

MOTIVATION TO LEARN ARABIC AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

ANNA-MARIA RAMEZANZADEH
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

WORKBOOK

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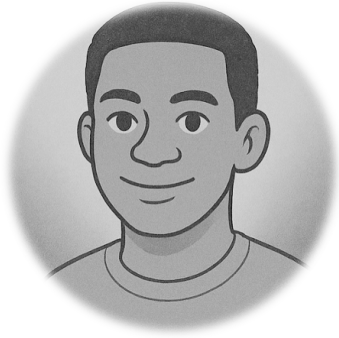
Applying Motivation Frameworks

Accompanying the explanations of different frameworks for capturing language learning motivation, on the next two pages are some vignettes of learners with different motivational profiles.

Think about the following questions for each of the learners described:

- Discuss which labels from the theory could be assigned to each learner.
- Do these vignettes resonate with any of your own learners or your own language learning experiences?
- Do any of these frameworks and labels help you understand or explain the dynamics of motivation in your own classroom(s)?

Vignettes



David

DAVID chose to sign up to an Arabic after-school class because he wants to apply for a politics degree when he finishes school. He is especially interested in Middle Eastern politics, and knows that Arabic will stand out on his university application. While memorizing vocabulary isn't fun and grammar drills can be tedious, he recognizes their importance for his future goals. He pushes through difficult lessons thinking, "This is exactly what I need to understand the region better." He doesn't love every aspect of learning Arabic, but he values it as essential preparation for his future studies.

In class, he appreciates when teachers explain how lessons link to real-world issues or regional topics, as it reminds him why he's there. When activities feel repetitive or disconnected from his goals, his focus fades, but clear guidance and purposeful tasks keep him driven.



Michelle

MICHELLE recently joined a local weekend class to learn Arabic, not out of academic interest, but because she believes it's essential to understand the Quran in its original language and for connecting with her faith. Arabic doesn't come easily to her, and it takes her much longer to complete her Arabic homework in comparison to her school subjects. She struggles with the grammar, the unfamiliar sounds, and the pace of classroom instruction. Still, she keeps going, even when she feels overwhelmed. She feels great satisfaction when she can recognise words in the Quran and imagines a day when she can read and understand the text fluently.

In class, she often feels slower than others, but when her teacher praises her careful effort or connects lessons to verses from the Quran, her confidence lifts. Supportive moments like these help her push through frustration and remind her that her hard work has meaning.



Sara

SARA is a Year 9 student in an Islamic school. She sits in her Arabic class staring blankly at the textbook. Arabic is a compulsory subject at her school, and she often wishes she could have taken French instead. Though her teachers tell her it is important for her to learn Arabic, she feels completely overwhelmed by the script and sounds. "I'll never be able to read this," she thinks, barely participating in activities. She sees no point in trying because she believes she has no talent for languages and Arabic seems impossibly difficult. She often asks, "Why do I even need to learn this?"

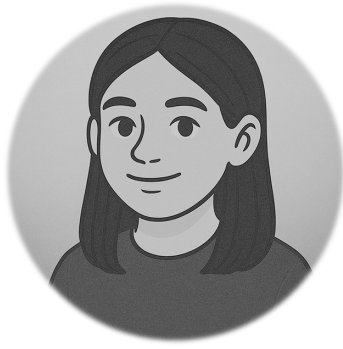
In class, instructions feel rushed and she rarely gets to choose how to practise; pair work leaves her quiet while others lead. Each lesson seems to confirm that she isn't moving forward, so her effort shrinks and she checks out more and more.



Fred

FRED signed up for Arabic purely out of fascination when it was introduced as an enrichment subject at his school. He loves the flowing calligraphy, enjoys discovering how the root system works, and finds himself listening to Arabic music and poetry in his free time even though he doesn't understand everything he hears yet. He's excited by every new grammatical pattern and delights in recognizing words in movies. Learning itself is rewarding - he'll spend extra time on lessons not because he has to, but because exploring the language brings him genuine joy and curiosity.

In class, he's the student who asks extra questions and notices patterns others miss. Quite often, however, he finds the tasks and activities too easy, which leaves him feeling frustrated. But when his teacher gives him freedom to explore or share his discoveries, his enthusiasm grows even more, and his curiosity spreads to those around him.



Amara

AMARA grew up in a mixed family with an Arab grandmother, and learning Arabic feels like reclaiming part of her heritage that was lost when her parent didn't learn the language or speak it at home. Studying Arabic at school aligns with her deeper values about family connection and cultural identity. Even when lessons are challenging, she persists because Arabic learning represents part of who she is - someone who bridges cultures and honours her ancestry. The language connects to her core sense of self.

In class, she lights up during stories, songs, and projects that touch on family or culture, and her teacher's gentle feedback helps her notice small steps forward. The room feels like a place where she belongs, which keeps her working through the hard parts.



Mazin

MAZIN is taking Arabic at school after his parents insisted he sign up for the subject. His parents are both Egyptian and are insistent that Mazin should be able to speak Arabic. But Mazin isn't interested. All his Egyptian family and cousins speak English anyway. He studies just enough to pass exams. He is a high achieving student across all subjects, and is motivated entirely by the grade - when there's no Arabic assignment due, he doesn't engage with Arabic at all. "Once I get through these four semesters, I'm done with Arabic forever," he tells friends.

In class he completes exercises efficiently but avoids extra practice, and activities that don't count for marks feel like a waste of time. He doesn't feel like he has anything in common with his classmates. The lessons are something to get through, not enjoy, so his energy spikes around tests and drops away the rest of the time.



Javier

JAVIER took up Arabic since he needed to fulfil a language requirement to pass high school, and he thought it sounded more interesting than German. Though he did not expect to, he really enjoys the classes and gets on well with the teacher. He recently managed to hold a short conversation with some Arabic-speaking neighbours, and although he did not understand everything they said, the exchange gave him great satisfaction. Javier's parents are not happy that he is taking Arabic and would prefer him to learn a European language because they think it will be more useful. Though initially Javier did not plan on taking Arabic in the future, his enjoyment of the class and his desire to prove his parents wrong have fuelled his desire to continue learning the language beyond high school.

Lessons are lively and practical, with plenty of chances to try short dialogues; the teacher's encouragement makes him feel he's genuinely improving. He looks forward to class and volunteers often, which keeps his motivation high despite pressure at home.

Notes