Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.
Book review

*Innovations and Challenges in Language Learning Motivation*, Zoltán Dörnyei. Routledge, London and New York (2020). viii+pp. 178.

Originally a construct associated with mainstream psychology, the field of language learning motivation has gradually evolved independently of the psychology field, developed its own pathways with regard to the psychological dimensions of second language acquisition (SLA), and has been flourishing and diversifying since its adoption by the field of additional language (L2) pedagogy. Both authors of this review share an interest in the power of motivation to stimulate language learning. The first author’s earliest interest in motivation started from a consideration of the integrative versus instrumental motivation distinction in SLA when she began to search for research topics for her MA thesis. Since then, her understanding of and interest in motivation have grown and developed. As a language learner for over two decades, and current doctoral candidate in Applied Linguistics, she is enthusiastic about innovative ways to motivate L2 learners. A principal driver of the second author’s research and teaching is on pedagogical practices that can enhance learner motivation in the L2 classroom. Thus, this book, *Innovations and Challenges in Language Learning Motivation*, written by Zoltán Dörnyei, a prominent and leading figure in this field, directly appeals by offering a comprehensive and cutting-edge overview through its discussion of issues and approaches, examination of advances and trends, and highlighting of challenges and innovations within the field.

This book consists of two parts: challenges and frontiers. As mentioned by Dörnyei in the introduction, motivation is a broad, complicated, intriguing and multidimensional construct, and this means that embracing the challenges in this ever-evolving field is a huge challenge in itself. In the first part of the book, and in response to its title, Dörnyei succinctly synthesises and illustrates 11 basic challenges under three broad categories: conceptualisation (Chapter 1), dynamics (Chapter 2) and application (Chapter 3) of the motivation construct. In addition, each challenge is followed by a presentation of detailed relevant innovations - extant research attempts and efforts to solve each challenge (except Challenge 4 which has a whole chapter [Chapter 4] devoted to it). Building on the first part, the second part entails a further microscopic examination of three specific under-researched areas of contemporary significance and future potential: unconscious motivation (Chapter 4), vision (Chapter 5) and long-term motivation and persistence (Chapter 6).

Specifically, this book presents a panoramic picture of motivation by first providing a broad overview of theories of and research into the topic in different disciplines and fields (mainly psychology) and then narrowing down to current motivation research in SLA. In what follows, we summarise the three-dimensional framework for motivation under examination in this book. The first and core dimension pertains to deconstructing the construct of motivation as a higher-order mental function within an individual - whether it is a trait, a state, or a process, its conscious/unconscious aspects and its interaction with a series of related variables such as goals, mindsets, vision, emotion and persistence. The second dimension concerns motivation in situational, contextual, social and cultural environments. The third dimension adds another factor - time. As ongoing studies become cross-dimensional and trans-dimensional, the goals of L2 motivation research are to understand language learners as whole persons and to explore language learners’ individual, situated, and changing motivations through the interplay of contextual and temporal variations. This theoretical reframing of L2 motivation as a complex, dynamic system brings out the limitations of dominant psychology-originated and linearity-oriented quantitative methodologies. A paradigm shift to qualitative research has led to the need for greater rigour and the rise of mixed methods research as well as a range of novel approaches such as the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre, 2012), retrodictive qualitative modelling (Dörnyei, 2014) and Q methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In effect, a multi-method approach which integrates multiple methods and data points and sources is valuable in capturing a holistic, richly grounded, fine-grained and multilevel analysis of motivational stability and change from a variety of perspectives (Ushioda, 2019).

Three distinctive features of the book are of particular note. A major feature of this book is Dörnyei's personal perspective - “think big, start small.” It is inspiring and insightful to see great coverage and depth of topics, challenges and innovations with regard to motivation, anchored in a substantial discussion of both historical and state-of-the-art theoretical developments and research advances in a wider range of fields and disciplines. This includes, but is not limited to, psychology, cognitive science and neuroscience. A second feature is the book’s interconnectivity. Each challenge, innovation or frontier is not separated and isolated. Rather, many are cross-referenced across chapters, providing overall coherence within these themes.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102355
We could take the controversial role of human agency as an example. Although theory of “person-in-context” (Challenge 5/Innovation 5 in Chapter 2) and investigations into unconscious motivation (Chapter 4) threaten the importance or even necessity of agency, Dörnyei confirms the indispensability and centrality of the agent in a complex motivational system (Challenge 8/Innovation 2 in Chapter 2). The third feature concerns directions for future motivation research, or, as Dörnyei calls them, “unticked boxes” (p. 167), in the Conclusion. The author aims to move beyond providing a comprehensive picture of the past and the present to also outlining a promising future. In addition to the elaboration of three more general and less-researched themes (Chapter 4 to Chapter 6), a variety of potential research-worthy topics have been presented and scattered throughout the whole book. To name just a few, motivational narratives (Chapter 1), motivation through interconnected multiple timescales (Chapter 2), motivation with regard to L2 learning subskills, and the influence of role models (Chapter 3). They are small compared to the three topics, but by no means insignificant.

However, as much more emphasis is placed on motivation in a broader sense in some chapters, it is possible to get overwhelmed by the bulk of information and to feel a little dizzy with regard to finding clues to L2 motivation on a first reading. While a few L2 motivation theories which explore different dimensions of motivation may have helped, including a process-oriented model, the L2 motivational self system and directed motivational currents, they are generally limited in scope. It is anticipated that researchers could take this book as a starting point to probe further into challenges and innovations specific to language learning motivation through broadening theoretical perspectives and deepening empirical investigations. Positively, as learning gets increasingly digital, an exciting feature is to call attention to empirical research into technology-mediated motivational factors. Additionally, another promising area is the burgeoning interest in positive psychology (PP). A motivational PP perspective emphasises balancing motivation and demotivation in a social-cultural context, which might help with understanding the occurrence of ambivalence or amotivation.

In conclusion, a range of stakeholders in the language learning endeavour (including language learners, postgraduate students, language researchers, teachers and teacher educators) will likely find this book highly informative, illuminating and enlightening - it not only helps in clarifying the multi-faceted construct of motivation, but also contributes to a better understanding of motivation research and provides readers with useful research ideas. Most importantly, this book will provide a valuable resource for those who need some “innovations” to motivate themselves to persist on their academic journey in light of the “challenges” we face, poignantly illustrated in the challenges brought up by the current COVID-19 situation.

References

Dörnyei, Z. (2014). Researching complex dynamic systems: ‘Retrodictive qualitative modelling’ in the language classroom. Language Teaching, 47(1), 80–91. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000516

MacIntyre, P. D. (2012). The idiodynamic method: A closer look at the dynamics of communication traits. Communication Research Reports, 29(4), 361–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2012.723274

Ushioda, E. (2019). Researching L2 motivation: Past, present and future. In M. Lamb (Ed.), The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning (pp. 661–682). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2012). Doing Q methodological research: Theory, method and interpretation. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446251911

Junyan Guo*, Martin East

School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand

* Corresponding reviewer.

E-mail addresses: jguo976@aucklanduni.ac.nz (J. Guo); m.east@auckland.ac.nz (M. East)

Available online 18 September 2020

Junyan Guo*