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CAN ASSESSMENT BE A MOTIVATIONAL FACTOR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING?

The article considers the influence of assessment of students' foreign language communicative competence on their motivation to master a foreign language. The authors of the article analyzed modern forms of assessment used to increase students' motivation while learning a foreign language; compared the opinions of teachers and students on effective types of assessment of foreign language communicative competence; identified strategies which proved effective to motivate students to study foreign language on a regular basis. The purpose of the study was to examine possible causal connections between introduction of high level formative assessment and motivation of students to study foreign languages. It has been established that while employing high level formative assessment teacher takes into account different level of students' language proficiency, directs their efforts in mastering a Viforeign language and provodes positive feedback. Such assessment is meant to be a process aimed to provide information that teachers can utilize to tailor instruction in order to meet students' needs so that students can progress more in their learning. Here teachers have important tasks of establishing rapport and collaboration with students thus making them aware of their learning achievements based on comprehensible criteria and objectives as well as delivering constructive feedback while assessing and evaluating. It is also essential to create an atmosphere in which students will be active participants of learning, not afraid of making mistakes and taking responsibilities for their successes and failures. The results of the study confirmed the research hypothesis that higher level formative assessment serves to enhance students' motivation to learn a foreign language and has a significant impact on the development of foreign language communicative competence.

Keywords: achievement motive; foreign language competence; high-level formative assessment; feedback; self-assessment.

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ЧИ МОЖЕ ОЦІНЮВАННЯ БУТИ МОТИВАЦІЙНИМ ФАКТОРОМ У ВИВЧЕННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ?

У статті розглянуто вплив оцінювання іншомовної комунікативної компетентності студентів на їхню мотивацію до оволодіння іноземною мовою. Автори проаналізували сучасні форми оцінювання, що можуть використовуватися з метою підвищення мотивації студентів; висвітлили думки викладачів і студентів щодо ефективних практик оцінювання іншомовної комунікативної компетентності; ви-

значили дієві стратегії та техніки мотивування студентів до регулярного та успішного навчання в процесі вивчення іноземної мови. Метою роботи було дослідити можливі наслідкові зв'язки між впровадженням в освітній процес опанування іноземної мови формувального оцінювання високого рівня та мотивації студентів до вивчення іноземної мови. Установлено, що при застосуванні формувального оцінювання високого рівня викладач враховує різний рівень знань студентів, скеровує їхні зусилля в оволодінні іноземною мовою та надає позитивний зворотний зв'язок. Такого типу оцінювання стає процесом, що надає інформацію, за допомогою якої викладач може скорегувати та пристосовувати викладання до більшої відповідності потребам студентів. Це сприятиме їхньому прогресу у вивченні іноземної мови. Важливим завданням викладача є налагодити взаємодію зі студентами щодо їхніх навчальних досягнень на підставі зрозумілих критеріїв і цілей та надати конструктивний зворотній зв'язок під час оцінювання. Також необхідно створити атмосферу, у якій студенти відчувають себе активними учасниками освітнього процесу, не бояться робити помилки та беруть відповідальність за свої успіхи й невдачі. Результати дослідження підтвердили попередню гіпотезу, що формувальне оцінювання високого рівня підвищує бажання вивчати іноземну мову, що, зі свого боку, веде до суттєвого поступу на шляху формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності.

Ключові слова: мотив досягнень; іншомовна комунікативна компетентність; формувальне оцінювання високого рівня; зворотний зв'язок; самооцінювання.

Problem statement. In the educational process, teachers use a variety of tools and technologies to increase students' motivation to learn foreign languages. But can assessments too be considered effective means of influencing the formation of students' learning skills, their interest in learning a foreign language, diligence and responsibility? Despite researchers' quite meticulous attention to this question, it still remains unresolved. Study of the positive effects as well as overt and covert challenges of assessment is critical for understanding the problems that arise during introduction of formative assessment in the educational process, and will hopefully contribute to their elimination.

Literature review. The concept of assessment and its implementation in teaching languages has been explored by G. M. Brosvic, I. Clark, M. J. Cook, L. L. Dihoff, K. Ecclestone, R. Epstein et al. The scientists research the concept of assessment, its types, forms, and implications for pursuing further learning. J. Harmer, B. Mccombs, M. Šendula-Paveliæ T. Tomak and others analyse motivation to learn foreign languages as well as various strategies that engage students, promote their desire to learn and enhance achievement. Conversely, the studies of Bachman and Harmer, Pierce, Swain and Hart focus on examining the validity of students' self-assessment of their language competency. However, studies on correlation between high level formative assessment and its impact on motivation are rather scarce as majority of the scholars focus either on the assessment or on motivation never seeking to find links between them.

The purpose of the article is to study the possible causal links between the implementation of formative assessment of a high level and motivation of students to study foreign languages. The author's suggestion is that high-level formative assessment can have an impact on the motivation of students and at the same time their foreign language communicative competence. The objectives of the study are to analyze the current views of researchers to define the main terms of the research, namely "assessment", "formative assessment"; provide the views of teachers and students on effective means of assessing foreign language communicative competence; experimentally trace the impact of low and high level formative assessment to motivate students to learn a foreign language, and suggest the most effective ways to implement formative assessment in order to improve students' foreign language communicative competence.

Discussion. Researchers identify motivation as learners' orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Tomak; Šendula-Paveliæ, 2017). Motivation is an individual's disposition to learning a task that can be modified both by him or herself and by the surrounding circumstances. It is seen as the internal state that instigates, directs, and maintains behaviour and defined as a process which initiates, directs or maintains behaviour to satisfy physiological or psychological needs (Mccombs, 2014). As a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, motivation contains various components, such as interest, confidence, self-esteem, effort, efficiency, etc. Among the most important signs of motivation are the determination to start a business, persistence (the decision not to stop and continue) and concentration on the completion, although some scholars consider only persistence and concentration important characteristics of motivation (Harmer, 2010). Motivation is intrinsic if the activity is not of compulsory nature, but carried out voluntarily, as one that brings us satisfaction and for which no external reward is promised. If you do something to avoid undesirable consequences, or it will be rewarded with certain compensation, then such motivation is extrinsic. Learning skills of students can be explained by a number of motives. Some students study a foreign language seeking future opportunities to be able to work abroad, assimilate with a foreign language community and culture, due to personal interest in the native speaker of this foreign language. If students consider studying languages as important and this coincides with their personal goals, they relate to language learning as one worthy of their efforts. This dichotomy of motivation is defined as orientation according to the academic, career or socio-cultural context of learning. Thus, motivation to learn is seen as a form of energy that governs students' ability to learn, adapt and change according to internal and external incentives. The need to succeed is another powerful motive that affects students the learning habits. Achievement motive is a person's desire to

achieve certain goals, to feel joy of completion. Students with a low level of motivation usually slow down or stop learning a foreign language when they encounter some obstacles, but explain their failures as a lack of aptitude to learn a language. Such students do not realize that the result depends not only on abilities but also on effort and perseverance. At the same time, people who are highly motivated to achieve, consider their own abilities, determination and hard work as factors that influence results and yield success. Moreover, students with a high level of achievement motive do not give up easily in the face of learning difficulties. They will continue to work on learning the language and enjoy testing their abilities. The teacher's learning values and the purpose of language learning certainly influence assessment of student achievements. Here we should distinguish between performance goals and mastery goals. The teacher for whom the main the goal is exemplary performance, evaluates primarily individual abilities and rewards for impeccable performance. If the teacher's goal is mastery, then he focuses on the assessment of students' progress, their mastery of new skills, and their improvement.

The definition of the term "assessment" depends on the vision of the researcher. It may cover any activities through which systematic evidence of training is received and which are the basis to form judgement about the results of students' learning (Ecclestone, 2011). The assessment has moved from assessing the knowledge of the material the effort and contribution students have shown in the process of learning (Florin; Mihai, 2010). The overarching principles of assessment include fairness, compliance with the purpose and content of assessment with students' abilities, relevance of the received information and consequences of assessment results. It is often a combination of formal and informal judgments, which means that not only the test results are important, but also the results of other insights into students' knowledge.

At the same time, scientists are critical of standardized language knowledge testing (Dihoff, Brosvic, Epstein, & Cook, 2014) questioning the validity of such tests, their effectiveness and feasibility and indicate tests inability to take into account the attitude of students, their interest, and involvement in the language learning process. Critics of standardized testing of knowledge highlight examination anxiety, the inability of exams to demonstrate the gradual development of students, curriculum constraints and other negative aspects of test use. As a result, new approaches to the assessment of foreign language communicative competence have been emerging. Scientists now consider assessment to be a means of solving educational problems, believing the type of assessment can and should change according to the problem that caused the very assessment. It is seen as a bridge that combines learning and teaching and due to assessment teachers can see if their methods are effective and help students overcome challenges, which occur during language learning (Sovhar, 2021). Obviously, it should not rely upon test results alone, as they are not always indicative. Tests should motivate students to learn and help to identify gaps in their knowledge.

Assessment, in the process of which information is accumulated about students' knowledge with the purpose of learning adaptation to improve learning, is defined as formative. It is a process during which the teacher systematically monitors the progress of students in language learning, helps them to overcome difficulties and eliminate shortcomings that affect the motivation to engage students in the learning process. Formative assessment demonstrates to students that they are able to master the language under certain conditions and with active action. (Clark, 2015). It is characterized as the formative assessment of high and low levels, the formative low-level assessment being more standardized, formal, where the main person who makes decisions is a teacher. Feedback here is usually provided after the assessment. The interaction between teacher and students is quite limited, and students' self-esteem is not taken into account. Motivation here is extrinsic. Students attribute their successes or failures to external factors. High-level formative assessment can be spontaneous, informal, involving students and using a variety of assessment tools. Feedback is often instantaneous. Tasks can be chosen not only by the teacher, but students as well, the adjustments are flexible, and the interaction between teacher and students is multifaceted. Much attention is paid to students' self-assessment and is part of the teacher's assessment. The typical motivation is intrinsic. Students realize that language learning depends on their efforts, the results depend on their responsibility.

The following methods were employed to solve the research tasks: experiment, observation, modelling, questionnaire, interview, testing, and mathematical statistics. Prior to conducting the research all participants have consented to questionnaires, observations and interviews. The following sections present the participants, the context, instruments for data collection, procedures and analysis. 80 students from Ukrainian military academy were involved in the given research. Experimental training was carried out during 2020-2021. Students studied the discipline "Military English" for 2 years. 90-minute classes were taught twice a week (first year of study) and three times a week (second year of study) for 2 semesters. The experimental and control groups were selected randomly and contained 40 students each. High-level formative assessment was introduced in the experimental group, and student control groups had low-level formative assessment. Respondents were told that the questionnaire was aimed at measuring their motivation to learn English and results of the questionnaires would not affect their assessment grades. The students were assured that no one except for researchers would have access to their answers that their names would not be used in the report on the analysis of research results. In order to obtain the necessary information in the study, the following materials were used: textbook "Psychological Education" with tasks (Dmitrenko, 2011); coursebooks "Campaign 1, 2" with tasks; self-assessment scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR); online tests on reading comprehension of the International Cambridge Examination (PET); adapted Gardner's Attitude / Motivation Test Battery. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Participants received instructions on the procedure of filling in the answer sheets. The first part of the questionnaire contained demographic data on the curriculum, year of study, gender, age, duration of learning English as a second foreign language and duration of learning ESP, as well as students' self-assessment of their English proficiency level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In order to check the level of students' achievement and motivation, an online test was used (http://www.wwnorton.com/college/psych/psychsci/media/survey.htm). The second part of the questionnaire contained 19 questions on the students motivation to learn English language for special purposes, which have been adapted and modified from the motivation test (The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery). In the second part of the questionnaire a fivepoint Likert scale was used, with fluctuations from level 1 ("completely disagree") to level 5 ("strongly agree"). The test was used twice: in the beginning and at the end of the experiment. After retesting the results of two motivational tests were compared, analyzed and generalized conclusions were drawn on the level of students' motivation to study a foreign language. The experimental training was developed in the form of a sandwich model. The forming stage was carried out between the control reading comprehension (PET) testing, which occurred before and after the application of the experimental methods. The formative stage of the experimental study involved interaction between students and a teacher who helped, prompted, asked questions, made suggestions and explanations, acting as both a mediator and a facilitator. During each class in the experimental group, 30 minutes for reading tasks were given using formative assessment of a high level at different stages of interaction according to the sandwich model. The first stage - students received a test for reading comprehension and tasks for it with open and closed questions. During the test and assessment of the test, the teacher provided comments and explained mistakes in writing in each paper, without offering the correct answer, encouraging individual student to conduct error analysis and self-assessment. The second stage – in the classroom the teacher in the format of a discussion tried to tackle the problem questions that were identified during the reading test. The teacher provided feedback, explanations, encouraged students to elaborate on their thoughts when choosing answers,

introduced various techniques that help to select the correct answer. During the discussion, the teacher tried not to give a ready-made answer, but to stimulate students to find it themselves. To this end, the teacher divided the students into groups and provided each group with a blank answer sheet. Each group of students had to discuss and agree on one version of the correct answers. After that they compared answer sheets with different groups. When assessing students, their self-preparation was taken into account, active participation in discussion, and self-assessment. Students were encouraged to take such reading comprehension tests on their own in extracurricular time, the analysis and assessment of which the teacher provided individually. The third stage - another test was performed to check comprehension of what had been read. The teacher-mediator used the same procedure for calculating points for a written test with 182 comments on the identified errors, but did not initiate a group discussion of the identified mistakes, encouraging students to correct mistakes, find the right answers and do self-assessment. The three stages of the given sandwich model were repeated five times during the semester in the experimental group. In the control group, students also performed comprehension tests in reading, but only some elements were observed during the study (for example, postponed feedback) low-level formative assessment procedures. Student self-assessment was not taken into account when giving assessment scores. After conducting a final test (PET), the same for the experimental and control groups, students were asked to complete the questionnaire to identify the level of motivation (The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery) for the second time to compare student levels of motivation to learn a foreign language at the beginning and after the experiment teaching. The whole process of the experimental group training can be presented as follows: a) two parts of the questionnaire (part 1 – personal data, self-assessment of English language skills and abilities, online test to determine motivation; part 2 – adapted motivation test The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery); b) pre-experimental test of reading comprehension (PET); c) sandwich model, three stages, repeated 5 times during semester); d) post-experimental reading comprehension test (PET); e) adapted motivation test The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery.

Self-assessment questionnaire was compiled in accordance with the CommoEuropean Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Students who assessed their own knowledge of English at the level of A1 or A2, made up the majority of respondents – 68.8%. The number of those, who assessed their English language skills at the B1 level or B2 (independent users), turned out to be 31.2%. Advance language users, that is, students, who assessed their foreign language skills as C1 / 2, were not found. The results of self-assessment are presented in table. 1.

Table 1

Students' self-assessment of their language proficiency

Level Number of students Percentage Α1 9 11.3% A2 46 57.5% **B1** 21 26.2% B₂ 4 5% C1 C2Total 80 100%

Comparison of the results of preliminary and final reading comprehension testing (PET) was conducted to confirm that the data of the experimental and control groups are statistically significant. Table 2 shows that a high level formative assessment procedure can be a significant indicator of motivation. Students of the experimental group demonstrated that they are more motivated to get better grades from the study of foreign language compared to the control group.

Table 2
Results of reading comprehension
pre- and post- tests

Groups		Control		Experimental	
Pre-test	Grade	N	%	N	%
	Α	-	-	-	-
	В	4	10%	3	7.5%
	С	22	55%	21	52.5%
	D	7	17.5%	10	25%
	E	7	17.5%	6	15%
	FX	-	-	-	-
Post-test	Α	-	-	-	-
	В	3	7.5%	5	12.5%
	С	22	55%	25	62.5%
	D	8	20%	-	17.5%
	E	7	17.5%	3	7.5%
	FX	-	-	-	-

In order to compare the motivation of students in the experimental and control groups, The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery test data were entered into the statistical software SPSS 16 for quantitative analysis. Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics. Average scores indicate a greater student motivation in experimental groups compared to the control group. In order for the difference to be statistically significant, a *t*-test was used.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics
of experimental and control groups

Groups	N	N Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	40	3.67	1.86	.26
Experimental	40	4.84	2.07	.29

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group (M=4.84, SD=2.07) and the control group (M=3.67, SD=1.86), t=2.942, p=0.00, i.e. high-level formative assessment can be a significant factor influencing motivation regarding the study of a foreign language. Test results of students of the experimental group indicate a higher motivation to learn English as a foreign language in comparison with students of the control group.

Results. According to the results of the motivation test, which was conducted at the beginning of the experiment, students were mostly indifferent to learning a foreign language. Most of them demonstrated a low level of motivation. About 38% of students believed that they will not need knowledge of English in their future profession. Although they do understand that in modern society a person must speak at least one foreign language, 57% of respondents were skeptical about the possibility of using a foreign language. Learning a foreign language for students is boring, uninteresting, and they see learning foreign language as a difficult test that they must pass while studying in a higher education institution. The test results show that the basic needs of students in learning a foreign language are not satisfied and their intrinsic motivation is quite low. In foreign language classes they feel the need to sleep, eat or rest. Most students (81%) informed that they had never been abroad, never used English language as a means of communication outside the classroom and do not understand the benefits of learning foreign language. Only the chance of failing the exam in English motivates 83% of students to study constantly foreign language during the course. The survey results show that students' motivation greatly decreases if at the end of the semester there is no final assessment in the form of a test or exam. This allows us to conclude that Ukrainian students are mainly guided by extrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language for special purposes. At the same time, analysis of the results of students' self-assessment of their command of a foreign language shows that 68% of second-year students have not mastered the B1 level of English language. Some students have such a low level of language proficiency that they feel extraordinary difficulties even in reading and understanding what is read. Most of them came to study from rural areas of Ukraine, where English is taught poorly. Such students find learning English especially tedious, useless and difficult. Being in the same group with students who already speak a foreign language at level B1, extremely hinders their learning. It is difficult for teachers to motivate these students and evaluate them properly, as incorrect assessment can destroy even the weak students' desire to learn English. Inadequate assessment of the efforts of such students makes them fail in their studies. Similar challenges are observed with students who demonstrate higher level language skills. The teacher must be very careful when evaluating such students, because there is a high probability that students will find it difficult to maintain their level of proficiency language, and it will gradually decline. If the teacher uses formative assessment of high level and assesses students' current progress in language acquisition, this can lead to misunderstandings in the assessment. Some students may compare their knowledge with the level knowledge of other students in the group, not taking into account their initial level of knowledge. Misinterpreting the teacher's assessment, they may disagree with the assessment. Research confirmed the assumption that the basic principles of high level formative assessment should be explained to students at the beginning of the course "English for Professional Communication", and clarified throughout the course if necessary. Students need to be explained and understand that when high-level formative assessment is utilized it does not take into account their level of English language proficiency compared to other students, but, above all, their individual achievements and progress in language acquisition

Such an assessment of progress on the basis of the principles of high-level formative assessment makes it possible to succeed for students who have not received the necessary skills and knowledge from the school course in foreign language (the level of language proficiency which corresponds to the level of A1 or A2), and encourages students who are independent users (language proficiency levels B1 and B2), to improve their foreign language proficiency. Analysis of the results of the motivational test The Attitude / Motivation Test Battery, which was conducted twice during experimental training, indicates the feasibility of using high-level formative assessment. The students' answers state that such assessment helps to establish a creative atmosphere in the classroom, and, therefore, increases their motivation to learn a foreign language and influences the improvement of their level of proficiency in a foreign language. We agree with Clark (Clark, 2011) that intrinsic motivation is preserved only when it is accompanied by the appropriate climate in the classroom. The environment in which students' smallest achievements are encouraged and praised catalyzes interest and desire to overcome the challenges that arise in the process of learning a foreign language. In our opinion, a formative assessment of a high level of foreign language proficiency motivates students if teachers increase students' inner inter-

est, encourage a positive atmosphere in the classroom, explain the purpose of assessment and involve students in making self-assessment decisions. Teachers, creating a positive atmosphere of support in the classroom, should explain the role of assessment for learning, to promote students' interest in learning and emphasize the importance of current progress, not the significance of a grade. Getting feedback is critical if the information obtained during the assessment is used by the teacher for re-planning or re-presentation of the material, as well as if the student wants to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities. It is useful to focus attention during training on the achievements of students, emphasizing that it is impossible to master the language without making mistakes. Both students and teachers demonstrated their vision of evaluating a foreign language communicative competence in the form of a discussion that encourages learning. Although some teachers preferred the possibility of conducting examinations more frequently, claiming that that it disciplines students and motivates them better than any discussion. It was surprising to find out that some students mentioned more frequent use of final assessment, confirming the idea of a fairly high level of extrinsic motivation in learning a foreign language.

The results of the study indicate that formative assessment of a high level contributes to shaping learning goals and objectives by assessing students success and progress, giving them opportunities for improvement by considering mistakes as part of the educational process, changing assessment methods and providing an individual approach in assessment. Thus, the study showed that the students of the experimental group in their learning made more use of cognitive learning strategies, combining new learning with prior knowledge. To do this during an experiment to improve learning student assessment material was associated with the achievement of each individual's goals student, taking into account active participation and providing positive feedback on the use learning strategies. Comparing the results of the survey before and after the experimental training, we should note that students of the experimental group who received formative assessment of a high level, found a higher level of motivation according to the results of performing a motivational test of post-experimental training. Some of them became more attentive, diligent and responsible. They tended to attend more regularly than the control group.

It has been observed that Ukrainian teachers receive insufficient training in assessment theory and practice, which means they require professional training for the introduction of formative assessment of high level. Most university professors complain about the pressure they feel during the assessment of level of students' foreign language proficiency, and express concerns about the implementation of formative assessment principles of a high level in foreign languages lessons. They often do

not have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills for assessment activities. Participation of teachers in webinars, seminars to improve professional skills on problems of assessing language skills in a foreign language could change their attitude and overcome existing problems of high-level formative assessment. By creating an atmosphere of discussion, reflection and mutual support in the classroom, teacher enhances responsibility of students for the results of their learning. Active involvement of students in the process of assessment indicates some change in their attitude to the learning process. As a result of the introduction of interaction (prompts, tips, questions, suggestions, explanations and elements of problem-based learning) during the formative assessment of a high level, students' motivation to learn English has improved significantly.

Conclusions. According to the results of the study, it can be argued that students who have gone through the high-level formative assessment procedure were more motivated than students who did not have similar experience. There is a significant difference in the motivation of students in the experimental and control groups, and there is a positive relationship between the formative assessment and motivation of students to learn a foreign language for professional purposes. Analysis of the results of the study allows us to conclude that the introduction of high-level formative assessment in foreign language classes has a crucial role in improving the motivation of student achievement, which significantly affects the development of foreign languages communicative competence. Students' desire for success and their level of achievement motive are closely linked to the efforts they are willing to make to achieve their goals in learning a foreign language. Student learning problems can be overcome through formative assessment of a high level, namely the support of a teacher, continuous feedback (when possible), and positive assessment of students' efforts. Teachers, providing students with problem-solving tasks that meet their individual level of knowledge of a foreign language, gives students the opportunity to focus on improving skills and the ability to perceive the achievement of goals as they progress in their own learning, increasing self-esteem and expected success in further learning. In order to increase students' motivation when assessing knowledge, skills and abilities in a foreign language, heterogeneity of students should be taken into account, teachers should guide them in making the necessary efforts to master the language, provide positive feedback and praise the work done and recommend what else to do in this prospect. The results of our study demonstrate the ample benefits of using assessment as a pedagogical tool to help identify students who may need additional support in the classroom, which is also endorsed in research by Brooks et. al. (2021).

Thus, in the process of assessing the foreign language communicative competence of students it is necessary to take into account its positive and negative impact on student motivation and modify or change its type, giving preference to high-level formative assessment in foreign language classes, which encourages students to be more inquisitive, do homework on time, partake in discussions, debates and self-assessment.

Further research prospects could be envisioned as study of correlation between computer assisted testing and boosting students' motivation to take ownership of their own learning. Moreover, the motivational strategies covered in the article need to be justified and complemented by additional empirical studies.

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