of the options let the participants choose freely their desire materials: "other". This question aimed to gather information about the students' favorite materials to be more motivated in the L2 classroom.

- Choose 10 of the below qualities that you consider your teacher should have to motivated you to learn an L2.

31 options were presented in this question. The teachers' qualities shown were an adaptation of Cheng & Dörnyei (2007). Following Ölmezer Oztürk & Ok (2014), 30 (one item was an open answer: "other") of those items were classified under the same five categories they used: 1) Teacher's lecturing style (1-15); 2) Teacher's personal features (16-24); 3) Teacher's rapport with students (25-27); 4) Teacher's error correction and evaluation techniques (28); 5) Teacher's giving and evaluating homework (29-30). This question aimed to collect information about the participants'

preferences regarding teacher's motivational practices in the classroom.

All the items in these three questions were presented as options to choose from and written in English. The participants had to choose 10 items for the first and third question, and 5 for the second question.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire contained 76 items: 31 items for the first question; 15 items for the second question; and another 31 items for the third question. The quantitative data were compiled and analyzed by using a Google form. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics.

2.4. Research questions

Three research questions were designed in this study:

RQ1: What types of factors, intrinsic vs. extrinsic influence the most the decision to learn an L2?

RQ2: What type of materials used in the classroom are preferred by L2 learners?

RQ3: Which teachers' motivational practices influence the most the students' motivation?

3. RESULTS

3.1. Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic source of motivation

The first research question of this study investigated why the participants decided to learn their specific L2. The options-items were designed to represent both, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational reasons. 15 items correlated with intrinsic motivation and 15 others with extrinsic motivation, following Deci & Ryan's (1985) definition of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Participants had the open option "other" to state any other reason by which they decided to learn an L2.

Table 1 shows the top 10 reasons why the participants took their respective L2 course. Table 2 shows those 10 reasons divided into intrinsic vs. extrinsic reasons.

Table 1. Top 10 reasons why participants decided to learn their L2

<i>Top 10 Reasons to learn the L2</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1. Learning the L2 gives me the possibility to communicate with people from other countries and cultures</i>	65.3
<i>2. I need it to be able to graduate</i>	53.8
<i>3. Learning an L2 will help me to get a good job</i>	53.7
<i>4. I need to study my L2 to travel in the future with more confidence</i>	53.2
<i>5. I really enjoy communicating with others from other countries and cultures</i>	52
<i>6. Being able to speak and understand the L2 gives me a great feeling of accomplishment</i>	48.6

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

7. I enjoy improving my L2 skills	47.4
8. It has always been very interesting for me to learn this L2	45.1
9. I feel good about learning an L2 due to my great curiosity about other cultures.	43.4
10. Learning an L2 has always been fun to me	38.7

Table 2. Top 10 reasons why participants decided to learn their L2 considering intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation	%
	1. Learning the L2 gives me the possibility to communicate with people from other countries and cultures	65.3
	2. I need it to be able to graduate	53.8
	3. Learning the L2 will help me to get a good job	53.7
	4. I need to study my L2 to travel in the future with more confidence	53.2
5. I really enjoy communicating with others from other countries and cultures		52
6. Being able to speak and understand the L2 gives me a great feeling of accomplishment		48.6
7. I enjoy improving my L2 skills		47.4
8. It has always been very interesting form me to learn this L2		45.1
9. I feel good about learning an L2 due to my great curiosity about other countries.		43.4
10. Learning an L2 has always been fun to me		38.7

The results from Table 1 and Table 2 help us to respond to RQ1: What types of factors, intrinsic vs. extrinsic influence the most the process of learning an L2? We can see in Table 1 that the most influential factor to study an L2 is the possibility to develop the skills to communicate with people from other countries and cultures, which is an extrinsic motivational factor since it refers “to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome”, (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 55).

We can also see in Table 2 that the first four motivational factors are extrinsic. However, the remaining 6 factors out of those 10 to learn an L2 are intrinsic.

3.2. The most motivational materials used in the classroom

The Research Question 2 investigated which materials used in the classroom were the most motivational ones for the students. The second question in the questionnaire presented a list of 13 specific resources to choose from. Also, participants had the open answer “other” to point out any other material not listed that they considered worth mentioning.

All these materials were classified under five different categories: 1) Paper-based materials; 2) Audio-based materials; 3) Audiovisual-based materials; 4) Technology-based materials; 5) Games-based materials.

Table 3 shows the 5 most motivational materials according to learners' preference.

Table 3. Top 5 motivational materials in the L2 classroom

Materials	Category	%
1. Movies	Audiovisual	79.2
2. Games	Games	67.1
3. Internet L2 websites	Technology	60.7
4. Note-taking	Paper	52
5. Handouts by teacher	Paper	48.6

Table 3 results show that movies and games are the most motivational materials in the L2 classroom. Also, it is remarkable the fact that the category “paper” (note-taking; handouts by teacher) represents the majority (2) of the categories in the top 5. Internet L2 websites is the third most motivational material in the L2 classroom. Table 4 shows the 5 least motivational materials.

Table 4. The least 5 motivational materials in the L2 classroom

Materials	Category	%
1. Dictionary	Paper	9.2
2. Comics	Paper	9.8
3. Textbook	Paper	18.5
4. Authentic materials	All	22
5. Cartoons	Audiovisual	23.1

Table 4 shows the dictionary as the least motivational material in the L2 classroom. Comics, textbook, authentic materials and cartoons are the other least favorite resources

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

to work with in the L2 classroom. By categories, "paper" category is the least preferred by learners.

3.3. Motivating teacher behaviors in L2 classes.

The Research Question 3 tried to find out what the most motivating teacher behaviors were among the L2 learners. Following Ölmezer Örtürk & Ok (2014) we created the same five different categories regarding those motivational practices in the classroom. Table 5 shows these categories and the items included in each one.

Table 5. Teacher motivational behaviors categories

<i>Teacher motivational behaviors categories</i>	<i>Items #</i>
1. Teacher's lecturing style	1-15
2. Teacher's personal features	16-24
3. Teacher's rapport with students	25-27
4. Teacher's error correction and evaluation techniques	28
5. Teacher's giving and evaluating homework	29-30

Table 6 shows the 10 most motivational teacher behaviors.

Table 6. The 10 most motivational teacher behaviors, categories and percentages

<i>Teacher motivational behaviors</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Sense of humor	Personal features	72.8
2/3. Show respect and care	Personal features	66.5
3/2. Promoting a good relationship with students	Rapport	66.5
4. Be kind, patient, and fair to the students	Personal features	63.6
5. Grades reflects achievement and effort	Evaluation	55.5
6. Grade papers, exams and assignments in a timely manner	Giving and evaluating	54.3
7. Being a spontaneous, creative teacher	Personal features	54.3
8. Familiarize learners with the L2 cultural background	Lecturing style	39.3
9. Give clear instructions and lectures	Lecturing style	39.2
10. Getting to know better the students: goals, interest, etc.	Rapport	38.2

The results displayed in Table 6 show that the most motivating teacher behavior is his/her sense of humor. Showing respect and care and promoting a good relationship with students are in second and third position. The fourth most motivational teacher behavior according to students is

another teacher feature: being kind, patient and fair to students. Regarding teachers' behaviors as categories, personal features and rapport are the two most appreciated in terms of motivation, representing 70% of the responses: 50% personal features; 20% rapport. Table 7 shows the 5 least motivational teacher behaviors.

Table 7. The 5 least motivational teacher behaviors, categories and percentages

<i>Teacher motivational behaviors</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Adopt the role of facilitator	Lecturing style	10.4
2. Being a demanding teacher, establishing high expectations	Personal features	10.4
3. Connecting the L2 with a better professional future	Lecturing style	16.6
4. Developing students' curiosity	Personal features	21.1
5. Invite seniors to talk about their positive experiences	Lecturing style	27.7

As Table 7 shows, the two least motivational behaviors according to the participants are when the teacher adopts the role of facilitator and when the teacher is demanding, establishing high expectations. Also, three other options complete the results as the least motivational behaviors in Table 7: connecting the learning of the L2 with a better professional future, developing students' curiosity, and the possibility to invite seniors as guests in the L2 classroom to let them talk about their positive learning experiences. In terms of categories, two of them, lecturing style and personal features are cited as the least motivational behaviors in the L2 classroom.

4. DISCUSSION

This study seeks to find out the most relevant type of motivation, intrinsic vs. extrinsic, by which L2 learners decide to study their respective target language. Another goal of this study is to investigate the type of L2 classroom materials that are more motivating for the students. Lastly, this research investigates the most motivational teachers' behaviors in the L2 classroom.

Regarding the RQ1, we can see in Table 1 and Table 2 that among the 10 reasons that students gave to study their L2, six of them showed an intrinsic motivation and four, an extrinsic motivation. At the same time, we can see in Table 2 that the four most popular reasons to study an L2 are all extrinsic, being the rest of them, intrinsic. Also, we can see a correlation between extrinsic motivation and instrumental

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

orientation. This finding is in line with the results from previous studies (e.g. Noels et al., 2001). On the other hand, there is not a correlation between intrinsic motivation and integrative orientation, since as we can see in Table 2, only two of the reasons to study an L2 represent an integrative orientation (reason 5 and 9). This finding differs from the study by Dhaimar & Kreishan (2013) which showed a significant positive correlation between intrinsic stimulation and integrative orientation. The explanation for this may be the different target languages studied and the specific cultural environment between the two studies.

Table 3 and Table 4 show the results regarding the RQ2. According to them, the five most motivational materials in the L2 classroom are: movies; games; internet L2 websites; note-taking; and handouts prepared by teachers. Table 4 shows that students find that working with materials such as dictionaries, comics, textbooks, authentic materials, or cartoons is not really appealing in terms of motivation. This finding is crucial since it gives us an outlook about the materials with which educators may plan their classes. We can see from these results that L2 learners are able to find a balance between what they like (movies, games, internet L2 websites) and need (note-taking, handouts by the teacher). At the same time, the dictionary is a material that participants don't find very likeable. Table 3 and Table 4 also show that L2 learners prefer to use materials made by the teacher rather than the textbook or the workbook, especially the former.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 are related to RQ3, regarding the most motivating teachers' behaviors. All the results obtained come from students' response. According to the results from Table 6, it seems that among the most motivational behaviors in terms of categories are those based on the teacher's personal features (sense of humor; respect; care), rapport (promoting a good relationship with students; getting to know the students better), and lecturing style (teaching L2 culture; give clear instructions and lectures).

According to the results in Table 7 depicting the least motivational teachers' behaviors, it seems that students don't feel very motivated when the teacher adopts the role of a facilitator, is demanding, or sets up high expectations in the L2 classroom. Also, relating the L2 learning with the possibility to attain a better professional future, promoting the students' curiosity, or inviting senior students to express their positive L2 learning experiences, seem to be not very motivational. Those behaviors belong to the categories of teachers' personal features and lecturing style.

This is an important finding. First, because the most motivational aspects from the teacher for these students are his/her personal features, lecturing style and rapport. Second, because we know that within those categories, participants treasure the most sense of humor, display of respect, care, patience, kindness, and fairness, and the establishment of a good relationship among students and teacher. In the literature, these results align with previous studies (Ölmezer

Öztürk & Ok, 2014; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010). In terms of the most motivational teacher behaviors, Ölmezer Öztürk & Ok's study shows that the teacher personal feature is the most motivational category for the participants, being the most motivational behavior very similar in both studies: sense of humor (present study); putting a smile on her/his face in the classroom, (Ölmezer Öztürk & Ok, 2014). With regard to the least motivational teacher behaviors, the present results are similar to Ölmezer Öztürk & Ok's. In both cases, the behaviors within the lecturing style category are the predominant as the least motivational: adopt the role of a facilitator; connecting the L2 with a better professional future; invite seniors to talk about their positive experiences (present study); always lecturing in the L2; giving importance to seating for effective language teaching; encouraging students to make oral presentations in English about various topics (Ölmezer Öztürk & Ok, 2014).

It is important to mention some implications of this study to the teaching community. Since it was found that the predominant reasons to learn an L2 were instrumental rather than integrative, it would be beneficial for the L2 teachers to stress the connection between the L2 learning and the integration in the L2 community. Regarding the use of materials in the classroom, educators should implement their lessons plans by considering that learners value the effort of taking notes and their teacher endeavor to create his/her own materials. Also, since the use of movies and games seems to enhance the L2 learners' motivation, it would be recommendable the use of these resources in a regular basis, e.g. one movie per trimester; games included in the lesson plans. Lastly, regarding the motivational teachers' behaviors, it is key according to the results that the teacher becomes conscious about the importance of his/her effort to care about the students, trying to create a safe and welcoming classroom experience for the learners, based on his/her predisposition to be nice, kind, just and caring.

5. CONCLUSION

This investigation shows some information about the motivational factors of 173 second language learners regarding the reason why they started their learning process in the first place, the classroom materials and the teachers' behaviors.

After reviewing the different findings obtained in this study, we can point out the following conclusions:

(1) L2 learners chose their target language based on instrumental orientations, which correlate with extrinsic motivation. At the same time, the participants were highly influenced by intrinsic motivations. Therefore, it seems that there must be a balance in the classroom instruction to make sure that students' motivation is enhanced from both sources: extrinsic and intrinsic.

(2) This investigation shows no correlation between intrinsic motivation and integrative orientation. Integrative

Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

motives were present but not decisively in the decision-making of learning an L2. Stressing the importance of integrativeness into the specific L2 may increase the motivation of its learners.

(3) Movies, games, note-taking and materials made by the teacher were the most motivational materials in the L2 classroom. It is important to recognize these materials to use them often enough to enhance the students' motivation, making sure that they are fully implemented within the curriculum of the target language.

(4) Dictionaries, comics, textbooks, cartoons, and authentic materials were the least motivational materials selected by the learners. The fact that dictionaries were the least motivational resource in the L2 classroom is significant. The explanation might be the L2 learners' often use of electronic devices in the classroom. Even though students don't like it, dictionaries are an essential tool to understand and learn the target language. On the other hand, the use of electronic translators impedes learners to really understand the grammatical and syntactic implications of the language.

(5) Sense of humor; showing respect, care, patience and fairness; promoting a good relationship with students; and grading both, achievement and attitude were the most motivational teachers' behaviors. It seems that we teachers value our students' attitude as much as our students value ours. We are dealing with human beings in our classrooms. We cannot forget that. Interacting with them should require a positive, happy, passionate, fair, and understanding state of mind. This would help create a welcoming learning environment, where learners would feel safe, confident and with a deep sense of belonging.

(6) The role of facilitator; being a demanding teacher with high expectations; making connections between the L2 and a better professional future; and developing students' curiosity were the least motivational teachers' behaviors. It is symptomatic that the least motivational teacher behavior is when the teacher adopts the role of facilitator, understood as someone who lets students take ownership of the learning process. At the secondary level of education, there is a students' tendency to rely on the teachers' behavior for almost the entire learning process. This prevents learners from being proactive, becoming more independent, and increasing their intrinsic motivation. A teacher-centered learning process is not beneficial for the students, who in contrast, develop a passive behavior, expecting the teacher to lead their learning experience. All of that generates an increasing less demanding academic expectations which makes students more insecure and less confident in their possibilities to succeed. Steinberg (2014) calls for attention regarding this issue expressing his concerns since "American high schools are considerably less demanding than in the rest of the industrialized world", and also, that "young people are rarely pushed beyond their current capabilities", (p. 213). It seems that according to the present times, it would be worth

trying to promote a different educational approach based on high expectations, teachers as facilitators, and rigor, which would help learners to become more pro-active and independent, appreciating the pure joy of loving to keep learning.

These conclusions based on the findings reported add some relevant details with regard to the motivational practices in the L2 classroom. There is no doubt in the literature that motivation represents an important function in the second language learning process. However, more research must be conducted, especially in two areas investigated in this study: classroom materials and teachers' motivational behaviors. This study represents a step in that direction.

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Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó, Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors

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