



MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AMONG UZBEK LEARNERS

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Abstract

The ability to speak English fluently has become a crucial skill for students in Uzbekistan, where education reforms have placed a growing emphasis on communicative competence. Despite years of classroom instruction, many Uzbek learners still struggle with spoken English, often due to low confidence, lack of practice, or limited exposure to real communication. One of the most influential elements shaping speaking performance is motivation—the internal drive that compels learners to engage, persevere, and succeed in language learning.

Motivation influences how often learners practice speaking, how willing they are to take risks in communication, and how they respond to challenges. Understanding the motivational factors behind speaking performance—whether they stem from personal goals, cultural values, educational settings, or external rewards—is essential for improving English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

This article examines key motivational influences on Uzbek learners, explores their effects on speaking performance, and offers practical insights for language educators to create more engaging and effective learning environments.

Keywords: Motivation, English speaking skills, Uzbek learners, language learning, speaking performance.

Understanding Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation plays a central role in language acquisition, especially in developing speaking skills. It can be broadly categorized into intrinsic motivation, where learners engage in language learning for personal satisfaction and interest, and



extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards such as grades, job opportunities, or social approval. According to Gardner's theory, motivation is further divided into integrative motivation, which involves a genuine desire to connect with the culture and people of the target language, and instrumental motivation, which focuses on practical benefits like career advancement. Both types of motivation significantly influence learners' willingness to practice speaking and overcome challenges such as anxiety or fear of making mistakes. In the Uzbek context, these motivational dimensions interact with cultural, social, and educational factors, shaping how students approach speaking tasks. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators to create supportive environments that foster sustained motivation and, ultimately, better speaking performance.

Key Motivational Factors Among Uzbek Learners

Several motivational factors significantly impact English speaking performance among Uzbek learners. One major influence is cultural and social aspirations. Many students in Uzbekistan view English as a gateway to global culture, travel, higher education abroad, and international career opportunities. This creates strong instrumental motivation to develop speaking skills that enable real-world communication.

The educational environment also plays a crucial role. Teachers who encourage active participation, provide meaningful speaking opportunities, and create a positive, supportive classroom atmosphere can greatly enhance learners' motivation. Conversely, a lack of interaction, excessive focus on grammar, or fear of negative evaluation often discourages students from speaking freely.

Personal goals such as self-improvement, academic success, and career advancement motivate many Uzbek learners to invest effort in speaking practice. The desire to communicate confidently in English often leads students to seek extra practice outside the classroom, including language clubs or online platforms.

Family and community support also influence motivation. In Uzbekistan, families often hold high expectations for educational achievement, encouraging learners to excel in English as a valuable skill. However, some learners face



psychological barriers such as speaking anxiety, fear of mistakes, or limited exposure to native speakers, which can reduce motivation and hinder progress. By recognizing these diverse motivational factors, educators can better address learners' needs, reduce barriers, and design activities that inspire consistent engagement in speaking practice.

Implications for Teaching Speaking in Uzbekistan

Understanding the motivational factors influencing Uzbek learners is essential for designing effective speaking instruction. Teachers should create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves without fear of criticism. This can reduce anxiety and build learners' confidence, encouraging more frequent and spontaneous speaking.

Incorporating culturally relevant topics and real-life scenarios into speaking activities helps connect learning to students' interests and goals, increasing intrinsic motivation. For example, discussions about Uzbek culture, current events, or future career plans can make speaking tasks more meaningful.

Collaborative activities such as group discussions, role-plays, and debates foster peer interaction and make speaking practice more engaging. These methods promote social learning and help learners build communicative competence in a less intimidating setting.

Teachers should also provide timely, positive feedback that focuses on effort and progress rather than just accuracy. Recognizing small achievements motivates students to continue practicing. Finally, integrating technology, such as language learning apps and online speaking platforms, can offer additional opportunities for practice beyond the classroom, catering to students' individual needs and pacing.

By addressing these motivational aspects, educators in Uzbekistan can enhance speaking instruction, leading to improved learner confidence, participation, and overall speaking competence.

Conclusion

Motivation is a critical driver in the development of speaking competence among Uzbek English learners. As this article has shown, both intrinsic factors—such as



personal interest and the desire for self-expression—and extrinsic factors—including academic goals, job opportunities, and family expectations—play a significant role in shaping students' willingness and ability to speak English. Additionally, social influences, teacher behavior, classroom environment, and access to speaking opportunities all contribute to the overall motivational landscape.

For Uzbekistan's language education system to truly promote speaking proficiency, it is essential to move beyond traditional grammar-focused instruction and prioritize learner motivation through meaningful, communicative activities. Teachers should be encouraged to create positive, low-anxiety classrooms where students feel safe to speak, while integrating topics that reflect students' interests and future aspirations.

By aligning teaching methods with motivational drivers, educators can support learners in building confidence, increasing fluency, and developing the communicative competence needed for success in academic, professional, and global contexts.

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