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A Review Study on the Increased Motivation of Students by Distance Education in Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract

With new chances for language learning worldwide, distance education has grown significantly for the past ten years. The convenience and potential of new language learning settings in distance education have been acknowledged by many language students, teachers, and researchers. Because digital technology used in distance education has advanced, it is now possible to use its tools and applications to motivate students outside of the classroom, in formal and comfortable contexts. It is a widely held concept that motivation and engagement are essential components of language learning. Increasing motivation through distance education can encourage students to use their own personal, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral resources, which will improve their learning outcomes. A detailed review of the literature with an emphasis on research that examines the impact of technology use in distance foreign language education on students' motivation in order to school themselves has been conducted in the study. This study additionally presents conclusions and suggestions for the efficient use of technology in distance education as a motivating tool or element in the context of learning a foreign language.

Keywords: Distance education, foreign language learner, foreign language teaching, motivation, technology.

Introduction

Distance education has grown significantly over the past two decades, opening up new chances for language learning all over the world. The convenience and potential of new language learning settings in distance education have been felt by many language students, teachers, and researchers. Teachers and students use web-based resources, learning management systems, live-streaming, and video-conferencing platforms in order to facilitate synchronous teaching and learning activities (Xu et al., 2021). Also, the substantial rise in publications over the past two decades is additional proof of the increasing focus on distance education in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

In general, distance education is primarily designed for students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend in-person courses. In distance education, students complete their tasks from home or the workplace, and communicate with their teachers and other students online. Teachers put a lot of effort into adapting their educational ideas for the technologically mediated online environment. As a result, the majority of educational activities continue, with only a small number being altered, eliminated, or put off. Since there are fewer distractions when practicing in front of a computer than when peers are around them in a classroom, the majority of students are happy with their online education, and some even prefer it (Bahri, 2022; Xu et al., 2021). Because there is an increasing need for some practical features, distance learning is emerging as a new technique in the field of education. These practical characteristics of distance education, according to Holmberg (1989,

p. 24), include its convenience, flexibility, and adaptability to fulfill the needs of each individual student.

Distance education is one of the methods the Department of Education adopts to uphold high standards in education around the world. With this method, replies are given immediately. The advantage of distance education is that it encourages students to actively participate while using a variety of internet-accessible resources when they are separated from one another by distance. Internet connectivity must be stable and readily available for participants. In distance education, teachers can continuously engage with their students effectively, pay attention to their opinions, and improve their methods of teaching a second language by staying informed of changes in the field and taking into account every part of the teaching method that might improve students' motivation in learning (Muñoz-Restrepo et al., 2020).

The demand for learning is the major reason why distance education is growing. There are many advantages and challenges for both students and teachers as a result of the rising globalization of distance education. Students are left by themselves, and expected to be more independent, self-directed, and self-sufficient. Students' autonomy is crucial since they are more responsible for their own learning in distance education. Sampson (2003, p. 104) defines distance education as autonomous learning done at a distance using self-study materials and limited communication. A number of issues are raised by this autonomy, such as whether it causes education to be of poor quality. Do teachers' materials used in distance education courses work as well as those

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used in in-person courses? According to some academics, students are not alone in this process. They frequently interact with their peers and teachers. Even if there seems to be opposition towards distance education, researchers, teachers, and students are nevertheless interested.

Methods

This review of the literature on distance foreign language education includes studies from the last two decades. Descriptive studies are most prevalent in terms of research methodologies for examining distance teaching of foreign languages (e.g., Rogers & Wolff, 2000; Rothenberg, 1998). The development of new learning opportunities, course development and evaluation, teaching roles, innovative learning spaces, and student contributions to the process of distance foreign language education are all significant subjects covered in the literature. The study focuses heavily on the new options provided by distance foreign language education. The need for adopting a learner-centered approach is also emphasized while examining the practical use and promise of distance education in foreign language teaching and learning. Since this study is only using the existing literature, it does not need ethics committee approval.

Motivation in Foreign Language Education

Motives are closely related to motivation. There are several definitions of the concept “motive”: Motive is the thoughts and aspirations of a student which are connected to certain needs that prompt them to act; motive is a conscious reason that is at the basis of a student’s actions; motive is the reason of the motivation of a student which are related to the satisfaction of needs in a set of external or internal conditions (Klementieva, 2023).

It is important for the teacher to know the motives underlying the students’ activities and to be able to maintain a positive motivation for learning. This can be achieved by the appropriate organization of the lesson during which the interests of students and their motivations for learning are taken into account. It is important for the teacher to know the needs of students and let them have self-control. A paradigm that is increasingly used to describe general student motivation is known as self-determination theory (SDT) (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). This psychological student theory, which is especially well suited to adult learners, post-compulsory education, and distance learning, lays a major focus on the idea of individuality (Nazari & Xodabande, 2023). The three fundamental psychological conditions that form the basis of SDT are competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-determination theory contends that autonomous learning settings for students would foster greater self-control. Noels et al. (2000) SDT research has confirmed these hypotheses (Deci & Ryan, 2003; Noels, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, in order to increase students’ intrinsic motivation in class, teachers create a learning environment that supports students’ basic psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Pelikan et al., 2021).

Lack of motivation in learning a foreign language, lack of understanding of its importance in modern life significantly complicates the work of foreign language teachers. There have been various studies over the past several decades on how emotional factors like motivation, beliefs, and anxiety might affect learning a second language (Bown, 2006; Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994, Noels et al., 2019). Many experienced teachers of foreign languages point out that it is impossible to teach a language to a person who lacks motivation.

Students learning English as a second language frequently struggle with their skills in speaking, which is why they frequently perform poorly on speaking tests. Fear of assessment, the educational approach of the teacher, and student culture all lead to language avoidance

(Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). According to Dinçer (2017), speech assessments are a time-consuming and challenging process for second language learners. When required to perform in front of classmates and professors, students of foreign languages exhibit anxiety and nervousness (Tridinanti, 2018). In addition, Tridinanti (2018) finds that throughout speaking assessments and classroom activities, students experience trauma, anxiety, fear, rage, and disrespect. All these can lead to demotivation in students. Only interested persons who have set a certain goal learn a foreign language much easier, faster and with great pleasure. Motivation is the guarantee of the entire learning process.

Today, it is possible to enhance students’ motivation to learn a foreign language through interactive and personally oriented technologies. In an action-oriented approach, learning can only occur by experiencing, by “doing.” People must be inspired to experience and take action (Brophy, 2004). According to Hartnett (2016, p. 13), motivation is crucial because it enables students to complete tasks on time, demonstrate a high level of engagement, and attain achievement. The use of technology may speed up the dissemination of knowledge while also inspiring students through comfort and engagement. Therefore, it cannot always ensure language proficiency at such a level that would allow them to use it in professional activities.

Motivation Through Technology and Distance Foreign Language Education

Digital integration is not a new concept in the teaching or study of foreign languages. However, the introduction of Web 2.0 and several other technologies that are simpler to access and use appears to have sped it up. The creative learning tactics used by students as well as teachers have both altered as a result of this combination. According to Lamb, “developments in digital technology are probably the most prolific source of innovation in L2 teaching methodology in contemporary times, at least in Western or developed world contexts, and the motivational properties of each innovation are usually considered an important aspect of its instructional qualities...” (Lamb, 2017, p. 30). Research on distance foreign language education focuses primarily on the effectiveness of foreign language teaching in distance education, the technological aspects of language teaching, and self-directed learning.

Researchers have recently examined the connection between Web 2.0 technology and motivation. Advances in information and communication technology have made it feasible for distance-learning students to engage in two-way web-based communication. Various technical communication techniques have been developed to facilitate communication between students, teachers, and material in circumstances where computer networks are commonly used for communication (Yılmaz & Aktuğ, 2011). Due to its comprehensive presentation, sharing, recording, and chat features, video conferencing services such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams are likely to continue to be the platforms of choice for educational purposes. As Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) advance, both teachers and students discover new ways to express themselves and have greater teaching and learning opportunities, which inspires both groups of people.

İşık et al. (2010) conducted a study on students’ views about distance education that looks at students’ attitudes regarding web-based distance education. Data collection for the researchers included demographic surveys and questionnaires. Their findings suggest that views regarding distance learning are typically favorable. Compared to male students, female students are more willing. The researchers maintain that while some students do indicate boredom throughout the exercises, the majority of students feel better at ease with distance education, according to the study’s findings.

Learning a foreign language from a distance can help students get over their fear of speaking. According to some other research, students are likely to turn to distance education for the same reason and seek security as students who have foreign language anxiety typically steer clear of engaging with their classmates (Alamer & Almulhim, 2021). According to the findings of the research, distance learning encourages students to keep up and motivates them to learn.

In a 2007 research, Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds examine how students' desire for learning, affection for learning, and the classroom atmosphere are affected by teachers' Facebook self-disclosures. The study's findings show that distance online education improves students' motivation and emotional learning. If the foreign language classroom is going to be dealt with by a counselor–client (teacher–student) relationship, then self-disclosure can be used by the teacher as a successful tool (Farani & Fatemi, 2014).

White (2006) provides an overview of the subject of distance language teaching and learning. According to her study, technological advancements in language learning have led to the emergence of distance foreign language education. She finds that there is a shift from sharing knowledge to encouraging relationships among students, teachers, and native speakers. She stresses the value of both independent learning and the community of learners who engage through online learning. If there is an internet connection, students can use a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone to access materials, complete tasks, and carry out activities at any time and anywhere. Thus, increased exposure to online content and practice can enhance foreign language skills, and this leads to motivation in students (Adas & Bakır, 2013).

According to Terrell (2011), access to internet-based tools (wikis, avatars, games, and interactive tales) encourages English language learners to practice their language skills outside the classroom. Additionally, as McLoughlin and Lee (2008a) note, Web 2.0 technologies appear to encourage people to align their specific hobbies in which learning a new language can be connected with larger social networks, therefore blending into an active network. This can lead to motivation in students.

According to the study conducted by Diny et al. (2020), teaching with Google Classroom is also good at enhancing students' writing skills. Students are encouraged to participate more in teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom with Google Classroom. As a result, their engagement with teachers and students increases, and this leads to motivation.

Yang and Wu (2012) create a digital storytelling program to see if it improves senior high school students studying English as a second language's performance in class, critical thinking, and learning motivation. Results after six months indicate that students have improved their English language proficiency as well as their capacity to think critically and be motivated to study. Additionally, according to a study conducted by Kessler et al. (2023), using Duolingo in a second language course can help students develop better listening skills while establishing a good attitude toward using the application as an educational tool. Castañeda and Cho (2016) find that a gamified conjugation app increases students' confidence while improving their accuracy in conjugating verbs in Spanish as a second language. McLoughlin and Lee (2008b) experimentally use the production of podcasts to better prepare their students for the content of the course. According to the findings of the study, the students find the task both challenging and motivating, as evidenced by the quality and intensity of their engagement and by the successful production of the podcasts.

Another study finds that mobile technologies can offer a wealth of ideas and strategies to encourage the process of foreign language

education (Klimova, 2018; Zou et al., 2020). The study examines the effects of mobile-assisted language learning in learning a second language and finds that it has great potential in enhancing learners' engagement and achievements. In addition, some students become more motivated by interacting with a chatbot prior to an online group discussion, according to an early study with chatbots as language learning partners (Goda et al., 2014). Chatbots are motivating, as evidenced by the expansion of research in this field (Zhang et al., 2023).

According to another study conducted by Khojasteh et al. (2023), teachers have developed an e-content which motivates students by making them curious and providing flexibility, interactivity, engagement, and effective design.

Besides, Mahoney (2014) focuses on how blogging is used in writing courses. According to the findings, this greatly motivates students. Wilkinson (2016) uses media sharing platforms to boost students' motivation. The study supports the idea that student motivation is increased when their work is made public (such as by uploading it to YouTube). In a study on the usefulness of voice blogs, Sun (2009) comes to the conclusion that students' eagerness to learn may be increased by voice blogging since it motivates them to introduce themselves, share knowledge, and interact with peers. Since it is important for foreign language students to improve their listening and speaking skills, voice blogging is likely to motivate them in performing their tasks and learning.

Along with the technical advantages, Moore and Kearsley (2012) emphasize the importance of immediate and efficient feedback and assessment in the context of distance learning. They maintain that the system is in danger if any part of it fails, which is why feedback and assessment methods are crucial in education. Teachers are able to give immediate feedback by using technology in distance education. Artificial intelligence (AI)-based software is one of the ways to provide individualized formative feedback. Artificial intelligence-enabled software can facilitate learning processes by providing quick and effective feedback to students and accelerating individual assessment of the student's language proficiency (Taşkıran & Yazıcı, 2021). The importance of computers in delivering feedback has grown as computing facilities have proliferated and technology has progressed. It is now simple for students all over the world to receive immediate feedback on their online assignments. Online feedback provided by peers, teachers, or software is frequently utilized thanks to the quick advancements in educational technology as well as the growing availability of online learning environments and opportunities for distance learning (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Artificial intelligence technology has also developed, especially since the early 2000s. It is currently used in education, as it is used in many other fields, and it is expected that it will continue to shape education without slowing down (Roll & Wylie, 2016). Thanks to machine learning algorithms, we can monitor students' skills and abilities, measure their motivation to learn, and predict where they are struggling and need help. Distance education, in particular, can completely change the size of existing training data and generate massive amounts of data that can be used by AI (Weld et al., 2012).

Therefore, such technologies are crucial in distance foreign language teaching and learning processes to observe the student's performance and receive timely feedback in the most rapid and effective way when they need it (Leenknecht et al., 2020). By focusing on the feedback procedures in distance education, they maintain that this process encourages a sense of participation and motivation in the course for both the teacher and the student. The majority of students want immediate assistance, only a small proportion of pupils will put up with the one-way communication that goes on without feedback (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

Technology also serves distance foreign language students through the use of virtual reality. According to a perception study, virtual reality is seen as useful in accomplishing learning goals by learners (Barrett et al., 2023). The reason why virtual reality is seen as useful is because virtual reality provides real-time simulation and engagement through multiple sensory channels for students. The positive perception of virtual reality indicates that virtual reality is inherently motivating.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Motivation is an important concept to consider in foreign language education. In order to increase the motivation of the student, teachers become more involved and caring, set actionable and clear goals, communicate flexibility in students' learning strategies, and explain the rationale for learning tasks. According to the literature review of the study, distance learning experience can in itself bring benefits to students in terms of increased motivation, confidence, and better self-regulation in foreign language education. Frequent separation of teacher and student in space and/or time requires students to regulate themselves to a greater extent than they do in the classroom.

One of the elements which motivates students more than traditional education in distance foreign language education is the fact that the student feels more secure and comfortable from a distance. Distance education comes to the fore in foreign language teaching as students feel more comfortable especially when performing the task of speaking in a foreign language. The feeling of security and comfort leads students to become motivated. Motivated students become more willing to learn and more open to learning. Since an unmotivated student cannot learn anything, one of the most important things to consider in education is to keep the student motivated. Another factor motivating students is that the tools and materials used in distance foreign language education are more abundant and more entertaining with technology. Therefore, it is possible for students to be more successful in distance foreign language education thanks to the increased motivation.

Teachers' self-disclosure on social media also plays an important role in increasing the motivation of students in distance education. The student feeling closer towards the teacher becomes more confident, and it helps them engage with the teacher more easily. Since language is closely related to life itself, the teacher's self-disclosure in distance foreign language teaching may be a good guide for students to take the teacher's lifestyle as an example. Therefore, it may be helpful for foreign language students to be educated by the teachers who are both willing and appropriate to disclose themselves on social media.

Apart from increasing motivation, another advantage of distance foreign language teaching for students is that materials that will help them learn foreign languages are more abundant in distance foreign language education, and students can access these materials more easily. Thanks to the abundance and ease of use of online language learning materials, students' success in learning a foreign language also increases. Another notable factor in distance foreign language education is that the power of social media enables students to better fulfill their tasks. Public exposure of student work drives them to do their best, and leads to success.

In addition to these technological advantages of distance foreign language education, timely and efficient feedback and evaluation in the context of distance learning is of crucial importance. Although some students may put up with delays in this procedure, the majority demand rapid feedback. As technology has advanced, the role of computers in providing feedback has become increasingly apparent. Students in many parts of the world can now easily get feedback on their online tasks. Thanks to machine learning algorithms, we can monitor the

student's skills, measure their motivation to learn, and predict where they are struggling and need help. These algorithms are useful to observe the student's performance and receive timely feedback in the most rapid and effective way when they need it. Technology also serves distance foreign language students through the use of virtual reality. The positive perception of virtual reality indicates that virtual reality is inherently motivating.

In conclusion, distance foreign language education may lead students generally to demonstrate greater motivation. They are more likely to display a high degree of student autonomy and responsibility, enjoy a great sense of enjoyment and fulfillment as they progress, and often report having prior language knowledge before enrolling even for beginner courses than traditional campus students. Therefore, distance language learning may change the identities of the students in a positive sense. Distance foreign language education could actually bring out students with better manners, and this could improve their relationship with foreign people.

Suggestions

1. It is suggested that more studies be conducted on the effect of teachers' self-disclosure through social media on the motivation of students in distance foreign language education.
2. It is suggested that more studies be conducted on the effect of foreign language students' online exposure to the public on performing their tasks and on these students' success in learning a foreign language.
3. It is suggested that more studies be conducted on the effect of distance foreign language education on the identities of these students.

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