

# The Factors Affecting Motivation in Language Learning

## *Dil Öğreniminde Güdülenmeye Etki Eden Unsurlar*

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### **Anahtar**

### **Kelimeler:**

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Başarı*

### **ÖZET**

İngilizce bilgisi iletişiminin ve birçok önemli alanın temel dili haline gelmiştir ve günümüz dünyasında her bireyde bulunması gereken bir özelliktir. İngilizce günümüzde özellikle uluslararası ticarete yaygın bir şekilde kullanılmaktadır, ayrıca bilim ve eğitim alanında da ortak bir dil olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda İngilizce öğretimine diğer ülkelerde olduğu gibi ülkemizde de uzun zamandan beri önem verilmektedir. Yayınlanan yönetmeliklerden Türk öğretim sistemi içerisinde İngilizce eğitime ilkokuldan üniversiteye kadar önem verilmekte olup, bunun paralelinde etkin bir İngilizce öğretimi için çözüm yolları arandığı ve çeşitli yenilikler getirildiği görülmektedir. İngilizce öğrenimini etkileyen birçok unsurlar bulunmaktadır, güdülenme de (motivasyon) bu unsurlardan birisidir. Öğrencilerin güdülenme seviyeleri yabancı dil öğreniminde çok önemlidir. Öğrencilerin güdülenmesi öğrencilerin yabancı dil başarılarını doğrudan etkileyen bir unsurdur. Yabancı dil öğrenme aktivitelerindeki başarı, başlıca motivasyon, öğretmen niteliği, öğrenci - öğretmen etkileşimi, ailesel faktörler, sosyo - ekonomik statüler, öğrencilerin kültürel altyapıları ve diğer bazı nedenlere bağlıdır. Çalışmada güdülenme kavramı ve güdülenmeye etki eden unsurlar ve Türkiye'nin güncel yabancı dil eğitim durumu açıklanmaya çalışılmış ve konu her açıdan bütün yönleriyle aydınlatılmaya çalışılmıştır.

### **Keywords:**

*Motivation,  
Teacher  
qualification,  
English language  
learning,  
Success*

### **ABSTRACT**

English knowledge has become the language of communication and many other areas in the world. It is now seen as an important requirement in today's world. It is widely used especially in international trade today and it has also used in the science and education areas as a common language. In this regard the focus on English teaching has been given importance in Turkey as well as in many other countries for a long time. As can be understood from the ongoing regulations, great importance is attached to English teaching from the primary to university level in the Turkish education system, solutions are sought for effective teaching and various innovations have been made. There are many factors which have influences on language learning, motivation is one of them. Students' motivation level is very important in foreign language learning. Motivation of the learners can be considered as the most important factor that directly affects their success in a foreign language. The success in foreign language learning activities mainly depends on motivation, teacher quality, interaction between teacher and students, parental factors, socio-economic status and cultural background of students some other possible reasons. In the study the concept of motivation and the factors have effects on motivation, and current language education situation of Turkey are expounded in detail and it is tried to shed light on the issue in every aspect.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English knowledge, which has become the language of communication and science in the world, is now seen as an important need in today's conditions. As Demirel (2019) mentioned, the need to communicate, the rapid developments in science and technique after the Second World War, economic, social and cultural relations made it necessary to have knowledge of, at least, one foreign language. English, which is widely used especially in international trade today, has also become widespread in the scientific field as a common language. Many internationally accepted scientific journals publish their articles in English. It is now seen as a global language.

To call a foreign language global, it must first be used by public authorities in many countries and secondly it must be given importance and should be in the first place in foreign language teaching in countries where English language generally has not the official status. Crystal (2010) says that a great number of people who use language is not related to globalization, and he emphasizes that globalization is related to language dominance and economy, technology and cultural power. According to Tochon (2009) English is now seen as the world language rather than as a foreign language. The importance of foreign language knowledge has been emphasized for global understanding, job potential, native language development, cognitive and life skills development and so forth.

English is the most spoken language as a foreign language, a great importance is placed on English education in many countries including Turkey. When the basic data on language teaching in schools in Europe are examined (Eurydice, 2008), English teaching is constantly expanding and dominating almost everywhere. On the other hand, Can and Can (2014 state that) about 90% of the learners at the second level of secondary education learn English first, whether it is compulsory or not.

In line with this, students' motivation can be considered as the most important factor that directly affects their success within the scope of foreign language learning & teaching activities. High motivation of students for foreign language is a situation that has a positive effect on their learning. It is stated that highly motivated less talented students can have greater success than clever students who are not well motivated (Soyupek, 2007). On the other hand, when the related literature is investigated in the field of foreign language education, low motivation of students effects the success in language learning negatively. The reasons for the low motivation in foreign language education may be mainly the insufficient quantity and quality of the lessons given to foreign language teacher candidates and some other factors.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY*

Many research and discussions reveal that different problems are encountered in teaching foreign language teaching is not very effective in our country (Acat and Demiral, 2002; Çelebi, 2006; Can and Can, 2014). These findings show that success in foreign language learning & teaching activities mainly depend on motivation, interaction between teacher and students, teacher qualities, socio-economic status and cultural background of students some other possible reasons.

The focus on English language started with the establishment of Anatolian high schools after the years of 1950 in Turkey. Anatolian High Schools were opened for the first time in 1955; in the 1987-1988 academic year, there were 103 private and 90 state-owned Anatolian high schools. In the following years, many high schools and lyceums were turned to Anatolian high schools and more foreign language education was targeted. Today, in our country, foreign language teaching starts even in pre-school time periods (in private schools) and in 4th grade in public schools and it continues until university years. According to the curriculum published by the MEB (Turkish Ministry of National Education) with the eight-year compulsory primary education application, English education was rearranged in order to start in the 4th grade, and thus, it was started to be taught in primary education levels in 1998. In 2005, English teaching was reorganized in all the schools, at secondary level as 10-hour a week in the first years and four hours a week in the following years (Oral, 2010).

As can be understood from the ongoing regulations, great importance is attached to English teaching at the primary and secondary levels in the Turkish education system, solutions are sought for effective teaching and various innovations have been made. For this purpose, lesson hours were increased from time to time and schools were tried to be converted into foreign language schools. It is known that the time set for foreign

language learning in many countries that are successful in a foreign language is not so different compared to Turkey (OECD, 2018).

### *THE FACTORS EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING*

Students' motivation can be considered as the most important factor that directly affects their success in a foreign language. Motivation can be considered as a kind of interaction process that is not independent of multiple variables. The effects of these variables arise from the individual's internal dynamics as well as some external factors. The students' failure experiences in the processes of language learning are very significant as they are negatively affected by these experiences (Paker, 2012). It is mentioned that the demotivation for foreign language observed in students creates reluctance to learn a language and prevents the language acquisition (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2013).

Dörnyei (1994), who produced a more comprehensive map for learning situations, divided these sub-dimensions into three groups as course related motivational constituents (interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction), teacher related motivational constituents (affiliative drive, authority type, socialization of student motivation, modelling, assignment presentation, feedback) and group related motivational components (target-orientation, reinforcement system, group cohesions) and argued that all dimensions have an impact on student motivation.

The common goals of these models are to achieve success in language learning by determining the dynamics that can affect the motivation of a foreign language. Since the models include internal and external factors, it is understood that they are intended for this purpose. In addition, it is noteworthy that the models are becoming multi-layered structures as time passes. The fact that they include social and cultural contexts as well as the elements related to the course shows how important the holistic approach is in motivation situations in the language teaching process.

Akbaba (2006) states that there are individual differences among students in terms of "intelligence, socio-economic status, cultural background, attitude towards school and some lessons". Similarly, Akdoğan (2004) states that various factors will affect language development and the most important of these are mental factors, socio-economic factors. In this case, it is seen that socio-economic status is an important variable that affects students' motivation to learn (Aktan, 2012). It is mentioned that the children of families with higher income levels may be more successful and motivated, as they may have already acquired cognitive skills due to the influence of the environment and family (Bozavlı, 2015). In some studies, it is stated that parents and economic status are the most influential factors (Butler, 2015; Wong, 2007).

Parental factor may be related to elements such as attitude and purpose known to influence motivation. For example, it is emphasized that lack of family support negatively affects instrumental motivation, which is a motivating feature in the context of the goal (Shum et al., 2011). It is known that parents with higher education levels can display more and more positive attitudes towards the activities of foreign language. Thus this attitude motivates their children internally.

There are opinions that, besides the socio-economic level and the education level of the parents, gender can be directly or indirectly effective in motivation (Shahbaz et al., 2017). It was concluded that motivation differs significantly by gender in some studies (Öztürk and Gürbüz, 2013), but it does not differ by gender (Burgucu, 2011).

When looking at many of the studies showing differences, there is a salient divergence of the female students. The usage of strategies in the language that has an effect on motivation differs according to gender (Wharton, 2000). Motivation also varies according to the education department (Özçalışan, 2012; Talayhan, 2018) and language level (Aygün, 2017).

It is stated that language acquisition and motivation towards a language can be affected by all these variables (Dörnyei and Csizer, 2005; Akbaba, 2006). Based on this view, it is thought that knowing to what extent all these variables affect student motivation and their interaction with each other will have an important place in explaining the general motivation and success. For this reason, studies that examine all variables related to motivation together are important for the literature.

While it is thought that one of the most prominent motivation factors may be related to the teacher, it is also stated that demotivation factors may differ from learner to learner and at different levels of expertise (Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009). It is seen that the factors such as the course content, materials and environment, the teacher's professional competencies and attitudes, the fear of the student being evaluated, the learner autonomy

and the interest, anxiety and self-efficacy for the course related to instrumental use are effective on demotivation.

### *QUALIFICATION OF THE TEACHERS*

A teacher has a guiding and leading position in the advancement processes of a country, in the training of qualified manpower, in ensuring social peace in the society, in socializing and preparing learners in the community, and in conveying their cultures and societal values to the future times (Özden, 1999). The quality and characteristics of the new generations will undoubtedly be identical to those of the teachers who trained them. Many studies have revealed that teachers are at the head of qualified manpower and professions that are important in development and that teachers have a salient duty in the development processes of the communities (Alkan et al., 1998).

In addition, the cultural and social duties of teachers include transferring the values of the society to the next generations and ensuring social peace. The teacher is responsible for training all professions that the country and society need. In addition, there is a definite interconnection between the teacher qualification and the individual to be trained. As Kaya (1984) stated, teachers are a necessary element for the development of a country, and therefore, training teachers with the desired quality will give a great contribution for the prosperity of the countries.

Teachers' task is not only to provide learners with proficient skill and experiences. Teachers are also expected to set an example with their behavior. Attention should be paid to personality traits in the selection of teacher candidates to be admitted to education faculties, and teacher candidates should be taught activities that develop students' personality throughout their education. In other words, the teacher should be able to organize studies and activities to develop students' personalities. In addition, the teacher must have a broad general culture and know how to teach the subject matter knowledge better in order to be successful in this task. Teacher training is given great importance in the educational policies of countries, especially in EU countries, and is subject to continuous ameliorations in terms of changing technological, educational, economic and philosophical beliefs. In this regard, it is always tried to create a better education system. Similar studies are carried out in our country, yet there have been lots of shortages in teacher training programs.

During teaching education periods, teachers need to acquire the competencies to successfully fulfill their social duties and achieve a more qualified education process in the future. This situation necessitates the continuous improvement of teacher education. For example, in the European Union countries where teachers are seen as the most significant factor in ensuring social and economic improvements, extensive structural changes have been made in teacher education in the last 20-30 years in order to provide a more qualified teacher development (Sağlam and Kürüm, 2005). The low motivational reasons of foreign language education may be the insufficient quantity and quality of the lessons given to foreign language teacher candidates (insufficient course hours, lack of practical education, use of materials, learning environment, grammar teaching based on memorization, etc.).

When the PISA results of the EU countries are investigated, it is seen that their scores are above the average and therefore all these reforms that have been and are being made have achieved their goals. In our country, as a result of the reforms made in education and especially in teacher education, an improvement was observed in 2009 PISA values compared to 2006 values, but it was still found to be average or below average. In addition, it is observed that the PISA values of EU countries and some Far East (Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, etc.) countries are higher than the scores of our country (PISA- 2009, in MEB, 2010).

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The significance of language learning, especially English, is emphasized for global understanding, job potential, native language development, cognitive and life skills development; for increasing the chance from entering prestigious educational institutions to understanding to making lifelong friends from the other countries. In this regard, a great importance is attached to English teaching at the primary and secondary levels in the Turkish education system, solutions are sought for effective teaching and various innovations have been made. It is understood from the research, motivation has cognitive and behavioral effects in foreign language education. Therefore, students' motivation status can be considered as the most important factor that directly affects their success in a foreign language. There are many factors such as anxiety, self-efficacy belief, language level, socio-economic status, parental factors, gender that affect or are thought to be related to motivation in the context of the process. We should not neglect the teachers' professional quality in terms of motivation.

In recent years, more research has been done on the effect of motivation on students' success, which has been less studied in the country in the field of education (Talayhan, 2018; Tugan, 2015). Şahin (2007) states that teachers should know motivational strategies and use them frequently by giving positive and on time feedback according to the readiness levels of students. In this process, students should be encouraged to increase their beliefs that they can learn and to find the subject or material to be meaningful. In addition, the teacher should know very well the characteristics of the environments where the learners live and parental factors in order to provide motivation with the students. The author believes that this issue of motivation has been very popular more comprehensive research on motivation and factors - and its influences positive & negative, should be conducted.

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