

Motivational Factors in Language Learning: Translation as Teaching Practice in School

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Abstract

Individuals do not process languages in isolated compartments; rather, they utilize their entire linguistic repertoire as an integrated whole to understand, communicate, and construct knowledge. This holistic approach allows learners to transcend the boundaries of their first language (L1) and navigate the complex journey of acquiring a second language (L2). Within this contemporary framework—often aligned with translanguaging theory—translation is no longer viewed as a passive, outdated exercise, but as a dynamic pedagogical practice. Working fluidly across languages generates profound metalinguistic awareness, prompting students to reflect critically on grammatical structures, cultural nuances, and the underlying mechanics of language itself. To investigate these dynamics, a questionnaire-based study was administered to a cohort of 17- and 19-year-old high school students. The primary objective was to examine how pedagogical translation influences various cognitive dimensions of language acquisition and to identify the specific motivational factors it enhances. The empirical results reveal two critical insights: Translation as a Cognitive Scaffold: Students actively employ translation as a deliberate strategy to anchor new vocabulary, clarify complex syntax, and reduce the cognitive load associated with L2 processing. The Motivation-Learning Nexus: Motivation acts as a decisive catalyst in the learning process. When translation tasks are meaningful, they bolster students' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, fundamentally shaping their long-term linguistic competence and engagement.

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