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<td>Titulación</td>
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<td>Curso Académico</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
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Trabajo de Fin de Grado

MOTIVATION AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Titulación:
Grado en Estudios Ingleses [601G]

Facultad de Letras y de la Educación

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AÑO ACADÉMICO: 2012/2013
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1. Abstract/Resumen

Motivation is one of the most important individual factors for learning a second or foreign language proficiently. In this essay, I provide a general outline of the main theories put forward in the literature and the main types of motivation as a background context for understanding the practical implications of motivational research. Motivation is inevitably linked with language achievement in the sense that language achievement cannot happen without motivation. However, how do we know that learners are motivated? In order to answer that question, many researchers have developed tools for measuring motivation in language learners, mainly questionnaires. Nevertheless, the most important part of motivational research is putting findings into practice, and this is why I provide a section with motivational strategies developed for improving L2 learners’ motivation; and therefore, helping them to learn a language proficiently.

Key words: motivation, SLA, learner, achievement, strategies.

La motivación es uno de los factores individuales más importantes a la hora de aprender un segundo idioma o un idioma extranjero. En este ensayo me centro en hacer una introducción de las teorías más relevantes propuestas en el estudio de la motivación en el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas, a modo de contexto para entender cómo aplicar estas teorías a la práctica. La motivación está unida estrechamente al éxito al aprender un idioma en el sentido de que ese éxito no puede ocurrir sin motivación. Sin embargo, ¿cómo sabemos que los estudiantes están motivados? Para resolver esta incógnita, investigadores de motivación han desarrollado instrumentos para medir la motivación en los estudiantes basados en cuestionarios. Sin embargo, lo más importante de la investigación en motivación es poner en práctica la teoría y para ello he introducido una sección con estrategias motivacionales que los profesores pueden usar para mejorar la motivación de sus estudiantes y ayudarles alcanzar un gran dominio y competencia en el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua.

Palabras clave: motivación, aprendizaje, segundas lenguas, estrategias, éxito.
2. Introduction

Everybody agrees that motivation is very important not just in language learning but also in every learning process. It is also said that learners who are not motivated are more likely to fail in achieving their goals than those learners who are motivated. The choice of this topic for my final degree essay is related to the importance of motivation in second language acquisition. Why do English teachers in general do not pay too much attention to this issue, despite the fact that there is general agreement that motivation is relevant for language learning? If they paid more attention to learners’ motivation and how to improve it, I am sure that English would be a more attractive subject for Spanish learners than it is nowadays. Nevertheless, I am aware that in learning a language, motivation is not the only factor that affects learning. Anyway, my interest for doing this essay is concerned with the fact that although motivation is not the only factor that affects language learning, it is very important for achieving a language. Therefore if we study more about motivation and how to improve learners’ motivation, we will be taking steps forward. This is why I have not just done a theoretical work but I have also included a section of motivational strategies, provided by Dörnyei (2001), which can be used in the language classroom for making the learning process more appealing to students.

This essay, therefore, encompasses ten sections. The first three sections are related to the abstracts, the introduction and the methodology and objectives of the essay. Section 4, which is divided in three parts, definition, theories and types of motivation, is the most theoretical part of the essay but it is relevant for the understanding of the rest of the work. The next section is related to one of the most important aspects concerning the study of motivation, which is the role it plays in second language acquisition (SLA). After this part, in section 6, I have directed my attention to some of the most important tools for measuring motivation in language learners. In the next part of the essay I have focused on how motivational research can be put into practice. I have followed Dörnyei’s (2001) taxonomy of motivational strategies which are useful for increasing motivation in the language learner. After that, in section 8, I have drawn the main conclusions obtained after studying an engaging topic as it is motivation. Section 9, is a final reflection of all the competences and skills I have acquired or improved during the elaboration of this essay. And finally, in the last section, I have included the list of references used in this essay.
3. Objectives and methodology:

The main aims of this essay are: first, to provide a theoretical background of motivational research; second, to determine which is exactly the role of motivation in SLA; third, to provide some examples of how motivation is measured; and fourth, and most important, to mention and describe the most important motivational strategies that teachers can use to enhance motivation in the language learner, and therefore, improve his/her achievement in the language learning process.

The methodology of this essay is mainly theoretical since reading, studying and researching on the topic are the base of its composition. However, it is my opinion that there is no sense in researching in motivation if the findings are not put into practice. This is why I have included a section with motivational strategies that can be used in the teaching context in order to make students more engaged in the language process.
4. Definition of motivation, theories and types

This section is divided in three parts. In the first one, I include some definitions of motivation. In the second part, I outline the main theories that have been put forward in the field of second language motivation, following Dörnyei’s (2005) taxonomy and including as well Dörnyei’s main theory of motivation: the L2 Motivational Self System. And finally, in the third part, I will take a look at the main types of orientations and motivation.

4.1 Definition of Motivation

To begin with, motivation is, as many scholars agree, a multifaceted construct. However, and as Gardner (2010: 8) points out, “A simple definition is […] not possible”. Gardner (2010) explains his socio-educational model of second language acquisition and some characteristics of motivated individuals. However, a simple definition of the concept is not provided. Gardner (2010) refers to Keller’s (1983: 389) definition of motivation: “Motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect”. Nevertheless, and as Gardner (2010) explains, this definition is not accurate, since it does not identify all the elements that characterize motivation.

Other definitions of the term are found in dictionaries and glossaries of Applied Linguistics, as for instance the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics. In this dictionary, motivation is defined as follows:

The factors that determine a person’s desire to do something. In Second Language and Foreign language learning, learning may be affected differently by different types of motivation. Two types of motivation are sometimes distinguished:
a) Instrumental motivation: wanting to learn a language because it will be useful for certain “instrumental” goals, such as getting a job, reading a foreign newspaper, passing an examination.
b) Integrative motivation: wanting to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it (1985: 185).

This definition of motivation is clearly in accordance with Gardner’s (2010) theory of integrative motivation and the classic dichotomy of integrative/instrumental
motivation put forward by Gardner and Lambert (1959). This theory is a crucial point to which I will come back later in section 4.2.

Richards and Schmidt (2002: 343-344) also provide a more precise and complete definition of the motivation construct:

In general, the driving force in any situation that leads to action. In the field of language learning a distinction is sometimes made between an orientation, a class of reasons for learning a language, and motivation itself, which refers to a combination of the learner’s attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language. Orientations include an integrative orientation, characterized by a willingness to be like valued members of the language community, and an instrumental orientation towards more practical concerns such as getting a job or passing an examination. The construct of integrative motivation (most prominently associated with R.C. Gardner) therefore includes the integrative orientation, positive attitudes towards both the target language community and the language classroom and a commitment to learn the language (see socio-educational model). Another widely cited distinction is between intrinsic motivation, enjoyment of language learning itself, and extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as parental pressure, societal expectations, academic requirements, or other sources of rewards and punishments. Other theories of motivation emphasize the balance between the value attached to some activity and one’s expectation of success in doing it (see expectancy-value theory), goal setting, the learner’s attributions of success and failure (see attribution theory), the role of self-determination and learner autonomy, and the characteristics of effective motivational thinking. Motivation is generally considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning.

In this definition, a clear-cut distinction is made between the concept of orientation and the term motivation in the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition). The former is defined as the reasons the learner has to study a second language, whereas the latter is seen as the driving force, that is, the desire that moves the learner to study a language. Motivation and orientations usually go hand by hand, and the orientations the learner have, often determine the type of motivation that the learner owns for studying a language. Some types of motivation and orientations are described in this definition (extrinsic/intrinsic, instrumental/integrative), as well as some motivational theories
(socio-educational model, expectancy-value theory, attribution theory). However, this is something I will come back later in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

An important point I would like to discuss, before explaining the main theoretical strands of motivation, is the last sentence of the definition provided by Richards and Schmidt (2002: 344): “Motivation is generally considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning”. This assertion refers to the relationship between motivation and language achievement, something that I will explain with detail in section 5.

4.2 Main theories put forward in the field of second language motivation.

Dörnyei (2005) provides an overview of second language motivation research, dividing the history of the field in three phases: the social psychological period (1959-1990), the cognitive-situated period (during the nineties) and the process-oriented period (the past five years). I have found this division quite interesting and appropriate for the purpose of this essay. Nevertheless, taking into account that Dörnyei’s taxonomy was published in 2005, the classification of the process-oriented period as the last five years (2000-2005) is not very accurate for the time being, since eight years have passed since its publication; therefore new trends and researches have been raised. In Dörnyei’s (2005) paper he also mentions some new conceptual issues to take into account for future research. However, I will not go into detail about these new approaches and I will just explain Dörnyei’s (2005) taxonomy and his main theory of motivation: The L2 Motivational Self-System. Furthermore, at the end of this section I will provide a table with the theories I have explained in this essay as a means of summary.

4.2.1 The social psychological period

This period is characterized by the socio psychologist Gardner’s theory of motivation: integrative motivation and the socio-educational model of second language acquisition; and by Clément’s theory of linguistic self-confidence (1977).

In the case of Robert Gardner’s theory of motivation (1959), it is important to take into account the context where his studies took place: Canada. Canada is a country with two official languages: French and English. Both are learned at school and are also spoken outside the classroom. This is a different context from the one we have in Spain, where English is taught as a foreign language. This distinction between monolingual
and bilingual contexts and between a second language (a language which is learned and spoken in the country) and a foreign language (a language which is learnt in the classroom context but which is not spoken outside the class), should be borne in mind in order to understand Gardner’s proposal and the criticisms addressed to it.

What Gardner (1959) proposed with his concept of integrativeness was that students in the Canadian context were more motivated to learn a language because of a desire to feel part of a social community; this is called in a broad sense of the term, integrative motivation. Integrative motivation encompasses three dimensions: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation and motivation (Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 174). These researchers (2003: 174) state that an integratively motivated student is one who does not just have an “openness” to feel part of the other language community, but who also has good attitudes toward the learning situation. Motivation, according to these scholars (2003: 174), is the most important variable affecting second language achievement.

Therefore, integrative motivation, as has been stated above, has three dimensions: integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation. The first dimension, integrativeness, is related to “an openness to identify […] with another language community” (Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 172). The second one, attitudes toward the learning situation, “refers to the individual’s reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught” (Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 173). And finally, the third and most important dimension, motivation is related to “goal-directed behavior”; and according to these scholars, some important features of the motivated individual are: expending effort; being persistent and attentive to the task at hand; having goals, desires, and aspirations; enjoying the activity; experiencing “reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure”; making attributions about success and/or failure; and using strategies to help him in achieving goals (2003: 173).

However, and as Dörnyei (2005) reflects, Gardner’s contribution to second language motivation is beyond the development of his integrative motivation construct. Gardner (1959) also developed a socio-educational model of second language acquisition, which focuses on the relationship of individual differences and language achievement, directing his special attention to the motivation variable which is one of the most important causes of success and failure in achieving second language
acquisition. Referring to the socio-educational model of SLA, Gardner (2010: 22) points out that:

The socio-educational model of second language acquisition was developed after years of research in an attempt to provide a fundamental basis for understanding the role played by different classes of variables […] it is intended to provide a platform where the role of these variables can be understood in the context of the learning of a second language in a classroom context.

The variables Gardner (2010: 22) talks about are: ability, motivation, culturally relevant variables, educationally relevant variables, language anxiety, and instrumentally relevant variables. However, I am just going to focus on the motivation variable. Gardner sees motivation as a primary variable which has great influence in the learner’s success or failure while learning a second language. In his explanation of the motivation variable, Gardner (2010: 23) argues that “motivation is a multifaceted construct that has behavioral, cognitive and affective components” and that students who are motivated endeavour to achieve their objectives and they enjoy anything which has to do with achieving their goals. In order to measure motivation on learners, Gardner proposed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, also known as AMTB. He used this instrument in several studies to show how the six variables of the socio-educational model affected the individual’s learning of a second language. In the case of the motivation variable, Gardner assessed the three components of motivation “through three measures, motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes toward learning the language” (Gardner 2010:23). Gardner defined motivation as the aggregate of these three variables. In point 6, where I will focus on how motivation is measured, I will comment in detail on the AMTB.

Another important point is the difference Gardner (2010) puts forward between orientations and motivation. Orientations are the reasons to learn a language but they do not always imply motivation. The first orientations that were proposed by Gardner and Lambert in 1959 were the instrumental and integrative orientations (Gardner and Lambert 1959: 267). An orientation is, in Gardner’s (2010: 16) words, “the overall aim, purpose, direction, and/or goal of the activity”. The difference between the two types of orientations, integrative and instrumental, lies in the fact that integrative orientations reflect a desire of becoming part of a community, whereas instrumental orientations
refer to "practical benefits for the individual" (Gardner 2010: 17). After years of research in motivation, other types of orientations have been found by different scholars, and this is something I will comment deeply in the next section.

Although Gardner has always focused on integrative motivation, he (Dörnyei 2005: 70) has also pointed out that motivation can be combined with instrumentality in order to create instrumental motivation. However and as Dörnyei (2005: 70) observes, "instrumental orientation/motivation is not part of Gardner’s core theory". Therefore, I am not going to direct my attention to that issue in this part of the essay.

Before concluding with Gardner’s theory, it is important to say that the most fundamental objection to this theoretical strand is that in a bilingual context, as Canada, integrative motivation seems to be what moves a learner to achieve a good command in a second language, since he is willing to be part of the second language community. However, in other contexts where the second language is not spoken outside the classroom, as it is the case of monolingual countries, the learner is not integratively motivated since there is not a second language community outside the classroom context where she/he can practice the language and feel integrated inside that social group. This is the reason why the integrative motivation construct proposed by Gardner has been criticized several times, since it is not universally valid. Furthermore, and as I will explain later when presenting other’s researchers notion of motivation, it has been empirically proved that there existed a need to re-interpret the original concept of integrativeness (Dörnyei 2010: 24).

Another important socio-psychological approach to second language motivation research is Richard Clément’s theory of linguistic self-confidence (1975). As Dörnyei (2005: 73) explains, self confidence is “the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks competently”; that is, the feeling of security that an individual can have towards what he/she is capable of achieving. The main tenet of Clément’s proposal is, in Dörnyei’s (2005: 73) words:

in contexts where different language communities live together, linguistic self-confidence –derived from the quality and quantity of the contact between the members of the L1 and L2 communities- is a major motivational factor in learning the other community’s language, and determines the learner’s future desire for intercultural communication and the extent of identification with the L2 group.
This means that, if the learner feels confident being in contact with members of
the L2, he will be more motivated and willing to communicate with the second language
speakers. Self-confidence is, therefore, a variable that affects motivation and second
language achievement. Furthermore, and as Dörnyei (2005: 74) points out, the self-
confidence construct is also valid in foreign language learning contexts where, although
learners are not in contact with L2 native people, they receive input of the L2 culture
through the media.

These two theories of motivation are related with sociology. Nevertheless, in the
1990s, motivational researchers directed their attention to cognition and its relation with
motivation. This leads us to the cognitive-situated period of motivational research.

4.2.2 The cognitive-situated period.

The main theories of this period are: the self-determination theory, the attribution
theory and task-motivation.

The first one, the self-determination theory was proposed by Deci and Ryan
(1985), and it centres its attention on different types of motivation from the ones
proposed by Gardner: extrinsic and intrinsic (Dörnyei 2005: 76). Apart from Deci and
Ryan’s proposal, several findings have been found out by Vallerand, Noels, Clément
and Pelletier relating the importance of self-determination theory in motivation. These
authors (2003: 36) explain some tenets of the theory and they also provide a study
carried out to prove how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the self-determination
theory could explain motivation and “how aspects of this theory relate to the
motivational orientations described by Clément and Kruidenier (1983)”. As noted
above, some key concepts of the theory are the dichotomy intrinsic and extrinsic
motivation. The former type of motivation is related to the joy the learner experiences
while learning a language, whereas the latter refers to an external pressure on the learner
to achieve its aim, as a reward or a punishment (Noels et al 2003: 38-39).

According to Noels et al. (2003: 38), intrinsic motivation can be divided in three
types: Intrinsic Motivation (IM) knowledge, IM-Accomplishment and IM-Stimulation.
The first one refers to “the motivation for doing an activity for the feeling associated
with exploring new ideas and developing knowledge”, the second one “refers to the
sensations related to attempting to master a task or achieve a goal”, and the third one
refers to the “sensations stimulated by performing a task” (Noels et al. 2003: 38).
In the case of extrinsic motivation, Noels et al. (2003: 39) point out that types or levels of EM (extrinsic motivation) can be differentiated depending on how much the motivation is self-determined. These three types or levels, from the lowest to highest level of self-determination, are: external regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation. The lowest one, external regulation, refers to “activities that are determined by sources external to the person” (2003: 39); introjected regulation, is related to “reasons that pertain to performing an activity due to some type of pressure that individuals have incorporated into the self” (2003: 38); and finally, identified regulation, is related to the choice of an activity on the part of the learner because of his/her “personally relevant reasons” (Noels et al. 2003: 38).

This two constructs (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) with their correspondent subtypes together with amotivation (a lack of motivation), are part of the Language Learning Orientations Scale; an instrument that Noels et al. developed to measure the components of self-determination theory in second language learning (Dörnyei 2005: 79).

Apart from that, another important contribution of Noels et al. to the research of motivation has been the reinterpretation of the concept of integrativeness. Their contribution in this aspect has to do with orientations, which Noels et al. defined to be more than the already proposed by Gardner (1959). These researchers proposed four orientations: travel, friendship, knowledge and the instrumental orientations; and as Noels et al. (2003: 37) argue, they are common to all groups of learners. Furthermore, and as it has already been commented, these orientations have to do with the need to reinterpret integrativeness and with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; a classification of motivation types which, in the already mentioned authors’ words, do not mean to replace Gardner’s original integrative-instrumental dichotomy but to complement it (2003: 37). Therefore, the self-determination theory includes some new aspects of motivation to research, complementing the previous theories, specially the hegemonic Gardner’s construct of integrativeness.

The second theory belonging to the cognitive-situated period is the attribution theory. This theory was proposed by Weiner (1992) and the main tenet is, in Dörnyei’s (2005: 79) words, that “the subjective reasons to which we attribute our past successes and failures considerably shape our motivational disposition underlying future action”. That is the same to say that depending on the experiences an individual has gone through while learning a language; his/her motivation will be lower or higher. If for
instance, the learner has always experienced failure and low marks in learning a second language, he would be less motivated than a learner who has always experienced success in this activity. Furthermore, as Dörnyei’s (2005: 79) states, an individual will be more motivated to try again an activity in which he/she failed if he/she ascribes this failure to a lack of effort on his/her part or to “unsuitable learning strategies”. On the contrary, if the learner ascribes his/her failure to a lack of ability on his/her part, it is more likely that this student will never give another chance to that activity (Dörnyei 2005: 79).

Finally, the third theory classified in the cognitive-situated period by Dörnyei is task motivation. According to this author (2005: 80), “Tasks […] constitute the basic building blocks of instructed SLA”. Dörnyei (2005: 81) also argues that “engaging in a certain task activates a number of different levels of related motivational mindsets or contingencies associated with various actional contexts, resulting in complex interferences”. That is the same to say that doing a specific task activates different motivations that are related with different contexts of action. For instance, it is not the same motivation an individual has to go to school than to do any activity he/she is fond of. Different contexts of action have different motivations for the learner. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2005: 81) states that “these motivational mindsets and contingencies activated during task performance feed into a dynamic task processing system”, which encompasses three mechanisms: task execution, appraisal and action control. This “task processing system” relates task motivation to the last phase of motivational research which is related to the dynamic feature of motivation. Therefore I am not going to dig deeper in this issue since this task process is related to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) process model of L2 motivation which I will explain in the next section.

4.2.3 The process-oriented period.

The process-oriented period focuses on the “ongoing changes of motivation over time” (Dörnyei 2005: 83). Motivation is a dynamic construct, and it varies throughout time, and as Dörnyei (2005: 83) points out, motivation can change even during a L2 class. Therefore, if during a single class motivation varies, during years of L2 learning it can experience different phases. This dynamic feature of motivation is crucial for the study of how it affects learning. The most important theory developed in this period is Dörnyei and Otto’s (1998) process model of L2 motivation, which was proposed in
order to explain the process of motivation. Dörnyei (2005: 84) points out that this model of L2 motivation:

-describes how initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and then into operationalized intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading […] to the accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process.

This model is divided into three phases which are related to different motives: the preactional stage, the actional stage and the postactional stage (Dörnyei 2005: 84). Firstly, the preactional stage, termed choice motivation, refers to the motivation that has to be generated. Secondly, the actional stage, also called executive motivation, is related to the fact that the generated motivation needs to be “actively maintained and protected” during the time the action takes place (Dörnyei 2005: 84). And, thirdly, the postactional stage, also known as motivational retrospection, has to do with the retrospective evaluation learners make about how the action was completed, that is, self-assessment. The most important point of this last phase is, in Dörnyei’s (2005: 84) words, “The way students process their past experiences in this retrospective phase will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future”. This assertion is similar to the main tenet of the attribution theory, since if the L2 learner has bad experiences in learning a certain L2, he/she will probably not be motivated to study it again. In addition, in this phase of retrospective motivation, if the learner evaluates the process negatively he/she will not be willing to do the same activity or to go through the same type of learning again.

And finally, before moving to section 4.3, I would like to describe the main aspects of Dörnyei’s main theory of second language motivation: the L2 Motivational Self-System. Dörnyei’s proposal is the newest theoretical strand I have described so far since it was hypothesized in 2005. The L2 Motivational Self-System has been made up from concepts taken from psychology (Markus and Nurius’ (1986) terms of possible and future selves-guides and Higgins’s (1987) self-discrepancy theory) and from the growing dissatisfaction with the integrativeness construct (Dörnyei 2010).

The main components of the L2 Motivational Self-System are the following: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience.
The first one refers to a special feature of one’s ideal self (the person we would like to become). According to Dörnyei (2010: 29), “the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual ideal selves”, that is the same to say that if the person we would like to become speaks a certain L2 we will be more motivated to learn it. This component of the L2 Motivational Self-System is related to the integrative and internalized instrumental motives (Dörnyei 2010: 29).

The second component, the ought-to L2 self, is related to the “attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes” (Dörnyei 2010: 29); that is, what the learner thinks he/she ought to have in order to avoid failure and achieve his/her goal. Dörnyei relates this second component to the more extrinsic of instrumental motives.

And finally, the L2 learning experience has to do with the “situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success)” (Dörnyei 2010: 29). Dörnyei goes beyond explaining his new approach of motivation since, as has just been argued, he establishes relations between his model and other theories of the literature.

So far, I have described the parts that make up the L2 Motivational Self System, and it has been argued that the L2 Ideal Self is a powerful motivator due to the willingness the learner has to turn up to be the ideal self he desires to be and leaving behind what he/she is now. However, according to Dörnyei (2010: 32), the Ideal L2 Self has to obey the following conditions:

1. the learner has a desired future self-image,
2. which is elaborate and vivid,
3. which is [...] plausible and is in harmony [...] with the expectations of the learner’s family, peers [...] ,
4. which is regularly activated in the learner’s working self-concept,
5. which is accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategies that act as a roadmap towards the goal, and [...] (6) which also contains elaborate information about the negative consequences of not achieving the desired end-state.

If the L2 Ideal Self owns these conditions it will be a powerful motivator and the learner will probably achieve his/her goal. Each of these conditions is explained in more
detail by Dörnyei (2010), and he also describes the practical implications of these conditions. However, due to space constrains I am not going to dig deeper into this issue since this point is an overview of the main currents that have been proposed in L2 motivational research. In Table 1 all the theories mentioned above appear together with their main proponents and their contributions to motivational research in schematic way:
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<td>Integrative motivation AMTB</td>
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<td>Clement (1977)</td>
<td>Linguistic self-confidence</td>
<td>Linguistic self-confidence as a motivational factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weiner (1992)</td>
<td>Attribution theory</td>
<td>The language learning orientations scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dörnyei (2005)</td>
<td>L2 motivational self-system</td>
<td>Motivation as a process</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>L2 self</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ought –to self</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L2 learning experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Main theories of motivation and contributions to motivational research.
4.3 Types of motivations and orientations.

In this section, I would like to outline the main types of orientations and motivations briefly due to the fact that these types have been already commented and explained in the previous section. Firstly, I will explain the two taxonomies related to the types of orientations; and secondly, I will describe the two different classifications of the types of motivations.

In the case of orientations, as noted already, these are defined as goals and as the reasons for learning a language (Gardner 2010: 16). Referring to the types of orientations, it is crucial to say that there are different taxonomies depending on the author who proposed them. For instance, in the case of Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner focused his research on the integrative construct and he argued (2010) that the types of orientation proposed by Lambert and him in 1959 were mainly two: integrative and instrumental orientation. The former is related to an openness and to a desire on the part of the learner of becoming part of the L2 community and feeling integrated, and the latter has to do with a practical desire to learn a language, because the learner wants to have a better job or improve his chances of passing an exam (Gardner and Lambert 1959: 267).

However, other authors, as Noel et al. (2003: 37), have found other orientations to be remarkable for second language motivation. The taxonomy that these authors provide includes four types of orientations: travel, friendship, knowledge and instrumental orientation. I am not going to go into detail about more types of orientations since the ones commented are the most important for second language motivation. Furthermore, they have already been explained in the previous section, therefore I will move on to the different types of motivation.

As it happens with orientations, different types of motivations can be found depending on the author who proposed them. In this case, two are the main theories and the most accepted classifications of types of motivation.

The first one is Gardner’s dichotomy of integrative and instrumental motivation, which is clearly related to the integrative and instrumental types of orientations. As Dörnyei’s (1994: 274) argues, “Gardner motivation construct has often been understood as the interplay of two components, integrative and instrumental motivations”. This author (1994: 274) refers to integrative motivation as the “positive disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community”; that is, the learner has a desire to become part of the L2
community. In the case of instrumental motivation, it can be seen as “the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary” (Dörnyei 1994: 274), which is the same to say that instrumental motivation refers to the desire the learner has to learn a language just because it gives him/her some practical benefits, as passing an exam, or getting a better job and higher wages.

And finally, the second taxonomy was proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985). They found two types of motivations: extrinsic and intrinsic. The former takes places when the learner does an activity because of the existence of external rewards or in order to avoid punishment. On the contrary, the latter has to do with the joy the learner experiences when he/she is learning the language (Dörnyei 1994: 275). However, I would like to highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation in the educational process. Deci and Ryan (1985: 245) state that:

Intrinsic motivation is in evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energize their learning. When the educational environment provides optimal challenges, rich sources of stimulation, and a context of autonomy, this motivational wellspring is likely to flourish.

According to this quotation, it can be stated that intrinsic motivation is a powerful source of motivation for L2 learners. However, and as the scholars above quote, the educational environment must be supportive in that the learners can find stimulus and support in order to be highly motivated and achieve their goals.

In conclusion, in the case of orientations, two taxonomies have been important in motivational research: Gardner’s dichotomy of integrative and instrumental orientations and the four types of orientations proposed by Noel et al (2003). In the case of the types of motivation, the most important classifications are Gardner’s integrative and instrumental motivation and Deci and Ryan’s extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.
5. The role of motivation in SLA (Second Language Acquisition)

The aim of this section is to determine which exactly the role of motivation in SLA is. Motivation is, as Masgoret and Gardner state (2003: 170) the “responsible for achievement in the second language”. What these scholars (2003: 170) mean is that in the socio-educational model of SLA “integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation are related to achievement in the second language, but that their effect is indirect, acting through motivation”. This means that although every item of the socio-educational model of SLA is important and it is related to language achievement, the most important and most influential item is motivation since its effect on language achievement is direct rather than indirect. Although Masgoret and Gardner (2003) are talking about the socio-educational model of SLA, other researchers who have developed other motivational theories have argued that motivation is the key to learn a second language proficiently. As Dörnyei (2001: 2) states when talking about motivation,

most teachers and researchers would agree that it has a very important role in determining success or failure in any learning situation. My personal experience is that 99 per cent of language learners who really want to learn a foreign language […] will be able to master a reasonable working knowledge of it as a minimum, regardless of their language aptitude.

In this quotation Dörnyei introduces another aspect related to the role of motivation in SLA: motivation is concerned with the level or success or failure a learner experiences when learning a language depending on his/her motivation. This aspect it is also related to language achievement since if the learner is motivated he/she is going to succeed, that is the same to say that if the learner is motivated when learning a language he/she will achieve proficiency in that language. Actually, Dörnyei and Masgoret and Gardner are saying the same but with different words: motivation is responsible for success and failure in learning a second language, therefore motivation is responsible for language achievement. However, although the statements of these researchers have already given me the answer of which the role of motivation in SLA is, mentioning empirical data which confirms these assumptions is more than desirable.

One important study, which shows that motivation and language achievement are closely related, is the one carried out by Masgoret and Gardner (2003). In this study,
they analyse how the variables of the socio-educational model (integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, motivation, integrative motivation and instrumental orientation) correlate with language achievement (Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 168). One of the most important results is that the motivation variable correlated with language achievement in a higher degree than the rest of variables of the socio-educational model of SLA. As Masgoret and Gardner agree (2003: 193), “Hypothesis 1 states that the correlations of the attitude, motivation and orientation variables with achievement will be consistently positive and that motivation will correlate more highly with achievement than will the other variables”. Therefore, the idea that motivation promotes second language achievement is not just a myth but something proved by researchers and many studies, and this one by Masgoret and Gardner is just an example.

However, motivation also plays an important role in foreign language learning contexts, where motivation is also responsible for the success or failure of students. In a study carried out by Dörnyei (1990) he showed that achievement was clearly influenced by motivation. As Dörnyei (1990: 69) states when talking about this influence, “It was argued that this influence is due to the fact that FLL is composed of a series of academic achievement situations, and thus Need for Achievement can be regarded as a motivational component typical of FLL contexts”.

As these two studies show, the influence of motivation in language achievement is clear and proves that motivation is a determinant factor in achieving proficiency in a second or a foreign language. As I have mentioned before, Gardner argued that other items of the socio-educational model of SLA also influenced language achievement but indirectly. In the case of foreign language learning (FLL) contexts, learners do not have enough contact with the target language milieu; therefore they have not clear attitudes towards the foreign situation (Dörnyei 1990: 69). That means that the influence of attitudes towards the learning situation in foreign language learners is not as high as the influence of learners who are learning a second language in the target language context, and who have specific and based attitudes towards the foreign situation and the foreign language speakers.

In conclusion, motivation is the key for achieving language proficiency when learning a second or a foreign language. Although there are other factors which can contribute as well, motivation is the most relevant and determinant since as some researchers (e.g. Masgoret and Gardner 2003 and Dörnyei 1990) prove, the motivation variable is the one which correlates higher with language achievement. The tremendous
influence that motivation has in language achievement is one of the reasons why researchers pay so much attention to develop motivational tasks and strategies that can help learners feel more motivated and enthusiastic to learn a language.

In this section, I will describe three of the most important instruments put forward in the literature for measuring motivation in L2 learners. For assessing students’ motivation, the most common method is the use of questionnaires and the three instances I am going to describe are good examples. I will start by describing the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) proposed by Gardner (1958), then I will focus on Guillauteaux’s and Dörnyei’s (2008) contribution: Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT), and after that, I will conclude this section by explaining another questionnaire proposed and used by Noels et al. (2003): the Language Learning Orientations Scale.

One of the most influential methods for measuring motivation was proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) in order to assess the main variables of the socio-educational model of SLA, and it is called the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner 2010: 107). Dörnyei (2005: 70) defines Gardner’s AMTB as: “a multicomponential motivation questionnaire made up of over 130 items […]. It operationalizes all the main constituents of Gardner’s theory of the integrative motive”.

It was designed, according to Gardner (2010: 108), “to produce a test that would measure the major affective individual difference variables identified by the socio-educational model of second language acquisition”. Therefore, as Gardner claims, apart from measuring motivation, the AMTB also assesses other individual variables. However, what it is interesting for the purpose of this essay is how the AMTB measures the motivation variable. According to Gardner (2010: 109) “motivational characteristics were assessed by items that reflected three common features of motivation, intensity, desire and affect”. These three aspects of motivation are measured by scales of negative and positive items. For example, in the case of motivational intensity, some of the positive keyed items are: “I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear”, “I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day” or “I really work hard to learn English”. On the contrary, some of the negative keyed items are: “I don’t pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class”, “I don’t bother checking my assignments when I get them back from my English teacher”, or “I put off my English homework as much as possible” (Gardner 2010: 121-122). The same happens with desire to learn English and attitudes towards learning English, all the positive and negative keyed items are answered by the students who are given the test battery in order to analyse how motivated they are.
The AMTB has been used on many occasions to measure learners’ motivation to learn a language and this instrument has advantages but also disadvantages. As noted by Gardner (2010: 108):

The advantage of this approach is that researchers are able to use items they feel are most meaningful in their context. The disadvantage of this approach from a scientific perspective is that there is very little continuity from one study or researcher to another because often scales with similar names have very different items and/or types of items.

However, as he (2010: 108) continues, “if the scales from the AMTB are used in the research as they were designed to be used, the results are very consistent”. And one example of consistent results obtained using the AMTB scales properly is a meta-analysis carried out by Masgoret and Gardner (2003). In this study they found out, among other things, that motivation is responsible for language achievement. It is also important to mention that there is not a fixed AMTB, the keyed items of the AMTB are modified depending on the purpose of the research, and there are several versions of this instrument. As Gardner (2010: 108) agrees, one example of the AMTB versatility is, for instance, a recent version of the AMTB: “The International AMTB for English as a foreign language”.

As stated above, the AMTB is not the only instrument to measure motivation, other researchers have developed other tools to assess how motivated L2 learners are. Another example is the method used by Guillauteaux and Dörnyei (2008): the Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT). Bernaus, Wilson, and Gardner (2009) mention Guillauteaux’s and Dörnyei’s (2008) study in which students were given a self-report questionnaire and a classroom observation tool developed only for that research. This tells us that, as it happens with the AMTB, there are not fixed instruments for measuring motivation. The instruments are adapted to every investigation depending on the focus and the purpose of it. In the case of Guillauteaux and Dörnyei study, MOLT was also used to assess teachers’ motivation (Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner 2009: 28).

Another method of measuring motivation is the Language Learning Orientations Scale proposed by Noels et al. (2003) to assess the elements of the Self-Determination theory: amotivation, extrinsic motivation (external regulation, introjected regulation
and identified regulation) and intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplishment and stimulation) (Dörnyei 2005: 78-79). An example of the amotivation subscale is, as table 4.2 (Dörnyei 2005: 78) shows, the following item (see Figure 1): “[…], I truly have the impression of wasting my time in studying a second language”. In the case of external regulation, an example is “Because I have the impression that it is expected of me” (Dörnyei 2005: 78). And an example of knowledge, as part of intrinsic motivation, is the purpose of learning a language “For the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things” (Dörnyei 2005:78) (see Figure 1).

![Table 4.2 Description of Noeis, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand's (2000) Language Learning Orientations Scale: Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation](image)

(Figure 1, Dörnyei 2005: 78)

These are just some examples of the motivation and orientations a learner can have to study a language. In the case of amotivation, obviously, there is no motivation or orientation at all (Dörnyei 2005: 78). This instrument has been used for measuring
motivation according to the self-determination theory put forward by Deci and Ryan (1985). An example of a study where this tool was used is Noels et al. (2003).

There are several instruments for measuring motivation in L2 learners, but due to space constraints I have been obliged to choose three of them. Although these three methods are different, they have something in common, the three are questionnaires. It is also important to say that a method can be changed in order to measure specific variables, as it happens with the AMTB. There are different kinds of AMTB depending on the purpose and on what the variables are. In conclusion, in order to measure motivation, it is important to have in mind what the purpose of the research is, who the participants are, and what variables apart from motivation have to be taken into account.
7. Motivating the L2 Learner.

In this section, I will mention the main implications that motivational research has for language teaching focusing on the taxonomy of motivational strategies proposed by Dörnyei (2001). Firstly, I will mention the most important areas of motivational implications in education. Secondly, I will define the meaning of motivational strategies. And thirdly, I will comment on Dörnyei’s four dimensions of motivational strategies: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation; giving as well some examples of my experience as a L2 learner.

To begin with, Dörnyei (2005: 110) introduces three areas where the study of motivation has had important educational implications. These three areas are the following: motivational strategies, action control and self-motivating strategies and teacher motivation. He differentiates between motivational strategies and self-motivating strategies. The difference is clear-cut, while motivational strategies are put forward and practiced by teachers in order to enhance motivation in learners, self-motivating strategies are practiced by the learners in order to promote their own motivation (2005: 110-111). Dörnyei (2005, 2001) also focuses on teachers’ motivation as an important and influential part on learners’ motivation. However, I am just going to focus on how teachers can motivate learners, that is, on the first area of educational implications proposed by Dörnyei: motivational strategies.

Dörnyei (2001) provides 35 motivational strategies that are classified into 4 dimensions. Before going into explaining these dimensions and the main strategies, it is important to provide a definition of the term “motivational strategies”. According to this author (2001: 28), “motivational strategies refer to those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect”. Therefore, the aim of using motivational strategies is promoting learner’s motivation when learning a language.

In section 4.2.3, I referred to Dörnyei’s and Ottó’s (1998) model of L2 motivation, this model is linked with the four dimensions into which motivational strategies are classified (2005: 111). The four dimensions are the following ones: “creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial student motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation” (Dörnyei 2005: 111). These four dimensions are related to the stages of the
motivational process proposed by Ottó and Dörnyei: preactional stage, actional stage and postactional stage (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: (Dörnyei 2005: 85)
According to these four dimensions, Dörnyei (2001) proposed and explained 35 motivational strategies that teachers could use for promoting and developing learners motivation. Dörnyei (2001) also developed a schema in which the four dimensions and the most important strategies are represented:

![Motivational Strategies Diagram]

Figure 3. (Dörnyei 2001: 29, 2005: 112)

All these strategies can motivate students successfully. However, as Dörnyei (2001: 30) states, teachers must be aware that “not every strategy works in every context” since every group of learners and every context is different in terms of age, level, social class, cultural background, etc. In Dörnyei’s (2001: 30) words, depending on the group of learners some strategies can be “completely useless/meaningless, while […] others […] particularly prominent”. All strategies are important and can have a
positive effect in L2 learners’ motivation. However, I am just going to highlight some of them following Dörnyei’s (2001) schema.

As Figure 3 shows, the first dimension, “creating the basic motivational conditions”, is related to the teaching environment. For motivation to be developed, the classroom atmosphere has to be “supportive and pleasant”, the teacher has to show enthusiasm and availability, he/she must have a good relationship with students and with their parents, the teacher also has to reach an agreement with students when establishing class rules which have to be observed by him/her, and the teacher has also to accept students and show them that he/she cares about them, especially about their learning progress (Dörnyei: 2001: 31-49). Students love feeling that the teacher supports them rather than he/she punishes them. For that reason, it is important to assure learners that teachers are not there just to assess their exams but also to help them whenever they need.

Also, learners like feeling important and expressing their opinions; this is why class rules must be an agreement between students and teacher rather than an imposition. At the same time, the rules established must be fulfilled not just by learners but also by the teacher. In fact, the person who must obey all the rules is the teacher since he/she is a figure of authority for learners, and if the teacher violates a rule, learners will assume that that rule was not important enough (Dörnyei 2001: 47).

The second dimension, generating initial motivation, can just happen when motivational conditions are set up. One of the first things a teacher should do in order to generate motivation in the learners is to have an interest about their ways of life. That is the same to say, that the teacher should know about what learners like or do not like; and a good way of knowing that information is by questionnaires in which students can express their own opinions. When the teacher has information about students’ hobbies and interests, is easier for him/her to develop teaching materials that are interesting for the learners, and therefore increasing their interest in the subject (Dörnyei 2001: 65). According to Dörnyei (2001), making the teaching materials important for the students is one of the main strategies for generating initial motivation.

Apart from that, there are also other strategies that must be taken into consideration. Dörnyei (2001) also focuses on the importance of promoting learners values (intrinsic, integrative and instrumental) by means of peer role models (2001: 59), by highlighting the features of the L2 learning that students will enjoy (2001: 53), by including sociocultural components in the syllabus (2001: 55) and also by showing the
learners the usefulness of learning a second language (2001: 57). The last three examples correspond to the intrinsic, integrative and instrumental values respectively. These are just some examples since Dörnyei (2001) provides more instances of how to promote learners’ values.

However, I am not going to dig deeper in that issue since it is also relevant to comment on the importance of “increasing learners’ expectancy of success” (2001: 57). In order to motivate learners is important to make them feel that they will achieve everything they intend to. It is completely normal that, at first, learners find some obstacles that make them be on the verge of giving up. Nevertheless, the teacher must always identify those obstacles and help the learner find a way to overcome every blockage he/she finds in his/her learning path (Dörnyei 2001: 57-59). Dörnyei (2001: 58) also points out that it is very important to give enough pre-tasks to the students to prepare them to cope with the task. In my opinion, one of the main reasons why this strategy has to be always taken into account is because if the students are not prepared for the task they will find more obstacles that will discourage them instead of challenge them.

And finally, other strategies that are highlighted by Dörnyei (2001: 62, 68) for generating initial motivation in learners, are the fact that the teacher must always create realistic beliefs about learning a language (progress, difficulty, effort needed etc) in the student and that the teacher has to increase learners’ “goal-orientedness” by agreeing achievable individual class goals with the students and common class goals and by giving them tasks to achieve their goals. Goals are good motivators in language learning since, in my opinion, they create the need in the student of going further than he/she expected and they make the student feel really proud and satisfied when goals are achieved. Sometimes, when students establish goals, they think they are able to do less than at the end they achieve, and the feeling of overcoming and self-improvement learners experience is one of the best rewards they can have.

The third dimension of motivational strategies is related to the maintenance and the protection of the motivation that has been generated. As Dörnyei (2001: 71) states, “motivation needs to be actively nurtured” since if it is not, it is easy that external influences will distract the learner and will make him lose the motivation achieved before. In order not to lose that motivation, Dörnyei (2001) proposes some strategies that can help to maintain motivation.
The main motivational strategies to maintain motivation are, as figure 3 shows, “making learning stimulating”, “presenting tasks in a motivating way”, “setting specific learner goals”, “protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence”, “allowing learners to maintain a positive social image”, “promoting cooperation among the learners”, “creating learner autonomy” and “promoting self-motivating learner strategies” (Dörnyei 2005: 112).

The last one refers to the second area of the educational implications of motivational research, which as I have said before, has to do with what learners can do to motivate themselves. At the end, enhancing the use of self-motivating strategies is a motivational strategy since the teacher is the one who introduces self-motivation techniques to the learner, and then is the learners’ responsibility to use them or not. However, due to space constrains I am not going to focus on this issue.

Among the other motivational strategies related to the maintenance of motivation, there are some of them which have specially called my attention. These strategies are the ones related to protecting the social image and the self-esteem of the learner. Dörnyei (2001: 99) proposes a rule of thumb for teachers: “Don’t do anything which may result in a student losing face in front of the others”. Learners, especially teenagers, often have a defined group of friends in which they feel respected and accepted; therefore, losing image in front of their group of peers is a humiliation for them. As Dörnyei (2001: 99) states, criticisms and “putting learners in the spotlight” without knowing if they agree is something teachers should avoid. Teachers must be aware of the fact that not all learners have the same personality, some learners are more extrovert and others shier. Putting shier learners in the spotlight if they want to remain unnoticed can increase their language anxiety and, as claimed before, language anxiety decreases motivation. This is also a reason of why questionnaires are a good way of knowing the students’ interests; by means of questionnaires, teachers are giving a chance of expression to those learners who are shier. It is my opinion that sometimes shier learners do not want to participate in class activities due to a lack of self-confidence that makes them think that they are going to commit mistakes.

That leads us to another strategy which is “protecting the learners’ self esteem and increasing their self-confidence” (Dörnyei: 2001: 86). Dörnyei (2001: 89) proposes that there are four types of strategies for protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence: providing experiences of success, encouraging them, reducing class anxiety and teacher learner strategies.
Learners will feel more motivated if they see clearly that they are able to achieve something. For that to happen goals have to be achievable and the teacher must provide enough opportunities for success in the classroom (Dörnyei 2001: 90). Although some learners encourage themselves when they achieve a goal due to the satisfaction and self-improvement they experience, some other learners are prone to need an external source of encouragement which is, normally, the teacher. Some learners know which are their strengths and weaknesses, but others are very pessimistic and they lack of self-confidence. In that case, the teacher must always make learners see what their strengths and abilities are (Dörnyei 2001: 91).

Furthermore, it is my opinion that some weaknesses can also be strengths and the teacher should be aware of that and make the learner believe that weaknesses can also be in one’s favour. For instance, some learners are really stubborn, if being stubborn makes the learner unable to see the solution to a problem or a mistake he/she has made that is a weakness. However, being stubborn, at least in my experience, is a strength in the way that I always achieve what I intend to and I do not rest until I reach my goals. Therefore, although being stubborn can be seen as a personal defect, one must be able to transform it into a virtue and get benefits from it.

Nevertheless, it is true that learners, especially teenagers, love to see that someone trust them and believes in their abilities, and the teacher must be that person. Dörnyei (2001: 91) recommends to teachers: “Indicate to your students that you believe in their effort to learn and their capability to complete the tasks”. Learners will feel more confident if someone believes in their abilities than if they feel that they are alone in the learning process.

Apart from that, and as mentioned before, teachers should always reduce language anxiety when possible and some ways of doing so is by avoiding comparisons between learners, by enhancing cooperation rather than competition, by indicating to the learners that mistakes are normal in the learning process, by making exams “completely transparent”, and making the learners participate in the negotiation of their finals marks (Dörnyei 2001: 94).

Other strategies that are related to maintaining motivation that I would like to highlight are: making learning stimulating and presenting tasks in a motivating way (Dörnyei 2001: 71-81).

According to this Dörnyei (2001: 72), “If we […] make the learning process more stimulating and enjoyable, that would greatly contribute to sustained leaner
involvement”. That is the same to say that if teachers make learning an enjoyable experience for learners, they would be more involved in the process and also more motivated.

Dörnyei (2001: 76) provides ideas of how tasks and learning materials can be made more interesting and he highlights the aspect of being challenged. And, according to my experience, this makes learners feel engaged in the task. As Dörnyei (2001: 73-74) affirms, it is also important to break the monotony of the language process. If learners are exposed to, for instance, too many grammar lessons in the same week they will inevitably get bored.

However, if teachers introduce a new task, an appealing, engaging and challenging task, they will recover the lost interest of learners. In my experience an example of that kind of task is the Scrabble game. In Secondary School, at the end each the trimester, our teacher brought us the Scrabble game to spend the hour playing it in English. I remember that we, as learners, used to love that task, maybe because it was different, engaging and challenging. We, at that moment, did not realize that when we were playing in small groups, all the vocabulary learnt and acquired during the trimester was being used. This is just an example, Dörnyei (2001: 77) also highlights the importance of increasing student involvement, and a good way is by role-playing or by introducing short pieces of theatre plays in which students have to represent different characters. Plays are a good activity for breaking monotony and, at the same time, they promote cooperation between learners since, when rehearsing, all students are collaborating with each other. However, maybe the shier learners do not like the idea of representing a character in front of others. The teacher, who is aware of that, must always provide other roles for the shier learners, for instance: decorating the stage or being prompters. I consider acting a good way of learning a L2 with teenagers since it is a different and entertaining task that can motivate learners and, at the same time, help them to improve their English pronunciation and intonation.

And, finally, I would like to comment on the fourth dimension of motivational strategies which is related to self-evaluation. Dörnyei (2001: 117-134) focuses mainly on four issues: “promoting motivational attributions, providing motivational feedback, increasing learner satisfaction and offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner”.

The first issue is related to the attribution theory which I mentioned in section 4.2.2. Dörnyei (2001: 122) directs his attention to effort as an important component of language learning. Teachers must make learners attribute their success or failure to
effort instead to abilities; since as attribution theory (Weiner 1992) explains, attributing failure to a lack of effort will make the learner try the task again; whereas if the learner thinks that he/she has not enough abilities for completing the task he/she will give up.

Another important point to make is that teachers should always provide positive and motivational feedback (Dörnyei 2001: 122). One of the best feelings a learner can experiment at the end of the learning process, is feeling proud of his/her work and the good commentaries received about it. Teacher appraisals towards a learner’s work makes him/her feel satisfied and makes him/her think that all the effort has been worthy.

However, Dörnyei (2001: 125) states that feedback should be regular; that is, throughout all the learning process; and that teachers should give positive feedback every time students do something right. When working with kids, I have always used the technique of stop saying everything they do wrong and praise them for everything they do right. And, I have to admit that it works, even with the most mischievous child, it works. I believe this is so because kids who misbehave are tired of being told off and when they are suddenly praised, they start feeling better and therefore behaving in a proper manner. I think that something similar happens with unsuccessful learners. They are used to hear all the mistakes they commit, they hardly receive positive feedback so, at the end, they do not put effort in doing things right and they lose motivation. However, if they are praised every day, even for the most insignificant detail, they will start feeling more satisfied and more motivated. For instance, there is one unsuccessful learner who has problems in writing compositions accurately and he also has lots of spelling mistakes, but the composition presentation is very neat and clean. As far as I am concerned, I will praise the clean presentation of the work, and I will also tell him, in a motivating manner, the main mistakes and how can he correct them. It is very important for teachers to take in to account that teenagers do not like to be told every mistake they commit but how they can solve them. By praising and by giving motivational feedback, teachers are inevitably increasing learner’s satisfaction which is another motivational strategy proposed by Dörnyei (2005: 112) in his schema.

This author (2001: 126) also recommends teachers to celebrate any success, to include activities in which the skills of the learners are displayed, take “stock” of progress and “make progress tangible” by visual aids which show the learners’ accomplishments and progresses.

Dörnyei (2001: 127) also focuses on how grades and rewards should be given to the learner. Apart from the feelings of self-improvement or satisfaction that learners can
get from learning, rewards and good marks are sometimes though to be powerful motivators. However, in this respect is important to note that as Dörnyei (2001: 128) says based on Deci and Ryan (1985), “if you start offering rewards for something that students were already doing for their own reasons, the reward may undermine the existing motivation”. For that reason, Dörnyei (2001: 130) recommends teachers not to “overuse rewards” and give them, for example, in activities that require great effort on the part of the learner.

In what is concerned with grades, Dörnyei (2001: 131-132) enumerates, based on Brophy (1998) and Covington and Teel (1996), a list of disadvantages that grades have towards language learning; as for instance: they end up being more important than learning, they segregate students, they can enhance cheating, they increase language anxiety, etc. For those reasons, Dörnyei (2001: 133-134) proposes using “grades in a motivational manner, reducing as much as possible their demotivating impact”. Some ways for achieving that aim stem from the transparency of grading, the presence of effort in the grades, the use of continuous assessment tools (as portfolios), the negotiation of marks and the combination of teacher’s assessments with learners’ self-assessment techniques. At the end, grades have to be a reflection of learners’ work and effort and the student should agree with his/her mark; that is why self-assessment tools and the negotiation of the mark can motivate the learner, since the student feels that he/she participates in all the learning process, and that also includes grades.

In conclusion, Dörnyei (2001) provides a complete and wide range of motivational strategies classified in four dimensions which correspond to the parts of the Dörnyei and Ottó process model of L2 motivation. Motivational strategies are, nowadays, good techniques for helping students feel more engaged in the learning process which sometimes can be dull.
8. Conclusions

And finally, after this analysis, which has given me a general perspective of the engaging field of motivational research, these are the main conclusions I have drawn.

First, motivation is not an easy concept to define; in fact, it is easier to describe it than define it. However, a simple characteristic of this concept which defines it somehow is that motivation is the driving force that leads people to behave according to their goals or orientations.

Second, motivation has been a field of research in psychology and SLA since the early 60s when Gardner and Lambert began to investigate the concept of integrative motivation in Canada. The work of Gardner triggered a boom of motivational studies from other perspectives apart from Gardner’s, which was related to socio-psychology. As I have shown with Dörnyei’s taxonomy, there were other two periods apart from the social psychological period in the study of motivation which are the cognitive situated period and the process oriented period. In these stages, many theories as for instance the attribution theory (Weiner 1992) and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1985) or the Dörnyei and Ottó process model of L2 motivation flourished questioning many ideas proposed by Gardner in the 60s. Motivation is a fertile field for research and however, due to space constrains, I have not had the chance to introduce the new trends in motivational studies. One of my aims, however, was to outline the main theories put forward in the literature as a mean of context for understanding how learners’ motivation can be improved, and I think I have completed that goal.

Third, there are different types of motivation and orientations depending on the author who proposed them. In the case of motivation it can be claimed that there are two dichotomies: one proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1959) and another one proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985). Gardner’s dichotomy includes the integrative and the instrumental motivation types, and Deci and Ryan’s dichotomy includes the extrinsic and intrinsic types. In the case of orientations, Gardner proposed two: integrative and instrumental orientations, while Noels et al. (2003) put forward four types: travel, friendship, knowledge and instrumental orientations.

Fourth, the role of motivation in SLA is that it is the responsible for language achievement in L2 learners.

Fifth, motivation is measured by means of questionnaires which are adapted to every research. Some of the most important ones are, the AMTB proposed by Gardner,
the MOLT put forward by Guillauteaux and Dörnyei and the Language Learning Orientations Scale developed by Noel et al. (2003).

And sixth, the main educational implications of motivational research are the development of motivational strategies, self-motivational strategies and teachers’ motivation. I have just focused on how teachers can motivate students and the main conclusion is that motivational strategies are one of the main resources teachers have to improve motivation in the language learners and therefore help them to achieve a L2 proficiently. As shown in section seven, there are several motivational strategies depending on the stage of motivation: creating conditions for motivation to happen, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and self-evaluation. These stages are related to Dörnyei and Ottó’s (1998) process model of L2 motivation, which has been explained in section 4.2.3. One of the most important aspects of motivational strategies that must be pointed out is that not every strategy works in every context and that although some strategies have fantastic results, in some groups of learners others do not. Therefore, teachers have to be aware of that and apply the motivational strategies that fit best according to the characteristics of their students.

All things considered then, it can be concluded that motivation is one of the most important individual factors contributing to the achievement and proficiency of a second or foreign language.
9. Final remarks to the TFG

In the previous section I have drawn the main conclusions of this essay. However, I also wanted to include a section with the main remarks to the TFG competences in general.

This essay has not just been an interesting introduction to the field of L2 motivation; it has also been useful for the development and improvement of abilities and competences such as summarising, solving problems, writing in academic English or being organised, autonomous, critical and flexible.

Apart from all the knowledge about motivation I have acquired, the improvement of the abilities and competences mentioned above is one of the main contributions this essay has had for my personal development. However, it is undeniable that being obliged to select information and limit the scope of this essay has been one of the most complicated tasks. I wish I could have introduced more issues relating motivation, as for instance, how teachers’ motivation influences learners’ motivation. Nevertheless, being able to limiting the scope has improved my ability to deal with tons of information selecting and summarizing it successfully. The same happens with other competences, there has been a progress in which not only the essay has been written, but also my skills and abilities have been improved.
10. References


