

The Effects of Teaching English on University Students' Motivation in Iran

Anis Behzadi, M.A. in TEFL

University Lecturer,
Department of English,
Payam-e Noor University (PNU), Sirjan, Iran

***Abstract:** Motivation is the driving force by which humans achieve their goals. It is often assumed to be a rather abstract concept (Dörnyei, 2001). In fact, it is the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain previous set goals. Accordingly, the current study was implemented in order to shed light on the effects of teaching or training on university students' motivation in learning English in non-native context, namely, Iran. The research was conducted on a population of 44 university students, all Persian speakers, majoring in English translation course at Payam-e Noor University in fall semester of 2013-2014 academic year, Sirjan, Iran. Technically speaking, this study is based upon pre-experimental method (one group pre-test post-test design). Interestingly, the results of quantitative findings revealed that there was not a significant difference in students' overall motivation after the treatment. Nevertheless, no notable differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and between female and male participants' motivation were detected. In short, it may be concluded that teaching or training activities have resulted in a moderate increase in learners' motivational level and enhanced metacognition as well.*

***Keywords:** Teaching English, Motivation, University Students, EFL Context*

1. Introduction

Motivation is internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested in and committed to a job, role, or subject, and to exert persistent effort in attaining a goal (Weiner, B. 2000). Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. In fact, it provides the primary impetus to initiate learning English language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Interestingly enough, among other psychological variables, motivation plays an effective role on academic achievement among students in general and English language learners in particular. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can work as driving force that affect students overall

performance. In this regard, teaching or training students also aims to build and heighten learners' awareness of themselves as learners and the language learning process. Additionally, the overall aim of learner training is to contribute to not only learners' cognitive but also learners' affective development. Therefore, second or foreign language learning is one of the subject areas in which learners are expected to learn how to learn in order to be more self-sufficient in their language learning process. Interestingly, most of the researches in this field revealed that the implementation of teaching or training approach has been very advantageous and promising in terms of many aspects of the language learning process such as learner beliefs, attitudes, autonomy, perceptions, self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation etc. With the respect of teaching and motivation, teachers' responsibility is so important.

1.1.Statement of the Research Problem

It seems that there are many variables underlying students' motivation to learn English language. Students' motivation to learn English in Iran, as non-native environment, has to do with student's desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities. Despite the fact that the students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation to learn English as a foreign language may differ. As mentioned before, motivation plays an important part in improving and developing learner's communicative ability, however, in Iran, some university students are not enthusiastic enough to learn English even though their course is English. It seems that teaching and teachers have vital role in enhancing students' motivation. Since learning a foreign language is mostly bothersome and problematic per se for most of the students; therefore, it is foreign language teachers' responsibility to smooth the learning path and energize and motivate the students. Accordingly, the present study is to evaluate the effect of teaching on students motivation among Iranian university students majoring translation in Sirjan, a prosperous city in South-east of Iran.

1.2.Objectives

The current study is to investigate the effects of teaching or training sessions on university students' motivation in learning English. Furthermore, any possible significant differences between female and male students' motivational level in learning English before and after teaching sessions were investigated. Finally, it was also intended to explore any significant differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation before and after the treatment. Accordingly, the objectives can be classified as follow:

- 1- The evaluation of university students' motivational level in learning English before and after teaching or training sessions.
- 2- The evaluation of probable difference between learners' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and gender before and after treatment.

1.3.Importance of the Research

Because of the central importance attached to motivation by practitioners and researchers alike, motivation has been the target of a great deal of research during the past decades. Strictly speaking, the current research is of prime importance on account to deal with one of the most important area of educational psychology. The result of researches in motivation field is not only rewarding for teachers but also beneficial for students.

2.Review of the related literature

Motivation is the driving force by which humans achieve their goals. It is said to be intrinsic or extrinsic. However, motivation to learn has a slightly different meaning that will be defined as following. According to Hermine Marshall 1987 motivation to learn is "the meaningfulness, value, and benefits of academic tasks to the learner-regardless of whether or not they are intrinsically interesting". On the other hand, Carole Ames 1990 mentioned that motivation to learn is characterized by long-term, quality involvement in learning and commitment to the process of learning.

2.1 Student Motivation

Student motivation naturally has to do with students' desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation may differ. A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity "for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes" (Mark Lepper 1988). An Extrinsically motivated student performs in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself," such as grades, stickers, or teacher approval.

2.2. Factors Influence Students' Motivation

As Jere Brophy (1987) and Deborah Stipek (1988) revealed, motivation to learn is a competence acquired "through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others (especially parents and teachers)." Some factors influence that the development of students motivation can be classified as follows:

- 1- Home environment
- 2- Classroom climate
- 3- Beliefs about teaching and learning.
- 4- Teachers' creative policies and procedures to teach.
- 5- University/school-related success and failure.

2.3. Teaching or training students

The term *teaching or training learners* has been defined in fairly similar terms by different scholars in this area. Hedge (1993, p. 92), for instance, learner was mentioned that training is to do with “a set of procedures or activities which raise learners’ awareness of what is involved in the process of learning a second language, which encourage students to become more involved and responsible for their own learning, and which help learners to develop and strengthen their strategies for language learning”. As a matter of fact, teaching or training students involves two main components: raising learners’ awareness and helping them acquire a set of skills for more effective learning (Hedge, 2000). In other words, typical learner training programmes aim at enhancing learners’ metacognition which is defined as “an awareness of one’s own mental processes and an ability to reflect on how one learns, in other words, knowing about one’s knowing” (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.148).

2.3. Connection between teaching and motivation

Interestingly enough, it has been widely mentioned that teaching or training schedules aim to increase learners’ cognitive and affective development through an attempt to build learners’ awareness of themselves as learners and the language learning process; furthermore, assist them to attain a set of skills for more effective learning. The common aim of such research studies is to investigate the effects of learner training on different constructs such as learner autonomy, academic success, beliefs about and attitudes towards language learning, motivation, etc. Despite the fact that there is a small number of studies exploring the effects of teaching programmes on motivation, the results of several studies point to some connections between learner training and motivation. For instance, it is pointed out in a study by Victori & Lockhart (1995, p.228) that the improvement in learners’ tolerance of ambiguity in language learning/use contexts, increased motivation, and improved self-esteem as language learners. Likewise, in a study Mynard’s (1999) indicated that more able learners tended to have higher intrinsic motivation and a higher internal locus of control than less able ones. Without a doubt, variables such as learner characteristics, teacher characteristics, the practices followed during learner training, etc. all interact differently in different contexts. Therefore, to investigate the topic of learner training from as many angles as possible in varied ways will add new insights to our understanding of the issue better. With regard to teaching and students motivation, this study is to investigate effect of teaching on university students’ motivation.

4. Methodology

4.1. Design of the Study

The design of the current study is based upon pre-experimental research design. To elaborate, only one intact group participated in the study; and that group was administered a pre-test prior to the treatment (learner training sessions). After presenting treatment sessions, a post-test was

conducted again to find out whether the treatment caused any significant differences in participants' motivational level in learning English.

4.2. Participants and Setting

This research population represents university students in undergraduate stage at Payam-e Noor University (PNU) in Sirjan, Iran. Actually, Sirjan is a prosperous city located in South-east of Iran. The main reason for conducting the study in this setting was its convenience to the researcher since she worked at the same university at the time of the research. Therefore, arranging the appropriate time and conditions for the implementation of the study was easier. Accordingly, the study covered a period of 6 weeks during the fall semester of 2013-2014 academic year.

4.3. Instrumentation

With regard to instrument, a questionnaire on motivation was developed by adapting various items about motivation from different sources. Most of the items were taken and adapted from Mynard's (1999) questionnaire and Demir's (2004) Attitude-Motivation Scale. The questionnaire on motivation, which involved 34 close-ended items originally, was built on a five-point Likert scale having the options of (1) *I strongly agree*, (2) *I agree*, (3) *I am not sure*, (4) *I disagree*, (5) *I strongly disagree*. The analysis of the data collected from the piloting of questionnaires showed that some of the items needed to be removed in order to ensure that data collection was reliable. After the necessary elimination based on the current research, the final version of the questionnaire included 19 items were divided into the two dimensions of extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Then, the remaining 19 items were analyzed statistically (Appendix 1). The Cronbach-alpha value of 12 items belonging to *intrinsic motivation* was found highly reliable ($\alpha = .86$) for data collection. The Cronbach-alpha value of items related to extrinsic motivation was found to be, .69, which is accepted to be moderately reliable according to the literature.

4.4. Procedures of Data collection

All the participants were informed about the purpose, content, length, time, language and procedures of the study prior to the study. Then, they were asked whether they would like to participate in the study, and all of them agreed to take part. The study was conducted in a six-week-long period. Firstly, a motivation pre-test was administered before the training sessions were started. Each session focused on a different aspect of foreign language learning lasting approximately 45 minutes per session. As mentioned before all the participants were Persian native speakers. Hence, participants' mother tongue, Farsi, was used from time to time during the sessions since the general purpose of the study was to help learners learn how to learn and in relation to this, investigate their motivational level. Additionally, all the participants did not seem to be professional and confident enough to speak in English about complicated and technical

subjects. A typical learner training session started with greeting and establishing rapport. In order to increase participants' awareness about the topic and also make them personalize the content, the participants were asked to reflect on their experience from the session by answering these two main questions: 1) What have I learned from this teaching session? 2) How and where can I use what I have learned this session?

4.5. Procedures for data analysis

The data obtained from the pre-experimental study were fed into the computer and analyzed with several statistical procedures like descriptive statistics, Paired Samples T-test and Independent Samples T-test on SPSS.

5. Results

Table 1
Total mean values of motivation pre-test

	Number of Subjects	Mean	SD
Total motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.12	44
Intrinsic motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.17	51
Extrinsic motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.06	48

To find out whether a significant change occurred in learners' motivational level in learning English, firstly descriptive statistics of pre-test motivation was carried out and mean values were calculated. As it is revealed in table 1 the mean value of pre-test total motivation was found to be 5.12. The results of descriptive statistics indicate that learners' overall intrinsic motivation appears to be fairly high (mean: 5.17). This result reveals that the majority of the participants are quite aware of the significance of English in their future lives. On the other hand, the mean score of extrinsic motivation was 5.06. It is fairly lower than intrinsic motivation.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of learners' intrinsic motivation in learning English (Before Treatment)

Motivation Items of questionnaire	N	Mean	SD
1. I like English.	42	5.01	.95

2. I would like to visit an English-speaking country.	42	5.20	.72
3. I would like to be able to speak English.	42	5.60	.61
4. I enjoy English lessons.	42	5.08	.91
5. I find English interesting.	42	5.18	.75
6. I want to do well in English class.	42	5.00	.96
7. I would like to meet English-speaking people.	42	4.99	.95
8. When I learn new things in English, I feel satisfied.	42	5.42	.74
9. I would like to learn English even if I didn't have to.	42	4.94	.78
10. I find learning English enjoyable.	42	5.68	.65
11. Learning English is important for my personal development.	42	5.77	.42
12. It makes me happy to think that I learn English.	42	5.72	.45

According to the table 2, some questions' mean and standard deviation was more than the others. For instance, I find English learning enjoyable have the highest mean score(Mean:5.68). On the other hand, 'I would like to learn English even if I didn't have to' had the least mean score(Mean score:4.94). The other items' mean scores are classified in the above table separately.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of learners' extrinsic motivation in learning English (Before Treatment)

Items of questionnaire on motivation	N	Mean	SD
13. I will need to know English in the future.	42	5.95	.41
14. It will be important for me to know English in the future.	42	5.94	.41
15. I need to learn English for my future career.	42	5.95	.41
16. I want only to survive the English lesson.	42	5.51	.58
17. If I learn to speak English, other people will respect me more.	42	5.65	.55
18. The main reason I learn English because I have to.	42	5.09	.63
19. If I had the choice I'd give up learning English.	42	4.91	1.22

Interestingly enough, participants' extrinsic motivation was also high among university learners' too. After analyzing motivation questionnaire, it was noticed that all of the first three highest scoring items involved statements related to the importance of English with respect to learners' future employment needs or career.

Table 4

The differences between extrinsic and intrinsic Motivation before treatment(Paired-Samples T-test results for)

	N	Mean	SD	df	t	SD
Intrinsic motivation	42	5.17	.51	832	21	5.11
Extrinsic motivation	42	5.06	.48			

In order to find out whether the difference between total mean values of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of pre-test was significant, a Paired-Samples T-test was implemented in the above table.

Table 5

Total mean values of motivation post-test

	Number of Subjects	Mean	SD
Total motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.01	46
Intrinsic motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.10	51
Extrinsic motivation(Pre-test)	42	5.05	48

To find out whether a significant change occurred in learners' motivational level after treatment in learning English, descriptive statistics of post-test motivation was carried out and mean values were calculated. As it is revealed in table 5 the mean value of post-test total motivation was found to be 5.01. The results of descriptive statistics indicate that learners' overall intrinsic motivation appears to be fairly high (mean: 5.10). This result reveals that the majority of the participants are quite aware of the significance of English in their future lives. On the other hand, the mean score of extrinsic motivation was 5.06. It is fairly lower than intrinsic motivation. All in all, there was not specific change in students' level of motivation after treatment.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics of learners' intrinsic motivation in learning English (After Treatment)

Motivation Items of questionnaire	N	Mean	SD
1. I like English.	42	5.03	.95

2. I would like to visit an English-speaking country.	42	5.20	.72
3. I would like to be able to speak English.	42	5.65	.60
4. I enjoy English lessons.	42	5.07	.91
5. I find English interesting.	42	5.17	.75
6. I want to do well in English class.	42	5.00	.97
7. I would like to meet English-speaking people.	42	4.99	.94
8. When I learn new things in English, I feel satisfied.	42	5.49	.72
9. I would like to learn English even if I didn't have to.	42	4.90	.75
10. I find learning English enjoyable.	42	5.61	.62
11. Learning English is important for my personal development.	42	5.77	.42
12. It makes me happy to think that I learn English.	42	5.79	.43

As the results of descriptive statistics show that participants' intrinsic motivation could be said to be high as in the pre-test. As table 6 shows in some items, there are specific differences between some items.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics of learners' extrinsic motivation in learning English (After Treatment)

Items of questionnaire on motivation	N	Mean	SD
13. I will need to know English in the future.	42	5.99	.40
14. It will be important for me to know English in the future.	42	5.94	.40
15. I need to learn English for my future career.	42	5.98	.41
16. I want only to survive the English lesson.	42	5.52	.58
17. If I learn to speak English, other people will respect me more.	42	5.65	.55
18. The main reason I learn English because I have to.	42	5.11	.62
19. If I had the choice I'd give up learning English.	42	4.89	1.20

According to the results of motivation items, descriptive statistics show that learners' extrinsic motivation is considerably high, especially in terms of some items.

Table 8

Gender differences in learners' motivational level after treatment

Gender	N	Mean	SD

Male	11	5.14	5.1
Female	31	5.23	5.2

As table 8 revealed there is not a particular difference between female and male subjects' motivation in this study. The mean score of male is 5.14 and mean score of female is 5.23. Therefore, there wasn't significant difference between two genders.

Table 9

The results for the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation after treatment (Paired-Samples T-test)

	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sd
Intrinsic motivation	42	5.18	.52	.361	21	.614
Extrinsic motivation	42	5.16	.47			

As table revealed the difference between the mean values of extrinsic motivation (mean: 5.16) and intrinsic motivation (mean: 5.18) is not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 10

The results for the differences between pre-test and post-test total motivation (Paired-Samples T-test)

	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sd
Pre-test total motivation	42	5.21	.57	832	21	5.11
Post-test total motivation	42	5.19	.55			

According to the values in table 10, there is not a significant difference among participants' motivation before and after the treatment ($p > .05$).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

One of the main purposes of the present study was to seek any possible significant increases in learners' motivational level after a teaching or training program. According to the statistical results there was no considerable increase in university students' overall motivation after

teaching sessions. Moreover, the findings pointed to no significant differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation neither before nor after the treatment. Finally, female and male students turned out to have quite close motivational level in learning English. Interestingly enough, it was proved that learners' motivational level was again fairly high following the treatment. As it was revealed in the students' pre-test motivation no notable differences were found between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of university students. Interestingly, future professional careers seemed to be an external factor for most of the participants. Seeking any possible significant increases in learners' motivational level after a teaching or training program was the critical purpose of this study. Accordingly, the statistical results revealed that no considerable increase was detected in learners' overall motivation. Additionally, the findings revealed that there were no significant differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation neither before nor after the treatment. Since motivation is considered one of the main elements in shaping learners' behavior and performance, and determination to achieve goals; therefore, it could be suggested that teaching can enhance learners' motivation with a focus on the development of learners' metacognition provided that it incorporated into every subject area and introduced preferably from the very beginning of education for different levels. If the time and the duration of the learner training observed, better behavior changes may occur in long periods. Teaching learners to become aware of themselves as learners and learning process is one of the most important factors of teaching and learning process. Therefore, it should be taken as part of a whole scheme of language learning.

6. Pedagogical implications and some hints for English teachers

Putting the result and findings of every research into practice to improve others' knowledge is the most important purpose and challenge of every scientific research. Since motivation is a very important part of learning second/foreign language, a teacher must equip him/herself with up-to-date techniques and methods of motivating students. As matter of fact, motivation is affected by several elements including personal ones such as age; academic success level; educational, cultural and family background, etc. and several contextual ones such as timing, duration of the training, intensity of teaching program and so on. Nevertheless, the English teachers should bear this point in their minds that all the other factors, or at least a majority of them, such as effective teachers, effective materials, and effective instruction should be provided so that motivation in learning can be greatly enhanced. Interestingly, the results of the present study have several important implications regarding learners, teachers, and methodological issues. Considering the fact that motivation is a crucial construct shaping learners' behavior and performance, and determination to achieve future goals, it could be suggested that teaching and training aiming to increase learners' motivation with a focus on the development of learners' metacognition should be incorporated into every subject area and introduced preferably from the very beginning of education. With regard to foreign language teacher, the training of pre-service language teachers should be strictly concerned with teaching how to learn apart from teaching how to teach the

content area. All in all, English teachers should be aware that considering motivation is essential part of teaching and learning process, specifically, in nonnative classes.

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Appendix 1**Dimensions of motivation and corresponding questionnaire items****Dimensions of motivation****Item Numbers**

(1) *I strongly agree*, (2) *I agree*, (3) *I am not sure*, (4) *I disagree*, (5) *I strongly disagree*.

Intrinsic motivation items	1	2	3	4	5
1. I like English.					
2. I would like to visit an English-speaking country.					
3. I would like to be able to speak English.					
4. I enjoy English lessons.					
5. I find English interesting.					
6. I want to do well in English class.					
7. I would like to meet English-speaking people.					
8. When I learn new things in English, I feel satisfied.					
9. I would like to learn English even if I didn't have to.					
10. I find learning English enjoyable.					
11. Learning English is important for my personal development.					
12. It makes me happy to think that I learn English.					
Extrinsic motivation items	1	2	3	4	5
13. I will need to know English in the future.					
14. It will be important for me to know English in the future.					
15. I need to learn English for my future career.					
16. I want only to survive the English lesson.					
17. If I learn to speak English, other people will respect me more.					
18. The main reason I learn English because I have to.					
19. If I had the choice I'd give up learning English.					