

Taking My Motivational Temperature on a Language Task¹

Andrew D. Cohen and Zoltán Dörnyei



The purpose of this inventory is for you to find out more about your motivation to learn a language starting with the “motivational baggage” that you bring to any given task in the target language. Then, if you are currently taking a language class, you are to indicate your motivation regarding various aspects of the class.

The final part of the measure has you look at your motivation to do a specific task. Ideally, you would fill out this task-focused portion of the questionnaire with respect to different tasks (tasks performed in class or as homework) so that you have an opportunity to see just how your motivation fluctuates while doing a particular task and across tasks. The instrument may prove to be a yardstick for determining the most motivating ways for you to perform certain tasks!

- 4 = very (much/good/important)
- 3 = somewhat (much/good/important)
- 2 = not very (much/good/important)
- 1 = not at all (much/good/important)

Pre-Task Motivation (to be filled out once, for example, at the start of a course or when starting a new unit):

What “motivational baggage” do I bring to this task?

- ___ How good am I at learning languages in general?
- ___ How much do I like this language?
- ___ How important is it for me to learn this language?
- ___ How motivated am I in this general learning situation (e.g., learning language at school)?

If you are currently taking a language course:

- ___ How much motivation does this language course instill in me?
- ___ How motivating is it to study with this teacher?
- ___ How much do I like learning together with my peers in this course?
- ___ How willing am I to do better in the target language than my fellow students?

Motivation concerning the task at hand:

How motivated am I to do this specific task?

- ___ How beneficial does this task seem to be in terms of my goals for learning the language?
- ___ How interesting does this task seem to be?
- ___ How self-confident am I about my ability to do well on this task?

What is it like for me as I begin to do the task?

- ___ How much does the setup of the task (e.g. physical conditions, grouping) add to my motivation?
- ___ How sufficient has the guidance been (from the teacher, the textbook, etc.) as I look to completing this task?
- ___ How much will my being anxious about this task actually facilitate my successful completion of it?

Looking ahead to the completion of the task:

- ___ How much does the prospect of feedback (praise or grade) contribute to my performance on this task?

After the task is completed:

- ___ How motivated am I to do other, similar tasks, now that I have completed this one?

¹The instrument was developed at the University of Minnesota by Cohen, with input from Dörnyei at the University of Nottingham, England. Many of the dimensions in the instrument were inspired by Dörnyei's book, *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.