



The Influence of Confidence-Building Diaries in Spanish Learning: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

The journey of mastering a second language, such as Spanish, which ranks as the second most spoken language globally, involves numerous complexities and challenges. Several approaches have been suggested to help in this learning process, with intrinsic motivation pinpointed as one of the paramount factors in accelerating acquisition.¹ Diving deeper into the underpinnings of motivation, the integral role of self-confidence in the realm of second language acquisition (SLA) emerges prominently.² Rooted in beliefs about one's capabilities, self-confidence, often synonymous with self-esteem, influences learners' speed and effectiveness in acquiring a new language (Rastelli 106; Bao and Liu 465). Tapping into this reservoir of inner strength and belief can be a game-changer for educators.

A growing strategy to delve into metanalysis of what drives learners in their learning process is the use of confidence-building diaries. Designed to bolster self-esteem, motivation, and, consequently, language proficiency, these diaries are instruments that have the potential to revolutionize the way individuals approach Spanish learning (Shelton-Strong and Mynard 460). Harnessing the principles of self-determination theory (SDT) defined by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, this article embarks on an exploration of these diaries and their transformative capabilities (230). Specifically, the research focuses on understanding the extent to which confidence-building diaries can ignite motivation and foster positive sentiments toward the Spanish language-learning journey.

Drawing inspiration from global studies on the symbiotic relationship between self-confidence and SLA, this research is further enriched by examining unique confidence-enhancing strategies, particularly within the confines of the SDT framework (Maftoon and Ziafar 76; Lenahan 144). As we delve into the nuances of this innovative pedagogical tool, we hope to unearth insights that can guide educators and learners in their mutual pursuit of mastering the Spanish language.

¹ See Azar and Tanggaraju 327; Clément and Kruidenier 151; Norris-Holt; Shelton-Strong and Mynard 459; Sugita McEown et al. 540; Sun and Gao 1188.

² See Douglas H. Brown's *Principles of Language and Teaching* (2014).

The use of confidence-building diaries represents a departure from traditional methods of language learning, which often focus solely on vocabulary drills, grammar exercises, and rote memorization (Brown 92). Instead, these diaries invite learners to engage in reflective practices that promote self-awareness and self-empowerment. By regularly documenting their language learning experiences, successes, challenges, and feelings, learners can cultivate a deeper understanding of their own learning processes and emotional responses (Hashemian and Heidari 481; Landau Wright et al. 615). This heightened self-awareness can, in turn, lead to increased self-confidence and motivation as learners gain a sense of control over their own language-learning journey (Azar and Tanggaraju 329).

Moreover, confidence-building diaries align with the principles of SDT, which posits that individuals are inherently motivated to pursue activities that satisfy their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Shelton-Strong and Mynard 461). By providing learners with a structured means of expressing their thoughts and emotions related to language learning, these diaries support their need for autonomy and competence as they take ownership of their learning process and track their progress over time. Additionally, sharing their diary entries with peers or instructors can foster a sense of relatedness and belonging within the language-learning community, further bolstering motivation and engagement (Canga Alonso 55).

Incorporating confidence-building diaries into language education programs has the potential to yield numerous benefits for learners of Spanish. By promoting self-awareness, self-empowerment, and a sense of belonging, these diaries can enhance learners' self-confidence and motivation, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of confidence-building diaries may vary depending on individual learner characteristics, learning contexts, and implementation strategies. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the optimal ways of integrating these diaries into language learning curricula and to assess their long-term impact on learners' language proficiency and motivation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) seeks to explain human behavior in the context of the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. SDT posits that individuals have three innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan 229). Meeting these needs results in increased intrinsic motivation, improved mental well-being, and effective performance. In the context of language learning, these factors play crucial roles. Learners need to feel capable (competence), have choices in their learning (autonomy), and connect with the language and its speakers (relatedness).

In addition to its relevance in language learning contexts, SDT also holds significant implications for understanding and enhancing confidence-building diaries. The three fundamental psychological needs identified by SDT—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—offer valuable insights into how to design and implement effective diary interventions aimed at bolstering confidence (Deci and Ryan 229). Addressing the need for competence within confidence-building diaries involves providing users with opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills and abilities in areas relevant to confidence enhancement. This could entail incorporating self-assessment tools, goal-setting exercises, and progress-tracking mechanisms within the diary platform (Shelton-Strong and Mynard 461). By enabling users to set challenging yet achievable confidence-related goals and providing them with the resources and support necessary to attain these goals, the diary can foster a sense of competence and mastery over their confidence-building journey (Shelton-Strong and Mynard 468).

Promoting autonomy using confidence-building diaries involves empowering users to make choices and exercise control over their confidence development process. This could include offering a range of diary prompts, exercises, and activities for users to choose from based on their preferences, interests, and learning styles. Additionally, allowing users to customize their diary entries, set their own pace, and determine the direction of their confidence-building efforts can enhance their sense of ownership and agency, thereby increasing their motivation and engagement with the diary.

Promoting a sense of connection within confidence-building diaries entails providing avenues for users to engage with individuals who have comparable confidence objectives and journeys. This might involve integrating social networking elements, discussion boards, or peer support communities within the diary platform, enabling users to communicate, exchange perspectives, and offer mutual encouragement. By fostering a feeling of community and inclusion among users, the diary can boost their drive, perseverance, and general welfare as they endeavor to cultivate confidence in themselves and their capabilities.

Incorporating principles of self-determination theory into the design and implementation of confidence-building diaries can thus optimize their effectiveness in promoting confidence development and well-being among users. By addressing the core psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, these diaries can empower individuals to take proactive steps towards achieving their confidence goals and realizing their full potential.

Deci and Ryan maintain that most people are naturally drawn to positive learning experiences where they can develop caring relationships and a feeling of competence (238). Nevertheless, they emphasize that the development of such experiences is dependent upon conditions that support it. Figure 1 describes Deci and Ryan’s motivation continuum as explained by Scott Shelton-Strong and Jo Mynard (460).

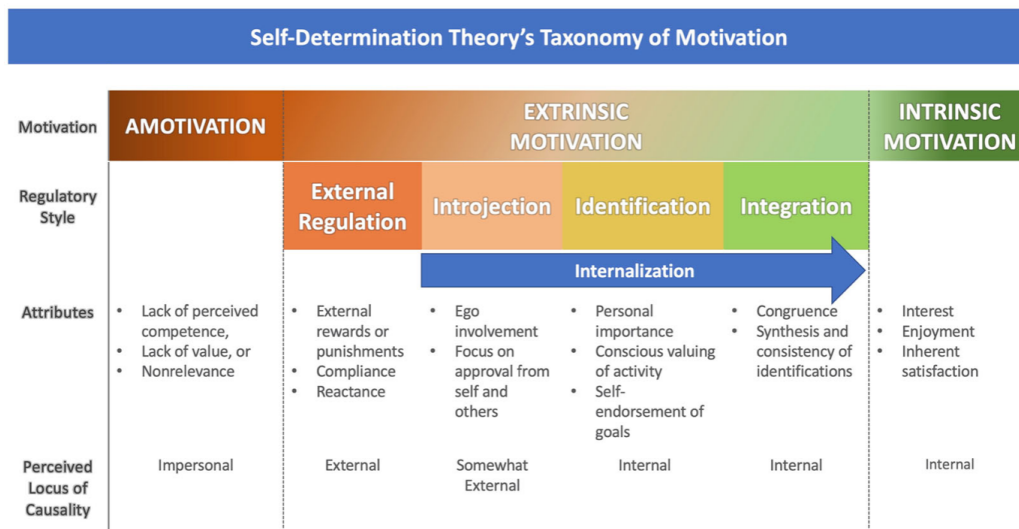


Figure 1. Deci and Ryan’s motivation continuum according to Shelton-Strong and Mynard.

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE ROLE OF CONFIDENCE-BUILDING DIARIES IN SPANISH INSTRUCTION

Confidence-building diaries have emerged as an innovative pedagogical tool, enhancing the holistic experience of learning a language. Especially within the realm of Spanish education, the potential of these diaries in molding learner attitudes, confidence, and motivation has been frequently deliberated. Historically, diaries have been utilized in various educational contexts. Michael O'Malley and Anna Chamot stressed the importance of metacognitive strategies, where learners reflect upon their own learning process (561). Diaries serve as an instrument facilitating this reflective practice, allowing learners to articulate challenges, successes, and evolving strategies.

Self-confidence, as reported by various studies, is an intrinsic aspect of second language acquisition (Rubio 4 and Shelton-Strong and Mynard 460). Rooted deeply in the human psyche, self-confidence can make or break an individual's journey toward mastery. According to Fernando Rubio, every success can be traced back to an underpinning of self-confidence (4). It is this internal force, this belief in one's capabilities, that empowers a learner to start, persevere, and eventually conquer. Rubio highlights the correlation between self-confidence and academic achievement, asserting that it is a feeling of self-competence required to overcome life's challenges. Echoing this, Albert Bandura, in his social cognitive theory, underscores the role of self-efficacy in engagement and persistence in tasks. Specifically, in the realm of foreign language acquisition, students equipped with higher self-efficacy exhibited more proficient linguistic performance and retention (Mills 8).

Confidence-building diaries inherently cater to the fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs presented in self-determination theory. By tracking progress, students witness their growing competence. The very act of maintaining a diary fosters autonomy. Furthermore, when diaries are shared within peer groups, the sense of relatedness is enhanced, creating a communal learning atmosphere (Canga Alonso 50).

A review of the literature on CBD rendered the following main themes:

1. **Reflection on Progress:** Consistent reflection is instrumental in sustaining motivation (Norris-Holt 1). By maintaining a diary, learners can track their achievements and progress, which can bolster their confidence and motivation. By seeing their own growth, learners can better appreciate the fruits of their labor and remain engaged.
2. **Establishing and Accomplishing Objectives:** According to the goal-setting theory proposed by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, individuals are more motivated when they set specific and challenging goals compared to those who set vague or easy goals (710). Diaries offer a medium for learners to set, evaluate, and adjust their learning targets, thereby boosting motivation by providing a clear sense of direction.
3. **Cultivating Autonomy:** As per self-determination theory, fostering a sense of autonomy can enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 231). Confidence-building diaries allow learners to take ownership of their learning, choosing what to focus on and reflecting on their personal experiences. This autonomy can fuel intrinsic motivation.
4. **Visualization and Affirmation:** Diaries can serve as tools for visualization and affirmation (Oettingen 29). By visualizing future successes and reaffirming their capabilities, learners can bolster their self-belief and motivation.

5. **Feedback Loop:** Confidence-building diaries can be shared with peers or instructors for feedback (Hattie and Timperley 88). This feedback, especially when constructive, can elucidate areas of improvement and celebrate strengths, thus enhancing motivation.

When examining the ways confidence diaries can enhance students' motivation, Shelton-Strong and Mynard explored a correlation between CBD and language learning-related motivation and determined a consistently positive outlook and motivation for learning. As a result, Shelton-Strong and Mynard consider motivation a high-priority domain where confidence-building diaries can play a significant role. They also emphasized the importance of positive affect in learning asserting that emotions and feelings promote perseverance in language learning, foster self-reflection, self-endorsement, and a sense of agency, facilitate cognitive benefits, improving lucidity, memory, and language fluency, and ensuring proper intrinsic motivation. In addition, researcher Jennifer Norris-Holt underscores the importance of fostering learners' confidence and self-belief in their language abilities, as these psychological factors significantly impact learners' persistence, effort, and, ultimately, their language proficiency.

Norris-Holt examines integrative and instrumental motivation as a critical factor in SLA, a domain where confidence-building diaries can play a significant role. Motivation in language learning encompasses various factors, including intrinsic motivation driven by personal interest and extrinsic motivation influenced by external rewards or pressures. The researcher studied high school students and found their motivation to study a foreign language as instrumental. Norris-Holt underscores the importance of fostering learners' confidence and self-belief in their language abilities, as these psychological factors significantly impact learners' persistence, effort, and, ultimately, their language proficiency.

One way confidence-building diaries can leverage motivational theories is by providing learners with a platform to reflect on their language learning experiences, set meaningful goals, and monitor their progress over time. By encouraging learners to articulate their aspirations, challenges, and achievements in writing, confidence-building diaries can help reinforce positive attitudes toward language learning and bolster learners' self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, the interactive nature of diaries allows for personalized feedback and encouragement tailored to individual learners' needs, further enhancing their motivation and engagement in the language learning process (Shelton-Strong and Mynard 459).

Edwin Locke and Gary Latham's theory of goal setting and task motivation offers valuable insights into the design and implementation of confidence-building diaries (709). According to their framework, setting specific, challenging, and attainable goals is crucial for motivating individuals to exert effort and persist in their endeavors. Confidence-building diaries can serve as a tool for individuals to articulate their confidence-related goals, whether they pertain to language learning, personal development, or professional advancement.

Breaking down larger confidence-building goals into smaller, more manageable tasks allows individuals to feel a sense of advancement and accomplishment, thus strengthening their confidence and drive (Park and Crocker 1591). As explained by Bandura, setting goals impacts one's performance by the following mechanisms: 1) provision of a directive function, 2) energizing goal attainment, 3) facilitation of persistence, and 4) indirect impact by encouraging one's discovery, arousal, and use of task-relevant strategies and knowledge (Locke and Latham 712). Furthermore, integrating feedback mechanisms into confidence-building diaries provides users with prompt guidance and support, enhancing their ability to reach goals and develop skills. By adhering to the principles of efficient goal setting as proposed by Locke and Latham, confidence-building diaries can optimize their influence on individuals' self-assurance and

effectiveness in diverse areas. Since CBDs are directly linked with SDT (Deci and Ryan 234), it is also important to look at the SDT's role in meeting students' psychological needs.

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory sheds light on the underlying psychological needs that drive human behavior and motivation. Deci and Ryan focused on different factors associated with the attainment of the stated psychological needs; however, their research was not empirical but rather a systematic literature review. CBD can be designed to address these needs by providing users with opportunities for self-expression, skill development, and social connection.

Based on their findings, autonomy can be encouraged by permitting users to personalize their diary entries and goal-setting tasks based on their preferences and interests. Competence can be nurtured by providing users with resources, tools, and feedback to improve their abilities and proficiency. Relatedness can be facilitated by establishing a supportive online community where users can exchange experiences, provide support, and applaud each other's achievements. Deci and Ryan also explore the effects of internalized extrinsic motivation, including external regulation, identification, integration, and introjection. By integrating characteristics that align with individuals' inherent psychological needs, confidence-building diaries have the potential to boost users' motivation, involvement, and general well-being. All of those are an essential part of the goal-setting and goal-attaining processes as further explored by Gabriele Oettingen.

Oettingen's research on future thinking and behavior change introduces the concept of mental contrasting with implementation intentions (MCII) as a powerful strategy for goal attainment (29). This approach involves contrasting positive fantasies about the future with realistic assessments of potential obstacles and planning specific actions to overcome them. Confidence-building diaries can integrate elements of MCII by prompting users to envision their ideal selves with greater confidence and resilience while also identifying potential barriers and strategizing ways to overcome them.

By engaging in mental contrasting exercises within the context of their confidence-building goals, individuals can enhance their motivation and commitment to taking action. Moreover, by translating their aspirations into concrete implementation intentions, individuals can increase their likelihood of success by specifying when, where, and how they will pursue their confidence-building objectives (Chemers et al. 273). Confidence-building diaries can thus serve as a structured framework for individuals to engage in effective goal-pursuit strategies, ultimately leading to greater confidence and self-efficacy.

Finally, John Hattie and Helen Timperley's meta-analysis on the power of feedback underscores the importance of providing learners with timely, specific, and actionable feedback to enhance their learning and performance. Confidence-building diaries can leverage feedback mechanisms to offer users personalized guidance, encouragement, and constructive criticism in their journey toward building confidence and self-efficacy.

By incorporating features such as progress tracking, self-assessment tools, and expert feedback, confidence-building diaries can provide users with valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, by fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, confidence-building diaries can empower users to take ownership of their growth and development. Whether through peer feedback, mentorship, or automated algorithms, feedback mechanisms play a crucial role in optimizing the effectiveness of confidence-building diaries as a tool for enhancing confidence and self-efficacy.

Incorporating motivational theories, goal-setting tactics, self-determination principles, forward-thinking methods, and feedback mechanisms presents a thorough structure for creating and executing successful confidence-building diaries. By harmonizing with individuals' inherent psychological needs and utilizing proven strategies for altering behavior, these diaries hold

promise for substantially influencing individuals' confidence, self-assurance, and general welfare across multiple spheres of life (Aydin and Tekin 5). Additional research is necessary to investigate the precise mechanisms and procedures by which confidence-building diaries produce their effects, as well as their possible utility in various contexts and populations.

THE STUDY

The study took place in a class at a liberal arts university in the south of the United States. The class was a hybrid model course where students attended class two days a week, and what would amount to their third class for the week was completed via the university's online learning platform. Participants had a series of activities to pick from and submit weekly, and the confidence-building diaries were one of their mandatory activities.

Participants' responses to the CBD activity were analyzed from a self-determination theory perspective by focusing on how participants saw the reflection activity itself as a tool to aid their experience of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. The following research questions were formulated:

1. What positive aspects of the learning experience do participants focus on in their diaries?
2. How did participants perceive their motivation was affected by completing CBD?
3. How did participants view the CBD two months after being done with them?

Participants

The study involved 42 learners of Spanish from diverse backgrounds taking second-semester Spanish. The majority of the students are taking the course as part of the requirement for their major, and none of them listed Spanish as their major. Participants ranged from 18 to 24 years of age, and they were either first- or second-year university students.

Methodology

Data collection for this study took place in two stages. During the first four weeks, participants wrote on their CBD. These diaries included sections to record achievements, challenges, feedback, personal reflections, and future goals. As part of their weekly assignments for their class and as a closing activity, participants had to write in their diaries. These diaries were segmented into:

- achievements: celebrating linguistic milestones, however trivial;
- challenges: a space to articulate roadblocks;
- feedback: personal reflections or feedback from peers or instructors; and
- motivation: What is helping you stay on task?

The diaries became available for them to complete once students had finished engaging with the weekly content. Figure 2 shows the weekly confidence-building diary activity.

<p>Tell yourself something GOOD and POSITIVE related to studying and using SPANISH inside or outside the classroom.</p>	
<p>What was a ROADBLOCK, and how did you overcome it?</p>	
<p>What was some GOOD feedback you got from peers/friends/teaching about your SPANISH?</p>	
<p>What is something that is helping you remain engaged and happy with Spanish?</p>	

Figure 2. Confidence-Building Diary

Once the initial data collection, which lasted for four weeks and took four diaries per student, was completed, the researcher coded the data qualitatively based on Amos Hatch’s recommendations for qualitative research (153). The coding was completed with consideration of affective factors and self-determination theory and how they related to the research questions. This researcher had a single rater and did not perform an intra-reliability test. This analysis led to identifying themes emerging from the analysis.

The second portion of the data collection process took place almost two months after the last diary entry activity. Ten of the participants participated voluntarily in an interview to discuss how they viewed the confidence-building diary activities at the end of the semester. The researcher followed a semi-structured interview format and focused on the following questions:

1. What do you remember from the CBD activity?
2. Did you continue to engage in any of the activities that you had indicated as positive while you were keeping the CBD?
3. Do you think the confidence-building diaries motivated you? Why or why not?

RESULTS

In terms of research question one, “What positive aspects of the learning experience do participants focus on in their diaries?,” the main themes were:

1. **Increased perception of competence:** Most participants reported an enhanced feeling of achievement after documenting their progress. A staggering 85% of participants resonated with heightened feelings of accomplishment post-documentation.
 - a. “I really did not realize I could understand as much as I did” (Participant 2, interview).
 - b. “I had my first ‘aha’ moment the other day when I listened to a dialogue and realized I understood most of it” (Participant 4, interview).

By continuously acknowledging progress, learners fortified their belief in their capabilities. Reflecting on their successes, no matter how small, contributed to a sense of competence.

2. **Enhanced autonomy:** The act of diary-keeping allowed learners to set their own goals and track their unique learning journey, promoting autonomy. Diary-keeping organically fostered self-direction. About 78% reported feeling more in control of their learning trajectory, setting personalized benchmarks and strategies.
 - a. “Learning a language seems like an overwhelming task but once I wrote some intermediate goals and made a plan, I felt I could it!” (Participant 22).
3. **Fostering relatedness:** Sharing diary excerpts in group discussions enabled participants to relate with peers, offering mutual support and understanding. This improved the sense of relatedness among learners.
 - a. “I could have sworn I was the only one confused about class today but after hearing how the girl on the other side of the room who seems to always understand was also confused I felt better about myself” (Participant 14).
 - b. “I had no idea the resources the language lab offered, I thought it was only for language majors, hearing about how my classmate goes there weekly for help opened a whole new world of options for me” (Participant 27).

Research question two, “How did participants perceive their motivation was affected by completing CBD?,” was designed to explore whether participants perceived the CBD task itself had a positive effect on their motivation to learn. To answer this question, the researcher looked at the last prompt of the diary entry together with responses to the last question of the follow-up interview. First, all ten of the participants in the follow-up interview reported that CBD activity was beneficial to them. When exploring the reasons through the analysis of the data in light of the SDT framework, overall, most of the positive remarks had to do with either their sense of competence or relatedness. Illustrative examples of how the diaries helped with competence can be found in the following comments from the participants:

“Successfully read my first short story in Spanish without having to look up words every sentence. It feels like a significant achievement in my language journey” (Participant 3).

"I finally was able to get the little guy in the supersite to clap on my first try!! YEAH to me!!" (Participant 8).

When there was evidence or an indication of closeness to others and a report of caring interactions, the data was coded as examples of "relatedness." Most activities in the language class involved interacting with or talking to people. Here are some comments from the diaries and interviews that show how the diaries helped with a sense of relatedness:

"I was in the parking lot the other day and I was able to help this old man with directions in Spanish. It was a great feeling to both help and use Spanish" (Participant 1).

"Talking to one of the lab assistants and hearing how others have come with the very same questions made me feel much better that I am not alone in being confused sometimes" (Participant 2).

In terms of research question three, "How did participants view the CBD two months after being done with them?," 70% of the students interviewed expressed they continued with what they perceived was working for them. Some said they tried a few new things because a classmate asked them to do things in pairs, but they also continued with what they were doing. One activity the majority described as motivating, and that they felt was a direct result of the use of the diaries, was how they had started using their Spanish outside of the classroom. Participants described that using the language not for the purpose of homework seemed to be more meaningful and motivating because it was something they decided to do on their own. An answer from a participant that conveyed a sense of achievement was: "Held a conversation with a native Spanish speaker from my community today. A month ago, I'd only manage basic greetings, but today we discussed the weather and local events!"

Another good example of an activity a participant took upon himself to engage in was watching a movie, and this was his comment: "Watched a Spanish drama without subtitles. Surprised to find that I could grasp the story even if I missed a few words. My listening skills are improving!" (Participant 3) Such a response during the interview shows a sense of awe and pride in what he realized he could do, which mimics the effect of the confidence-building diary.

DISCUSSION

Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, confidence-building diaries are used as a way of fulfilling the intrinsic needs of language learners. This study's conceptual framework highlights that learner self-confidence hinges on supporting motivation as the pivotal element in the language learning process. In turn, supporting learners' confidence in themselves is key to supporting motivation.

Confidence, in essence, is a perception of one's ability. Paradoxically, a competent individual may falter not due to a lack of skill but rather a deficit in self-confidence (Azar and Tanggaraju 329; Shelton-Strong and Mynard 465). Such a scenario resonates in language learning contexts where proficient students hesitate to communicate due to confidence constraints. Rubio articulates that self-confidence orbits around cognition, positing that both triumphs and setbacks are processed at this cognitive juncture (9). A myriad of determinants can incite fear or anxiety, just as numerous elements influence a learner's self-confidence.

In bridging the gap, this study zeroes in on the elements that amplify learners' self-confidence within SLA. The collected data culminated in identifying three core elements that emerged as a result of using confidence-building diaries:

1. **Bridge the gap:** Many learners feel a disconnect with Spanish due to its vast linguistic and cultural elements. The diaries act as a bridge, making learners feel more aligned with their learning process. A similar idea was mentioned by Sugita McEown et al. in terms of socio-cultural and political influences on a student during the language learning process (541).
2. **Sustain motivation:** Spanish, like any language, poses challenges. Diary entries act as a consistent reminder of progress. Even when grappling with complex grammatical structures or pronunciation, documenting incremental progress helps maintain enthusiasm. The diaries help learners see the bigger picture, ensuring that they remain motivated even during tough phases.
3. **Personalized learning:** Every learner is unique. Diaries can cater to individualized learning styles and paces by making foreign language learning more tailored and effective while also promoting a sense of autonomy. This finding concurs with Shelton-Strong and Mynard's statement about a positive relationship between language learning motivation and the learner's positive feelings (468).

Building a strong sense of autonomy in learners is beneficial, as research in educational psychology suggests that self-confidence is closely intertwined with an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or achieve desired outcomes successfully (Clément and Kruidenier 28). Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that self-efficacy beliefs play a central role in determining the level of effort, persistence, and resilience individuals exhibit when faced with challenges. Thus, fostering self-confidence in language learners involves not only addressing their perception of overall language proficiency but also nurturing their confidence in specific language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Socio-cultural factors significantly influence learners' confidence levels in language acquisition. Cultivating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where learners feel valued, respected, and encouraged to take risks can lower their affective filter, allowing for more effective language acquisition and higher levels of self-confidence. Additionally, exposure to positive role models, such as proficient language speakers and supportive peers, can serve as sources of inspiration and encouragement, further bolstering learners' confidence in their language abilities.

Recent advances in technology offer innovative ways to enhance self-confidence in language learners (Hori and Fujii 5). Virtual reality (VR) simulations, for example, provide immersive and interactive environments where learners can practice real-life communication scenarios in a safe and controlled setting, thereby boosting their confidence and reducing anxiety. Similarly, language learning apps and online platforms offer personalized feedback and progress-tracking features, empowering learners to monitor their improvement over time and build confidence in their language skills (Gorini and Riva 6; Lan 13). Similarly, language learning apps and online platforms offer personalized feedback and progress-tracking features, empowering learners to monitor their improvement over time and build confidence in their language skills. Along with CBD, these tools offer a wide selection of approaches to mitigate anxiety and improve students' confidence.

A holistic approach to fostering self-confidence in language learners involves addressing cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural factors, as well as leveraging technological advancements

to provide tailored learning experiences. By incorporating these additional elements into the discussion, we further underscore the significance of confidence-building diaries as a comprehensive tool for supporting motivation and self-confidence in Spanish learners.

This study has a few limitations. First, the sample group for the study had a limited number of participants with limited demographics. Thus, the findings may not be representative. Second, the study centered its attention on learning Spanish as a second language. If there was an opportunity to conduct a comparative study on learning different foreign languages, the results might have been different. Third, the variables that could have affected the learning process and student motivation (for example, personal distractions like parental divorce or terminal illness of a loved one, or disinterest in the country or culture) were not considered.

CONCLUSION

Motivation acts as the cornerstone in SLA, steering learners to assimilate the language more efficiently. Jack Richards et al. epitomize motivation as the internal fuel igniting an individual's desire (249). A paradigm shift shows invested learners grasp the language more expeditiously than their non-committed counterparts. This motivation can be internal or external, oriented towards integration or instrumental purposes. An ensemble of these factors forms the bedrock of learners' confidence.

Central to sustaining motivation is the role of commendation. Encouragement, especially from educators, can significantly boost learners' confidence in mastering a second language. Admittedly, learners are predisposed to making errors. However, constructive feedback framed as "it's alright, you can do it" can mitigate shyness and trepidation, enabling learners to articulate more assertively. An impressive 80% of participants echoed this sentiment in their diaries, emphasizing the salutary effects of such positive reinforcement.

In addition to commendation, the cultivation of intrinsic motivation among learners is paramount. Intrinsic motivation stems from an individual's innate interest in the language itself rather than external rewards or pressures. Educators can foster intrinsic motivation by incorporating engaging and meaningful learning materials, providing opportunities for autonomy and self-expression, and tapping into learners' personal interests and goals. When learners are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to persist in their language learning endeavors, even in the face of challenges, and exhibit higher levels of engagement and satisfaction. In this study, we saw that the diaries provided intrinsic motivation in some students who experienced specific psychological needs but lacked encouragement and tools to overcome their barriers. The use of CBD also fostered a sense of autonomy and improved their perception of competencies and capabilities. The learners managed to develop a sense of relatedness among their peers, which also fostered their mutual support.

The socio-cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping learners' motivation. Peer support and a sense of belonging within a community of language learners can significantly influence motivation levels. Collaborative learning activities, group projects, and language exchange programs can create opportunities for learners to interact with peers, share experiences, and support each other's language learning journey. Additionally, exposure to authentic cultural content, such as literature, films, and music, can enrich learners' understanding of the language and its cultural nuances, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn. In this study, we saw that students expressed a 78% spike in desire to engage with the language from the exposure to self-directed learning. This higher level of learner engagement came from finding strategies and materials engaging, amusing, and exciting. The instructor's feedback was viewed as a positive stimulus to their learning progress and acknowledgment of their capabilities and competence.

Even if the instructor provided minor feedback, it enhanced the learners' motivation and improved their self-perception of and belief in their abilities and competencies.

Addressing learners' individual differences and learning styles is essential for maintaining motivation. Recognizing and accommodating diverse learning preferences, whether visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or tactile, ensures that instruction is tailored to meet the needs of all learners. Incorporating multimedia resources, interactive activities, and experiential learning opportunities can cater to different learning styles, keeping learners engaged and motivated throughout the language learning process. Diaries seem to be a promising tool to foster academic excellence and facilitate achieving higher level of competency in the target language by prompting students' engagement, encouraging their self-confidence, and allowing them to perceive their progress and growing competence.

Furthermore, nurturing a growth mindset, which underscores the conviction in one's capacity to learn and enhance through dedication and persistence, has the potential to embolden learners in surmounting obstacles and setbacks. Promoting a constructive outlook on errors as chances for development and advancement fosters resilience and nurtures an encouraging learning atmosphere conducive to motivation and advancement (Kim and Kim 428; Kim et al. 382). This was seen in this study in a student who was reluctant to progress in his language skill acquisition because of impaired confidence in his ability to learn Spanish. Upon completing the CBD and receiving the instructor's feedback, the student's attitude was modified by addressing the affective filter.

In the realm of personalized learning, confidence-building diaries can be harnessed as a reflective tool. By integrating the findings of this study into the diaries, instructors might foster an environment in which learners can benefit from a tailored roadmap, steering their journey in mastering Spanish and bolstering their self-confidence in tandem.

The integration of confidence-building diaries in Spanish instruction, backed by robust theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, holds immense promise. As the pedagogical landscape continually evolves, such tools, which cater to the psychological and emotional facets of learning, are bound to gain more traction. Future research might delve into implementing such diaries in digital formats or incorporating them into formal Spanish curriculums. By addressing these various facets of motivation in second language acquisition, educators can create a conducive learning environment where learners are empowered to thrive and realize their full potential in mastering the target language.

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