

# ***Motivations for Primary School Students in EFL Countries to Participate During In-Person English Sessions***

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**Abstract:** Motivations for primary school students to participate in English classes are important for educators in areas that consider English as a foreign language (EFL). Although there is a lot of research discussing how to motivate non-native English-speaking children to participate in sessions, there is little study making an effort to find out what motivates primary school students in EFL regions to engage in their English classes despite their relevance. However, there is still a lack of specific studies, so this is a systematic review of previous studies about motivations for those students to participate during online and in-person sessions because of the limitations of previous literature. By reviewing previous research, this paper finds that both external and internal motivations have an influence on the engagement of EFL primary school students during in-person English sessions. For intrinsic motivations, reward plays an important role in motivating EFL primary school students to learn English. However, students can be influenced by different kinds of motivations at the same time.

**Keywords:** Motivation, EFL, Primary school, Student engagement, In-person sessions

## **1. Introduction**

Primary school students are generally considered to be encouraged to learn foreign languages hence the development of global environments. Children are increasingly being encouraged to begin studying English in school at a younger age in a variety of international environments, thus finding the motivations for L2 primary school students is very important [1]. Although many previous studies discussed the motivations for students in English-speaking countries such as the UK, USA and so on, less research has focused on EFL students in these countries.

Many previous studies discussed motivating factors from the cognitive psychology aspect, including internal and external motivations. Significant motivational factors for children aged 6 to 14 included positive attitudes towards the learning environment and the instructor, intrinsically motivating activities, tasks, and materials, and the fact that they were more driven by classroom practice than by integrative or instrumental elements[2]. However, there are many other factors influencing the English-learning motivation for primary school students like gender differences. Children show gender differences in their motivations for learning second languages. The results of Yeung, A. S. et al.'s research showed that both boys and girls tended to feel less motivated and competent in 9th grade compared to 5th grade, which may indicate that students may be less motivated to learn English at higher year levels[3]. Thus, this paper will focus on L2 primary school

students' personal internal motivation during in-person English sessions. Finding the English-learning motivations of primary school students in L2 countries is helpful for educators to know how to motivate them to participate in in-person sessions.

## **2. L2 Primary School Students' Internal Motivation During in-Person English Sessions**

Learning the English language by primary school students has largely been influenced by the motivations that these students have toward the English language. These motivations influence the primary school student's devotion to learning the English language, their dedication and their resilience towards understanding the language[4]. The main motivations for primary school students' participation in in-person English sessions for L2 include intrinsic motivations which include the attitude of the primary school students, mastery motivation, achievement motivation, competence motivation and autonomy motivation. The motivation for English language learning in English as a foreign language countries may work together in motivating primary school students[5]. A primary school student may thus be motivated by two or more intrinsic motivations at the same time, which increases the student's participation in English language learning. This means that students in primary schools, when learning the English language as their second language, can have many motivations at the same time, which determine their engagement, participation, and dedication to learning the language.

### **2.1. Curiosity**

Primary school students' curiosity is another intrinsic motivation which encourages students in primary school to learn the English language as their second language. Curiosity is the desire to learn something and know or understand it[4]. Many students in primary school where English is the second language are curious about speaking and writing English language and therefore have an eager wish and urge to learn English and know how to write and speak English. Curiosity in primary school students is an internal motivation which encourages and makes the students desire to understand the English language[4]. When primary school students are curious about the English language, they tend to participate more in these English language classrooms and ask questions as they have an urge and desire to push them to be active and understand the language. Curiosity also makes primary school students seize every opportunity available to learn the English language as their second language while also practising the English language writing and speaking at every chance available. Curiosity increases the student's engagement with the English learning class and materials as they are motivated by their curiosity to learn English language[6]. Also, curiosity as a primary school student's motivation makes these students more receptive to learning and their minds are more receptive due to this curiosity.

### **2.2. Definition of Intrinsic Motivation**

Motivation for primary school students to learn the English language as a second language is that some students find learning the English language and communicating using English to be enjoyable and interesting. This way learning brings self-satisfaction to the students as they feel that they have achieved a great milestone by attaining an important competency in speaking English[7]. This type of motivation is called intrinsic motivation or internal motivation and the reward for studying English as a second language is the competency to speak and write the English language which this paper sees as a great achievement. Intrinsic motivation deals with self-satisfaction and thus mastering the English language becomes the main reward for English as foreign language students learning English as their second language[8].

### 2.3. Students' Attitude

The attitude of primary school students towards the English language community is one of the main motivations of these primary school students to study English language as a second language. Primary school student attitudes towards the English language communities can be positive or negative[9]. When primary school students studying the English language as their second language have positive attitudes towards the English language community, then the student will be motivated to study the English language to understand the culture of the English language community and be able to live like the community in that English language community. These positive motivations increase the primary school students' participation and dedication towards learning the English language as a second language as students dedicate most to learning this language just to be like the people of the English language community[4]. When students have a negative attitude towards the English language community, they are demoralised to learn the English language as their second language. This reduces their dedication, and resilience and also leads to less practice of the English language as the second language as they allocate less time to learning English language as their second language. This way, primary school students are motivated to learn the English language as their L2 by their positive attitude towards the English-speaking communities which is different when the students have a negative attitude. With a positive attitude, English as a foreign language students can integrate with the language well which motivates them to study the English language[8]. Although a teacher is part of the extrinsic English language learning environment, the positive attitude of the students because an internal process which thus makes the students' attitudes intrinsic motivations.

Student's internal attitudes towards the teacher form part of the intrinsic motivations that motivate primary school students to learn English language as a second language[9]. Positive attitudes in the primary school student's minds about their teacher make the students love and enjoy learning the English language as their second language. Student attitudes are internal motivations which influence the actions of students towards learning and their perception of the learning process[8]. The attitudes of the primary school students also include the positive attitudes of the students towards the other classmates in the English classroom.

### 2.4. Autonomy

Autonomy is an important internal motivation for primary school students learning English as their second language. Autonomy means the ability of a given student to take a complete change in his/her learning[10]. Learner's autonomy acts as a motivation towards learning of English language as their second language. Primary school students would want to take charge of their learning by developing English language skills and abilities which leads to many learning avenues and materials to learn. Autonomy as a motivation to learn the English language as a second language induces self-esteem in the student and positive emotion as the student is in control of his/her learning. Autonomy is thus an internal motivation that makes learners have a sense of responsibility for their learning of the English language as their second language[10]. With autonomy as the motivation, students take learning English as their responsibility and their goals which they should achieve and this motivates the students to be more persistent in learning the English language.

### 2.5. Enjoyment

Enjoyment has been a great motivation for primary school students studying the English language and their second language[11]. Enjoyment as a motivation makes primary school students view English learning, writing and speaking as fun and full of excitement which makes them want to speak and write in English thus motivating them to study the English language. Enjoyment motivation arouses interest to learn the English language and this enables them to sustain their willingness to

continue learning English even if they are facing challenges thus creating persistence in these students[11]. When the students enjoy the English language learning, they tend to be satisfied with the learning of the English language and they enjoy it or excite them. This form of excitement and enjoyment of purely intrinsic and motivates students to learn the English language as their second language[11]. Also, enjoyment as an intrinsic motivation plays a big role in the primary student's engagement in their studies and this applies also to learning English language as a second language in English as foreign language students.

## **2.6. Mastery Motivation**

Mastery is a form of psychological force in primary school students which acts as stimulation for the primary school students to master the English language, have the skills of the English language and get involved in the tasks involved in learning the English language as a second language[12]. With mastery motivation, primary school students take learning and mastering of English language as an activity that matters to them and thus they continually have a great desire to improve their mastery of English as it matters to them. Through mastery motivation, learning English as a second language becomes an important accomplishment for primary school students. Mastery motivation is one of the main motivations for primary school students learning v as their second language as it generates pleasure in the success of mastering the English language[12]. In many countries where the English language is a foreign language and is learned as a second language, learning English presents many challenges especially for primary school students but with mastery motivation, they develop the drive and desire to accomplish the challenging task of learning the English language.

Primary school students may also derive their motivation to study English language as their second language when they view English language learning as an achievement[13]. This constitutes the achievement motivation which is an intrinsic motivation of students to learn the English language. Achievement motivation of students learning the English language is based on the potential opportunities and chances which will be available for students who have learned and mastered the English language as their second language[14]. Students who are motivated by the achievement motivation to learn the English language, view learning the English language as a sense of accomplishment and thus they develop the need for excellence which they feel they can achieve by learning the English language[10]. Achievement motivation is thus the students' need for certain accomplishments and excellence and does not depend on the external rewards that the student may be offered after mastering the English language. Achievement motivation thus creates anxiety in primary school students in learning the English language.

Competence motivation is part of the intrinsic motivation of primary school students especially English as foreign language countries. To learn and excel in the English language, students in the English as a foreign language countries are motivated by competency motivation. Competency motivation encourages students to work hard and participate in the learning of the English language as their second language[15]. Through competency motivation, primary school students want to be competent in the English language to participate in activities which demand English language competencies and be able to show their competence in the English language. Being competent in the English language for some primary school students learning English language as their second language can be internally satisfying to them even without considering any other external rewards[15]. The competence motivation is based on the competence motivation theory which entails that the individual drive to be engaged in certain activities is usually activated by their desire to show their skills and competencies in that area. This applies to learning of English language by English as a foreign language students as they may be motivated to participate in the English classes and the learning process due to their desire to develop their skills in the English language and demonstrate

these competencies[2]. Competence-motivated students thus have the desire and urge to participate in the classes learning the English language.

### 3. Conclusion

Learning English as a second language for primary school students who are using in-person English sessions is determined by many motivational factors. English as a second language students are thus motivated by intrinsic motivations, which are also internal motivations in which the English language is the reward and does not take care of the external rewards. These intrinsic motivations include students' internal attitudes, competence motivations, curiosity motivations, autonomy motivations, enjoyment motivations, mastery motivations, and achievement motivations. These motivations are characterized by what the students feel after accomplishing their goal of studying English as a second language. The English language being studied as a second language, especially in English-speaking countries, presents many challenges to primary school students, and thus intrinsic motivation is key in encouraging students to take part in studying this language. Primary school students can be influenced by many different intrinsic motivations at the same time.

Furthermore, this article is mostly an academic and theoretical analysis, ignoring the physical and practical implications. Different regions and countries have different policies and laws and how these affect parental decisions is also worthy of discussion in future research.

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