The Relationship between Teacher's Attitudes and Students' Motivation- Case of Undergraduate Students in North Cyprus Universities

Reema ASLAM RAO
School of Foreign Languages, Final International University
Toroslar Caddesi, No:6, Çatalköyö Girne, KKTC
reema.rao@final.edu.tr

Abstract

Motivation is the main driving force to perform a certain action or to achieve a goal. Motivation plays an important role for students and help them achieve enhanced learning outcomes. Student satisfaction is directly related to quality teaching methods. To get reliable feedback from students, getting a questionnaire filled by them at the end of the semester is not enough. Most of the time, it does not address the main concerns of students which leads to low response rate. This paper attempted to find out which behaviours of teachers effect the motivation of students. The study adopted a mix method approach to find out the answers of the questions under study. A questionnaire was administered to the students studying in the department of English in the universities of North Cyprus. The questionnaire attempted to find out the motivating behaviours of teachers in English classrooms. Apart from this, seven students were interviewed to find out the most motivating interpersonal behaviours of teachers. This study found out that the role of teachers inside and outside the classroom is very vital to motivate students. The findings of this study can help the teachers to understand the needs of the students and help them feel motivated to obtain better learning outcomes. Course designers can also benefit from the findings of this study. They can design the course activities according to the students' interest to ensure the required outcomes of the course since the findings of this study have been derived directly from the students.

Keywords: Self-actualization, Needs hierarchy, Constructional communication, Education psychology, Nonverbal behaviours

Introduction of the Study

English language is the modern language and has become the main tool of human interaction in various areas. The use of English has gained popularity as Dalby (2002) commented that "no one can doubt that the use of English worldwide is growing year by year, as is the demand for English language teaching" (p. 10).

It has been accepted by researches and learners that motivation can accelerate the rate of learning and it is the key factor for the success of second language learning. Motivation provides the initial impetus and later driving force to initiate and sustain learning process. Remarkable abilities, appropriate curricula, and good teaching will not provide desired outcomes if the individuals are not motivated. Whereas, a motivated individual can make up for deficiencies in his learning style and aptitude (Dorneyi, 2009).

Gardner & Lambert (1972) gave importance to the fact that although second language learning largely depends on the individuals' aptitude however, motivation can override aptitude.

The word motivation has its root in Latin language. The meaning of this word is 'to advance, progress or to move'. From this statement we can conclude that the study of motivation regards the study of action (Vural, 2007). The views on the definition of motivation largely varies however, most of the researchers agree upon the fact that motivation involves human behaviour and investigates in which order or criteria a person is

behaving. It refers to the choice of a certain action, perseverance of the person to perform that action and the effort given to perform that action" (Dornyei, 2001b, p. 8).

Therefore, motivation is the result of why people choose to do a particular task. It also involves their consistency and hard work towards achieving the target.

Significance of the Study

It is very common now a days to use questionnaires for teaching evaluation. The data obtained from these questionnaires must be reliable and valid. One factor that determines reliability is the response rate from the targeted audience. Low response rate may question the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaires usually used for teaching evaluation do not address students' concerns. This study is important because it provides an opportunity to the students to speak about their concerns and choices. It allows them to talk about the teaching factors that motivate them in and outside the classroom. Generally students do not find a chance to talk and share their concerns this study reflects on their concerns and the factors that they actually find motivating in teaching and teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Gardner (2001a) claimed that an individual is motivated by observing the efforts that he puts forward to achieve his goals and his consistency with the efforts. A motivated individual does not take the tasks at hand as a burden but enjoys his endeavours to achieve his goal by employing different strategies to achieve the goal. It is source of positive reinforcement for him. This implies that motivation is goal-directed behaviour.

Gardner (2001a) agreed with Dörnyei's argument that three fundamental elements are required to learn L2 which includes effort, desire and positive effect. Gardner argued that these elements are necessary to differentiate between motivated and demotivated students.

Each element is necessary but not sufficient if taken in isolation. All three have to act together to exhibit the desired outcome. They all are adequate factors to assess motivation.

Each element is insufficient to reflect motivation on its own, and a motivated student exhibits many other qualities in addition to effort, desire and affect, but these three attributes adequately assess motivation (as cited in Vural, 2007).

Maslow's needs theory

The most popular and important theory on the subject of human motivation was proposed by a clinical psychologist Maslow in 1943. His theory was based on the personal judgement of people. He theorised that people are motivated by needs and they take certain actions to fulfil those needs in their lives (Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be divided into two categories i.e. growth and deficiency needs and they follow a certain order. It proposes that an individual must satisfy lower basic needs before moving to the higher basic needs. Once the individual will be reasonably satisfied only then he will be able to reach the highest level, which is self-actualization (Burleson & Thoron, 2014).

According to Kuar (2013) Maslow's needs hierarchy can be summarised by explaining the five needs which are included in this theory. Psychological needs form the basis of this hierarchy. This comes at the bottom of all other needs. This includes the fundamental biological needs, which includes food, water, air, house and so on. The rationale here is that the basic psychological needs of the student should be met.

The second level in hierarchy is safety needs. This implies that a student should feel secure in the classroom. He should know that he is as secure in the classroom as he feels in

his own home. Students should be assured that they are being taught in a harmless environment.

Then next are the social needs. It refers to a sense of belongingness of students with the class and their classmates. Teachers should design such activities in their lessons, which include pair and group work so that students get a chance to collaborate with each other and should not feel isolated.

The next level is self-esteem. It refers to the sense of taking care of each other's self-respect they should learn how to work together. Students come from different learning styles so a teacher should motivate them to respect each other's abilities and flaws.

The last level, which comes at the top of the pyramid in needs hierarchy, is self-actualization. This stage suggests that after meeting all four stages of needs hierarchy a learner will be able to give his full potential and can aspire to achieve a certain goal.

The effect of teachers' behaviour on student motivation

There is no one certain and set method of motivating students therefore, realistically the task of motivating students will never be an oversimplified process (Scdeideciker & Freeman, 1999 p. 13). Li (2006), stated that classroom is not only an academic environment but it is also a real social world and in this world teachers and students have an influence on each other. It is an important factor as this interaction might affect the learning of students as well (Seifert, 2004).

Wilson & Wilson (1992) sorted out the factors within the family and school environment that can have an impact on students' learning. He found out that teachers' support has a consequential effect on the motivation achievement of the students.

Moreover, Dornyei (2001) stated that motivation is a very important factor in learning second language. If an individual is de-motivated he will not be able to learn the language effectively and the responsibility of motivation or de-motivation of a student lies copiously on teacher.

On the basis of the literature discussed above, the emerging conclusion is that teachers play a vital role to create and increase the motivation of students. According to Winkie (2005), with the help of the motivational strategies used by the teachers, the learning and motivation of the students can be enhanced to help them learn foreign language.

In the light of the above discussion this study tried to explore the answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the most motivating personal behaviors of teachers?
2. Which behaviors affect EFL student motivation the most in English Language class?

Methodology

Design of the study

This study followed the mix method approach. Data was collected using qualitative method i.e., interviews and quantitative method i.e., questionnaire.

Data collection instruments

This study involved two data collection tools. For the first research question about the interpersonal behaviours of teachers seven students were interviewed. The following question was asked from the students during the interview:

What do you think are the most motivating behaviours of teachers?

A questionnaire was designed comprising the items on teacher motivational behaviours in order to collect the data about the motivating behaviours of teachers in classroom during teaching sessions. This 'Teacher Motivational Behaviour Questionnaire' was designed after referring to Dornyeı & Csizer (1998). Finally, out of 62 items, 13 items were selected to be added in the questionnaire and were written in English language. The whole questionnaire comprised of the items related to teacher's lecturing style, personal features, rapport with students, error correction and evaluation techniques and lastly giving and evaluating homework. Students were given the right to keep themselves anonymous and they were given an option to opt out of the study at any time by contacting the researcher through the contact details given in the questionnaire.

Section one of the questionnaire was aimed to collect demographic information of the age and gender of participants. Section two consisted of five Likert Scale items about the behaviours of teachers during the teaching sessions.

Data was collected after the midterm exams of the students allowing them adequate time to get familiarity about the instructor and also to gain an understanding of their verbal and nonverbal behaviours.

The participants of this study were 80 Undergraduate students (34 male and 46 female) enrolled in Undergraduate Program at the universities in North Cyprus. An additional 15 students were involved in the pilot study. However, later on they were excluded from the study while collecting final data. The age of the participants of this study ranged from minimum 15 to maximum 30 years old.

Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, two ELT experts were asked to identify repeated or irrelevant items in the questionnaire. They suggested corrections for the items they viewed as difficult for the students to understand. The questionnaire items were corrected as per their suggestions. In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaıre, it was piloted with 15 students. Those students did not take part in the actual data collection later on and were excluded from the study.

Consequently, after finding out the reliability scores of each ıtem in the questionnaire, some items were omitted and some were simplified. This process resulted in 13 items to be added in the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the students rated the behaviours of teachers towards themselves during English language classes with a scale ranging from highly motivating to highly demotivating. As mentioned earlıer, that the questionnaire was designed after referring to Dornyei and Csizer (1998) 'Teacher Motivational Behaviours Questionnaire', the Cronbach Alpha reliability for the overall questionnaire is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Reliability analysis for 'Teacher Motivational Behaviours Questionnaire

	Cronbach Alpha's
Teacher's Lecturing Style (1-36)	.89
Teacher's Personal Features (37-45)	.83
Teacher's Rapport with Students (46-52)	.82
Teacher's Error Correction and Evaluation Techniques (53-57)	.72
Teacher's Giving and Evaluating Homework (58--62)	.85

Cronbach Alpha for 62 İtems	**.94**

Limitations of the study

The study is limited to the students who are studying at undergraduate level at universities in TRNC. Therefore, the results of the study can be generalized for the students studying at undergraduate level in North Cyprus only.

Findings and Discussion

To collect the information about the most motivating behaviors of teachers regarding their interpersonal behaviors, interviews were conducted. Seven undergraduate students who were studying at the universities of North Cyprus were interviewed. A written consent from all the students was taken to take part in interviews. The items listed below in the table shows the motivating behaviors in ascending order from the most to the least.

Table 2

The most motivating interpersonal behaviors of teachers

1.	being friendly
2.	being enthusiastic and energetic
3.	accessibility
4.	greeting students
5.	addressing them by name
6.	putting a smile on his/her face
7.	sense of humor

As it can be seen from the table that majority of the students feel motivated when the teacher talks to them in a friendly manner as one interviewee uttered that "when my teacher talks to me in a friendly manner I feel comfortable to talk to her. I participate more in class and I do not feel stressed. However, when she talks to me in a strict voice I feel hesitant to ask anything"

The next behavior that motivates the students is when the teacher is enthusiastic and energetic. On the issue of being energetic and enthusiastic one participant uttered that: "Sometimes I feel lazy or bored to attend my English class but when my teacher enters in class with enthusiasm and with energetic attitude I also start feeling energetic. It makes me feel happy and I feel my teacher is happy to teach me. "

According to the data in the table the next motivating behavior is when the students can access the teacher. One participant stated that "If I find the homework difficult I usually do not want to do it but when I know that I can ask my teacher and she will respond to me if I will be stuck then I feel that I should study because my teacher will be there to help me".

Greeting the students after entering in the class was also seen as a motivation factor for the students. "Greeting can have an immediate effect on students to create positive environment. It's the first step to make connection with your students and acknowledge their presence".

Another motivating factor for students is when their teacher calls them by their name. Syverud (1993) challenged educators to "ask yourself who is the one teacher in your entire life who made the biggest difference for you who taught you so well that you still think about him or her as your best teacher. I bet that for almost all of us, that best teacher was someone who knew you by name" (p.247).

When the teacher puts a smile on her face, students feel less stressed and they do not feel that teacher is the authoritarian in class. A smile can work wonders as it can make students feel at ease. It conveys a message that they are in safe and caring environment. Once they are sure about it then learning will easily take place (Ghiora, 2010).

If the teacher adds humor while teaching students feel motivated. One participant stated, "I like when my teacher adds humor while explaining something or while talking to me. I feel fresh and ready for the next session. According to Pollack & Freda (1997), student teacher relationship may be improved when humor is infused into the classroom. Another advantage of adding humor in lessons is that it decreases stress and makes students feel happy (Moran, 1996).

The second research question aimed to find out the behaviors of teachers in learning situations with the maximum effect on student motivation. Table 2 shows the results of students' responses after they were analyzed on SPSS 20.

Table 2
Teachers' Behaviors in Class during the Lessons

	N	**M**	**SD**
When the teacher takes breaks through the lesson I feel	80	4.02	.74
When the teacher shows her concern for my academic progress I feel	80	4.76	.48
When the teacher takes feedback of the key points of the lecture I feel	80	4.03	1.08
When the teacher gives positive written feedback on my assignments I feel	80	4.55	0.50
When the teacher repeats instructions I feel	80	3.63	1.23
When the teacher uses audio visual aids in lessons I feel	80	4.63	.55
Giving regular home works makes me feel	80	2.51	1.50
When teachers involve us in class activities I feel	80	3.96	.93
When the teacher delivers lecture based lessons I feel	80	2.40	1.73
When the teacher states objectives of the lesson I feel	80	2.95	1.27
When the teacher monitors us continuously I feel	80	4.53	.74
When the teacher asks questions during the lecture I feel	80	4.31	.94
When the teacher gives me lessons that I can relate with my personal experiences I feel	80	4.73	.52

Key N= No. of students M=Mean SD= Standard Deviation

Table shows the mean values and standard deviations of the behaviors that students think are motivating for them. The most motivating behavior is when the teachers are concerned about the academic progress of their students (M=4.76). The next behavior that motivates the student the most is when they can relate the lessons with their real life. They can make connections of the lessons with real life situations.

Students like when teachers use audio visual aids in their lessons (M=4.63). From the table it can be concluded that the students do not find it motivating if the teacher delivers lessons with lectures only (M=2040). However, they like when the teacher involves them in class activities (M=3.96). This can be supported by the fact that they like the lessons in which their teachers use audio visual aids. According to Dash & Dash (2007), visual aids are attractive to the sense of vision in which children see something. Furthermore, Singh (2005) defined visual aids as any device which can increase the practice of an individual either by sight or by sound.

Positive written feedback on the assignments of the students is another motivating factor for the students (M=4.55). As it is apparent that students feel good when teachers show concern for their academic progress therefore, giving them feedback would motivate them more to learn. It is also another behavior which shows that teachers are concerned. Continuous monitoring (M=4.53) during class is more motivating for the students than asking questions during the lessons (M=4.31). Students also do not find to be interested to give feedback for the key points of the lecture (M=4.03). Neither do they want to participate in class activities (3.96).

Students find continuous class hours to be boring. Students like to take breaks during their class hours (M=4.02).

Sometimes teachers repeat instructions to make sure that the students have understood the idea being taught to them. However, according to table 2, students do not like this teaching attitude of teachers. They also do not seem to be interested in knowing the objectives of the lesson (M=2.51). Students do not like to get home works. From the mean score, it was found to be the least motivating behavior of teachers in classroom.

Conclusion

This study has found out that teachers play an integral part to motivate students and to enhance their learning. The positive attitude of teachers has a positive effect on students' academic performance. We can conclude that the teachers' attitudes affect students' urge and awareness to develop themselves academically and personally. Therefore, teachers should be reminded of their importance. They should create an environment in which students can feel relaxed and comfortable. The results of the study can be useful for the teacher trainers as well. Teacher trainers can help the teachers to understand and address the needs of students inside and outside classroom. Teachers should be trained not only to use textbooks and resources but they should also be trained to improve their interpersonal skills that can affect the students and help them achieve effective and desired learning outcomes.

References

Barleson, S. & Thoron, A. (2014). Maslow's hierarchy of needs and it's relation to learning and achievement, University of Florida.

Dash, N. and Dash, M. 2007. *Teaching English as an Additional Language*. New Delhi: Atlantic

Dalby, Andrew (2002). Language in Danger. Allen Lane. University of California.

Dornyei, Z. and Csize´r, K. (1998). Ten Commandments for motivating language learners: results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research*, 2 (3), 203-229.

Do¨rnyei, Z., & Csize´r, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied Linguistics*, 23, 421–462.

Dornyei, Z. (2009). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 31(3), 117-135.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001b). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Pearson
Education Limited.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology. 53,* 109–132.

Gardner, R.C. & Lambert, W.E. (1972). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology.* 14 (1), 266-272.

Gardner, R. & Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning.* Newbury House Publishers, New York

Gardner, R.C. (2001a). *Integrative motivation: Past, Present and Future*. Retrieved from http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/docs/GardnerPublicLecture1.pdf

Ghiora, W. (2010). *The power of a teacher's smile.* Retrieved from http:/teaching4achange.blogspot.com.cy/2010/03/power-of-teachers-smile.html

Gorham, J & Christophel, D/ (2009)/ Students' perceptions od teacher behaviors as motivating or demotivating factors in college classes. *Communication Quarterly*, 40(3), 239-252

Kuar, A. (2013). Maslow's Need HirarchyTheory:Applications and Criticisms, *Journal of Management & Business Studies.* 3 (10), 1061-1064

Li, N. (2006). Researching and experiencing motivation: A plea for 'balanced research'. *Language Teaching Research*, 10, 437-456.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*,50(4), 370.

Moran. C. (1996). Short-term mood change, perceived funniness, and the effect of humour stimuli. *Behavioural Medicine*, 22(1), 32-39.

Olmezer Öztürk, E. & Ok, S. (2014). Motivational behaviors of teachers in Turkish EFL classes: Perception of students. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 10*(2), 120-133.

Pollack, J. & Freda, P. (1997). Humor, learning, and socialization in middle level classrooms. *The Clearing House, Journal of Educational Strategies*, 70 (4), 176-178.

Scheidecker, D. and Freeman, W. (1999) Bringing out the best in students: how legendary teachers motivate kids. *Journal of Food Science Education*. 15, 1-4

Syverud, Kent D. (1993) "Taking Students Seriously: A Guide for New Law Teachers." *Journal of Legal Education*, 43 (2), 247-259.

Tagaki, A. (2005). Motivating Japanese students in the language classroom.*Proceedings of the University of Cambridge Second Postgraduate Conference in Language Research*, 96-103.

Christophel, D. (1990). The relationships among teacher immediacy behaviors, student motivation, and learning, Journal of Communication Education, 39, 323-340.

Singh, Y.k. 2005. *Instructional Technology in Education*. APH Publishing Corporation. New Delhi.

Vural, S. (2007*). Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Teacher Motivational Behavior*. Bilkent University, Ankara

Wilson, P. M., & Wilson, J. R. (1992). Environmental influences on adolescent educational aspirations: A logistic transform model, *Youth and Society*, 24(1), 52-70.

Winke, P. M. (2005). Promoting motivation in the foreign language classroom. *Clear News*, 9 (2), 1-12.

Wong, R. (2013). Effective teaching. Retrieved from http://www.teachers.net/wong/OCT1