TEACHERS' THOUGHTS ON AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MOTIVATION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT: Motivation represents an important issue in learning. Motivation in learning a second language differs from more general motivation due to the fact that second language learning requires acquisition of the four skills (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening), involves cultural background, and necessitates new adaptations. The level of student motivation does not remain stable; demotivating factors cause decreases in students' motivation level. Thus, teachers employ motivation strategies in the classroom to help their learners regulate their motivation, avoid states of demotivation; thereby, help them persist in academic tasks. This study aimed to find out teachers' thoughts on and attitudes towards motivation strategies. Data were gathered through a questionnaire on motivation strategies, and they were analyzed through frequency tests. The findings suggest that teachers employ motivation strategies; however, they need to take student perspectives into consideration while applying the strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The research on motivation in second or foreign language learning, spanning decades, started with Gardner (1985). As a result of his study with his colleagues on the motivation of Canadian students learning French, he concluded that learners are motivated when they desire to communicate with second language native speakers. Because this interaction requires socialization, they have to make adjustments of a social nature (Gardner, 1985). After Gardner, many scholars investigated motivation in second and foreign language learning. Brophy (1999) and Wigfield and Eccles (1994) emphasize the value of the actual process of learning in their research: the more learners value the task, the more motivated they are. Deci and his colleagues (1991) state that if the learner chooses the tasks himself, this choice will provide fully self-determined behavior. The task will be important and valuable to the learner since he chose it himself. Williams and Burden (1997) state that decisions that determine action, the amount of effort to be spent, and the degree of perseverance are the key factors in motivation. Ames (1992) and Pintrich (1999) distinguish between goals for learning for the sake of learning and goals for getting normative evaluation such as good grades. Dörnyei (2001a) defines a motivation framework composed of three levels: the language level, the learner level, and the learning-situation level. The language level involves learning goals and language choice. The learner level involves learner traits such as self-confidence and need for achievement. The learning-situation level involves intrinsic and extrinsic motives and motivational conditions related to factors such as the course, the teacher, or the learning group. Motivation in second or foreign language learning courses differs from motivation in other courses. Second languages, as curricular topics, are like any other school subject but second language courses are not merely courses taught through discrete elements like a mathematics course would be (Dörnyei, 2001b). Gardner (1985) states that second language learning must be viewed as a central social psychological phenomenon. Thus, second language learning courses differ from other school subjects in the way in which they incorporate complex elements of second language culture. Dörnyei (1994) explains this complexity by emphasizing that "second language learning is an integral part of an individual's identity" (p. 274).

Demotivation

Learners of second or foreign languages often face problems during their learning processes. These problems often stem from demotivating factors that cause decreases in learners' levels of motivation. Dörnyei (2001b) identifies nine main demotivating factors (outlined in Table 1). Demotivating factors can influence classroom motivation because they obstruct high levels of motivation and persistence of motivation. Motivated and demotivated learners can easily be differentiated. "Academically motivated students infrequently need to be disciplined since they are interested in what is being said. When students are academically motivated, then teachers become professionally motivated. In short, the whole educational enterprise is strengthened (Spaulding, 1992). Demotivated students, on the other hand, generally cause discipline problems since they are not willing to engage in and are not interested in classroom tasks. The higher the level of students' motivation, the better classroom atmosphere and more successful learners we have. Teaching and learning are interrelated and motivation promotes the quality and benefits of this interaction, in addition to the interrelationships between teachers and students.

Table 1.   Demotivating Factors (from Dörnyei, 2001b)

Source of demotivation	Causes of demotivation
Teacher	Teacher's intolerance or aggressive behaviors Lack of commitment to his or her profession Lack of competence in the language being taught His or her teaching style and the teaching method
Inadequate school facilities	Large classes Multi-level groups Frequent change of teachers and methods
Student's reduced self-confidence	Student's failure in the past Lack of success
Student's negative attitudes toward the second or foreign language	Student's personal reasons for disliking the target language
Compulsory nature of second or foreign language study	Compulsory language courses without any alternatives to choose from
Interference of another foreign language being studied	Two foreign languages learned at the same time
Student's negative attitudes toward the second or foreign language community	Student's negative attitudes toward the culture or the community of the target language
Attitudes of group members	Negative attitudes of other students in the classroom
Course book	Student's negative evaluation of the course book as useless, difficult, or uninteresting

Motivation in second language contexts has a significant impact on learner engagement and academic success. Recent studies on motivation in second language learning mainly focus on demotivation, self-management, and self-regulation strategies of second language learners.

Teachers of EFL courses in state universities in Turkey often face demotivation problems in their classrooms. These motivational problems may stem from the demotivating factors described by Dörnyei (2001b). Both the teachers and students should share the responsibility for classroom demotivation. Depending on their motivational beliefs, students might employ motivational self-regulation strategies to deal with these problems. Since demotivation may cause disengagement in academic tasks and subsequent failure, teachers' employment of motivation strategies as part of second language instruction may help to solve demotivation problems in the classroom. Dörnyei (2001b) listed more than 100 motivational techniques in *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. The techniques were grouped as:

- Set a personal example with your own behavior
- Recognize student's effort and celebrate any success
- Promote learners' self-confidence
- Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom
- Present tasks properly
- Increase the learners' goal- orientedness
- Make the learning tasks stimulating
- Familiarize learners with the L2 culture and L2- related values
- Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms
- Promote learner autonomy

According to the results of H. F. Cheng & Z. Dörnyei (2007), a study conducted with Taiwanese teachers on motivational strategies, Dörnyei (2001b) suggested that displaying motivating teacher behavior, promoting learners' self- confidence, creating a pleasant classroom climate and presenting tasks properly are transferable across diverse cultural and ethno- linguistic contexts. Another result is that although communicative and game- like activities are not promoted in Taiwanese EFL settings due to the test- driven teaching culture and the perception of learning as a serious work not to be wasted by games. The study shows that Taiwanese teachers appreciated the student effort in the learning process.

THE STUDY

As the study H. F. Cheng & Z. Dörnyei (2007) suggests, teachers can be effective on student motivation with the strategies they use as part of their instruction. This study aims to identify Bülent Ecevit University Prep School teachers' thoughts on and attitudes towards the use of the motivation strategies they may use in the classroom and they may apply in their instruction. To gather data, Dörnyei's (2001b) motivation strategies questionnaire is conducted to Bülent Ecevit University Prep School teachers. The teachers were asked to respond to a 4-point Likert scale (not important, partially important, important, very important) to find out their thoughts on and attitudes towards motivation strategies. The data is analyzed using SPSS, frequency tests. The list of strategies used Dörnyei (2001b) in the study is as follows:

- Set a personal example with your own behavior
    - Show your enthusiasm for teaching (17)
    - Increase the amount of English you use in the classroom (38)
    - Share with students that you value English as a meaningful experience (39)
    - Be yourself in front of students (46)
- Recognize student's effort and celebrate any success
    - Monitor students' progress and celebrate their victory (8)
    - Remind students the benefits of mastering English (9)
    - Make sure grades reflect students' effort and hard work (15)
    - Encourage students to create products (26)
    - Promote effort attributions (41)

- o Recognize students' effort and achievement (45)
- Promote learners' self-confidence
  - o Show students you care about them (2)
  - o Encourage students to try harder (27)
  - o Provide students with positive feedback (33)
- Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom
  - o Bring in and encourage humor (1)
  - o Explain the importance of the class rules (5)
  - o Teach self-motivating strategies (14)
  - o Avoid social comparison (40)
  - o Make tasks attractive by including novel and fantasy element(42)
- Present tasks properly
  - o Give clear instructions by modeling (6)
  - o Design tasks that are within the students' ability (11)
  - o Present various auditory and visual teaching aids (44)
- Increase the learners' goal- orientedness
  - o Encourage students to set learning goals (10)
  - o Give students good reasons as to why a particular task is meaningful (24)
  - o Make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct (32)
  - o Ask students to work toward the same goal (34)
  - o Encourage students to use English outside the classroom (37)
- Make the learning tasks stimulating
  - o Introduce various interesting topics (12)
  - o Make tasks challenging (13)
  - o Break the routine by varying the presentation format (18)
  - o Use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class (20)
- Familiarize learners with the L2 culture and L2- related values
  - o Familiarize students with the cultural background of L2 (4)
  - o Invite senior students to share their English learning experiences (7)
  - o Help students develop realistic beliefs about English learning (19)
  - o Introduce authentic cultural materials (31)
- Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms
  - o Allow students to get to know each other (3)
  - o Establish good rapport with students (22)
  - o Encourage peer teaching and group presentation (23)
  - o Encourage students to share personal experiences (26)
- Promote learner autonomy
  - o Let students suggest class rules (16)
  - o Involve students in designing and running the English course (21)
  - o Find students' needs and build them into curriculum (25)
  - o Give students choices in deciding how and when they will be assessed (24)
  - o Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking (29)
  - o Teach students learning techniques (35)
  - o Adopt the role of a facilitator (36)
  - o Allow students to assess themselves (47)

FINDINGS

The teachers were asked to respond to a 4-point Likert scale (not important, partially important, important, very important) to find out their thoughts on and attitudes towards motivation strategies. Frequency tests are used to analyze the data.

Table 2. Set a personal example with your own behavior

		1	2	3	4		
		% Percentages				**Mean**	**Std**
17	Show your enthusiasm for teaching	0	18.2	27.3	54.5	3.36	.790
38	Increase the amount of English you use in the classroom	0	0	36.4	63.6	3.64	.492
39	Share with students that you value English as a meaningful experience	0	9.1	40.9	50	3.41	.666
46	Be yourself in front of students	0	9.1	45.5	45.5	3.36	.658

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the teachers emphasize setting a personal example with their own behavior just by using English in the classroom.

Table 3. Recognize student's effort and celebrate any success

		1	2	3	4		
		% Percentages				**Mean**	**Std**
8	Monitor students' progress and celebrate their victory	0	4.5	40.9	54.5	3.50	.598
9	Remind students the benefits of mastering English	0	9.1	36.4	54.5	3.45	.671
15	Make sure grades reflect students' effort and hard work	4.5	18.2	31.8	45.5	3.18	.907
26	Encourage students to create products	4.5	45.5	40.9	9.1	2.55	.739
41	Promote effort attributions	4.5	9.1	45.5	40.9	3.23	.813
45	Recognize students' effort and achievement	0	0	45.5	54.5	3.55	.510

As shown by the data in Table 3, recognizing students' efforts and achievement, and monitoring their progress while praising their success is important. Also, reminding them the benefits of mastering English is important.

Table 4. Promote learners' self-confidence

		1	2	3	4		
		% Percentages				**Mean**	**Std**
2	Show students you care about them	0	4.5	36.4	59.1	3.55	.596
27	Encourage students to try harder	0	4.5	45.5	50	3.45	.596
33	Provide students with positive feedback	0	4.5	40.9	54.5	3.50	.598

As the results described in Table 4 suggest it is important to promote students' self-confidence by showing that teachers care about them, encourage them to try harder and providing them with positive feedback.

Table 5. Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom

		1	2	3	4		
		% Percentages				**Mean**	**Std**
1	Bring in and encourage humor	0	18.2	50	31.8	3.14	.710
5	Explain the importance of the class rules	0	0	54.5	45.5	3.45	.510
14	Teach self-motivating strategies	0	4.5	59.1	36.4	3.32	.568
40	Avoid social comparison	4.5	13.6	31.8	50	3.27	.883
42	Make tasks attractive by including novel and fantasy element	4.5	54.5	31.8	9.1	2.45	.739

As seen in Table 5, teachers emphasize explaining the importance of the class rules to create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

Table 6. Present tasks properly

		1	2	3	4	Mean	Std
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
6	Give clear instructions by modeling	0	0	31.8	68.2	3.68	.477
11	Design tasks that are within the students' ability	0	4.5	40.9	54.5	3.50	.598
44	Present various auditory and visual teaching aids	0	4.5	27.3	68.2	3.64	.581

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that it is important for the teachers to present tasks properly by giving clear instructions, designing tasks within student ability level and using various teaching aids.

Table 7. Increase the learners' goal- orientedness

		1	2	3	4	Mean	Std
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
10	Encourage students to set learning goals	0	18.2	50	31.8	3.14	.710
24	Give students good reasons as to why a particular task is meaningful	0	0	54.5	45.5	3.45	.510
32	Make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct	0	4.5	59.1	36.4	3.32	.568
34	Ask students to work toward the same goal	4.5	13.6	31.8	50	3.27	.883
37	Encourage students to use English outside the classroom	4.5	54.5	31.8	9.1	2.45	.739

As seen in Table 7, teachers tend to avoid student goals for learning English, they only emphasize explaining why a particular task is meaningful.

Table 8. Make the learning tasks stimulating

		1	2	3	4	Mean	Std
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
12	Introduce various interesting topics	0	13.6	40.9	45.5	3.32	.716
13	Make tasks challenging	0	13.6	54.5	31.8	3.18	.664
18	Break the routine by varying the presentation format	0	4.5	31.8	63.6	3.59	.590
20	Use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class	0	13.6	27.3	59.1	3.45	.739

As shown by the data in Table 8, it is important to use a short, interesting opening to start the lesson and break the routine by varying the presentation format.

Table 9. Familiarize learners with the L2 culture and L2- related values

		1	2	3	4	Mean	Std
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
4	Familiarize students with the cultural background of L2	0	18.2	63.6	18.2	3.00	.617
7	Invite senior students to share their English learning experiences	9.1	36.4	36.4	18.2	2.64	.902
19	Help students develop realistic beliefs about English learning	0	13.6	40.9	45.5	3.32	.716
31	Introduce authentic cultural material	4.5	18.2	59.1	18.2	2.91	.750

The results presented in Table 9 indicate that familiarizing learners with L2 culture and L2-related values are not important for the teachers.

Table 10. Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms

		1	2	3	4	Mean	Std
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
3	Allow students to get to know each other	0	9.1	40.9	50	3.41	.666
22	Establish good rapport with students	0	9.1	68.2	22.7	3.14	.560
23	Encourage peer teaching and group presentation	0	0	68.2	31.8	3.32	.477
26	Encourage students to share personal experiences	0	22.7	40.9	36.4	3.14	.774

As seen in Table 10, promoting group cohesiveness and setting group norms are not important for the teachers. Also, as the results presented in Table 11 indicate, promoting learner autonomy is not important for the teachers.

Table 11. Promote learner autonomy

		1	2	3	4		
		% Percentages				Mean	Std
16	Let students suggest class rules	4.5	45.5	40.9	9.1	2.55	.739
21	Involve students in designing and running the English course	4.50	40.9	40.9	13.6	2.64	.790
24	Give students choices in deciding how and when they will be assessed	0	18.2	72.7	9.1	2.91	.526
25	Find students' needs and build them into curriculum	0	4.5	45.5	50	3.45	.596
29	Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking	0	4.5	50	45.5	3.41	.590
35	Teach students learning techniques	9.1	9.1	36.4	45.5	3.18	.958
36	Adopt the role of a facilitator	0	18.2	40.9	40.9	3.23	.752
47	Allow students to assess themselves	0	13.6	45.5	40.9	3.27	.703

CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify Bülent Ecevit University Prep School teachers' thoughts on and attitudes towards the use of the motivation strategies they may use in the classroom and they may apply in their instruction. The results indicate that promoting student self- confidence is important for the teachers. Explaining the importance of the class rules is an important motivation strategy for the teachers. It is also important to monitor student progress, recognize student's effort and celebrate any success, and remind students the importance of mastering English. The teachers emphasize finding out students' needs and building them into curriculum. Breaking the routine by varying the presentation format and using a short and interesting opening activity to start each class are other important motivation strategies.

The results have important pedagogical implications for EFL in preparatory schools of Turkish universities. Firstly, it seems that the teachers are mostly interested in properly presenting their lectures properly. Secondly, the fact that they monitor their students' progress, and recognize their effort and celebrate their success may be considered as teachers' interest in the assessment. Thirdly, teachers are not interested in motivating students by promoting their autonomy. However, learner autonomy is a very important issue in language learning as indicated in the literature; autonomous people are intrinsically-motivated, perceive themselves to be in control of their decision-making, take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions and have confidence in themselves (Deci& Ryan, 1985; Bandura, 1989; Doyal& Gough, 1991).

Fourthly, teachers do not seem to emphasize familiarizing learners with the L2 culture and L2- related values; however, as stated in the literature (Gardner, 1985), students who have positive feelings towards the second language speaking community are more successful in learning a second language. Fifthly, increasing learners' goal- orientedness is not important for the teachers; however, as Ames (1992) states that the goals that learners set for themselves (learning/ performance goals) during their learning process determine their motivation. Although students with learning goals aim to gain competence in the skills being taught, students with performance goals seek to gain positive judgments of their competence. However, both groups of students tend to keep trying when they face problems and, as a consequence, their motivation increases. As a result, this study indicates that teachers employ motivation strategies; however, they need to take student perspectives into consideration while applying the strategies.

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