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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MOTIVATING
CHARACTERISTICS OF TASKS IN
A COMMONLY USED EFL COURSE BOOK


The Graduate School of Education

of

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by



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ABSTRACT


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The main objective of this study is to investigate students' motivation levels as a response to five different task types – group work, group discussion, interview, role play and information-gap tasks – in a commonly used EFL course book and their motivating characteristics from students' perceptions at the Foreign Languages Center of İstanbul Kültür University.

The data gathered from a motivation questionnaire were submitted to quantitative analysis while the data collected from semi-structured interviews and students' journals were submitted to qualitative analysis. In order to measure students' motivation levels towards five different task types, the mean values and standard deviations for each task in each class and for all tasks from all proficiency levels were calculated. Additionally, an ANOVA test was run to compare the motivation levels of all students to similar task types and different classes towards different task types. In order to analyze the qualitative data, recurring patterns about

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the motivating characteristics of tasks were found both in the interviews and student journals. Then similar comments that were recurring in the data from these two instruments were matched to describe both motivating and demotivating aspects of tasks from students' perceptions.

Results revealed that students found the tasks from a commonly used course book motivating on a scale between "some" and much". They preferred the group work task due to its motivating characteristics. The group discussion task was evaluated as the second most motivating activity, while the interview task was labeled as the third motivating task by the participants of the present study. On the other hand, students evaluated role play and information gap tasks as only partially motivating, as they recognized both motivating and demotivating aspects of these task types, which led to a statistical difference at a significant level in the upper-intermediate level.

The results from the present study may call teachers' attention to students' perceptions of motivating and demotivating characteristics of course book tasks, so that teachers can exploit course book tasks more efficiently.

Key words: Task, motivation, task-specific motivation, motivating and demotivating features of course book tasks.

ÖZET


YAYGIN OLARAK KULLANILAN BİR DERS KİTABINDAKİ
GÖREVLERİN ÖĞRENCİ AÇISINDAN MOTİVE EDİCİ YANLARI
Özönder, Özgül
Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü
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Bu çalışmanın amacı, yaygın olarak kullanılan bir ders kitabındaki farklı özelliklere sahip farklı görev tiplerine – grup çalışması, grup tartışması, röportaj, rol canlandırma ve verilmeyen bilgiyi bulma – yönelik, İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Merkezi öğrencilerinin öğrenme isteği düzeyini ve bu görevlerin öğrencilerde öğrenme isteği yaratan özelliklerini incelemektir.

Motivasyon anketi ile elde edilen veriler nicel incelemeye tabi tutuldu. Mülakatlardan ve öğrenci günlüklerinden elde edilen verilerse nitel incelemeye tabi tutuldu. Öğrencilerin beş farklı görev türüne yönelik öğrenme isteklerini ölçmek için her görev türü için her sınıftaki öğrencilerin ve bütün görevler için tüm seviyelerdeki öğrencilerin verdiği yanıtların ortalamaları ve standart sapmaları hesaplandı. Ayrıca, tüm seviyelerdeki öğrencilerin benzer görev türlerine ve farklı seviyelerdeki öğrencilerin farklı türlerdeki görevlere yönelik öğrenme düzeyini karşılaştırmak için bir ANOVA testi yapıldı. Nitel verileri incelemek için mülakatlar esnasında ve öğrenci günlüklerinde sıkça yinelenen yorumlar bulundu. Ardından bu araçlardan

elde edilen verilerdeki sıkça yinelenen benzer yorumlar, öğrenci açısından görevleri motive ve demotive kılan özellikleri tasvir etmek için eşleştirildi.

Elde edilen sonuçlar, öğrencilerin yaygın bir biçimde kullanılan ders kitabındaki aktiveleri "biraz" ve "çok" aralığında öğrenme isteği yaratıcı bulduklarını gösterdi. Öğrenciler motivasyonel yanları dolayısıyla en çok grup çalışması görevini tercih ettiler. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları tarafından, grup tartışması ikinci en çok motive edici ikinci görev olarak değerlendirilirken röportaj görevi üçüncü motive edici görev olarak nitelendirildi. Öte yandan, öğrenciler rol canlandırma ve verilmeyen bilgiyi bulma görevlerinde hem öğrenme isteği oluşturan hem de oluşturmayan özellikler tanımladıkları için bu iki görevi kısmen motive edici buldular. Yabancı dil seviyesi en yüksek grupta, bu iki görevin oluşturduğu öğrenme isteği düzeyinde anlamlı fark bulundu.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin ilgisini ders kitaplarındaki görevlerin öğrenme isteği oluşturan ve oluşturmayan özelliklerine çekebilir. Bu sayede, yabancı dil öğretmenleri görevlerin öğrenciler açısından öğrenme isteği oluşturan özelliklerini bilerek ders kitaplarındaki görevlerden daha etkin bir biçimde faydalanabilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Görev, motivasyon, göreve bağlı motivasyon, ders kitaplarındaki görevlerin öğrenme isteği oluşturan ve oluşturmayan yanları.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Language classrooms aim at enhancing students' efforts and involvement in the learning process of a foreign language. Recent studies of second language acquisition and theories about how individuals acquire a foreign language suggest that learners internalize the target language through the process of interacting, negotiating, and conveying meanings in purposeful situations (Williams & Burden, 1997). Task-Based Instruction (TBI) presents such purposeful tasks in which students can communicate in the target language and develop their knowledge of the language system.

Instructional tasks of teaching materials are thought to promote student motivation (Dörnyei, 1994a; Ellis, 1985, 2003; Julkunen, 1989, 1993, 1997; cited in Julkunen, 2001). The type of tasks employed in instruction may arouse a range of feelings and emotions in learners and may positively influence their performance (Williams & Burden, 1997). Tasks as effective and meaningful activities can create an interest and desire in students to carry them out because they lead students to focus on the exchange and negotiation of meanings in order to reach an intended outcome (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Canale, 1983; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Skehan 1996).

Because the learning tasks of course books often constitute a great part of classroom instruction, students' motivation and perceptions are directly influenced by them (Julkunen, 2001). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the motivating characteristics of tasks in a commonly used course book from students'

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perspectives and analyze the degree to which students of different proficiency levels are motivated by its tasks.

Background of the study

As an important second language teaching method, task-based instruction (TBI) has received enormous interest from second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and practitioners in the field of English Language Teaching. This approach promotes language learning by using language for communicative ends (Brumfit 1984; Ellis 2003). It rejects the focus on form which is seen in traditional methods of language teaching and puts emphasis on learner-centered contexts for language development during the performance of interactive tasks.

The definition of the concept of "task" by different researchers is very enlightening to understand this approach's difference from traditional teaching methods. One of the earliest definitions of a task was provided by Long (1985; cited in Ellis, 2003) in which a task is seen as the use of language for some practical purposes, like making an airline reservation, or a goal-directed activity, like painting a wall. However, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) redefined this definition by limiting the task concept to the activities in which the use of language is necessary. Nunan (1989) came up with another definition of the task. He described tasks as activities in which learners engage in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while they are mainly focusing on meaning rather than form. Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001) restricted the use of the term to activities requiring primarily meaning-focused language use to obtain an outcome. In this sense, TBI is differentiated from traditional language teaching methods in which there is an emphasis on teaching the linguistic forms. TBI focuses, instead, on the

exchange of meaning with an intended outcome where learners can learn and practice the forms of target language while paying attention to conveying meaning (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1996). In this study, tasks will be treated as activities leading participants to be language users since these tasks improve learners' ability to cope with real-world communication (Ellis, 2003).

The research literature on task-based language teaching reveals some critical features of task which activate participants in this learning process. One of the most important characteristics of tasks is that they include a work plan (Ellis, 2003). Learners are directed by the task's work plan which provides an outline about how to carry out and complete the task. The second critical feature of a task is that there is a primary focus on meaning (Ellis, 2003). Learners focus on tasks to exchange meaning rather than just practice some language structures. While they are carrying out tasks in which they fill an information gap, opinion gap or reasoning gap, they learn both to act as the users of the language and to employ their own linguistics resources. In this respect, the proponents of TBI underline that while performing tasks, the participants mobilize their grammatical knowledge to convey meaning (Nunan, 2004). The function of the form is to facilitate the language users' expressions of different communicative meanings. Another aspect of tasks is related to the authenticity element that they include. According to Ellis (2003), tasks may reflect real-world processes of language use such as completing a form, phoning a hotel and booking a room, or making an appointment that have a clear communicative outcome. Authentic tasks prepare learners for real life applications and several studies show that the authenticity of tasks has a positive impact on

learners' motivation and their desire to complete the task (Appel & Gilabert 2002; McDonough & Chaikitmongkhol, 2007).

Finally, tasks lead learners to employ cognitive processes such as reasoning, selecting, ordering or evaluating information abilities (Ellis, 2003). These cognitive skills play an important role in the choice of language forms that learners decide to use while performing different types of tasks.

"Task" and "motivation" are two related concepts. Since tasks have communicative purposes, students may feel motivated to carry out and complete them to express themselves. However, this situation depends on tasks' characteristics. This means that the motivation levels of learners may be increased or decreased according to the specific characteristics of a task. An examination of some motivation theories explaining language achievement (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) and models of motivation theories in the classroom environment (Ames, 1990; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei 1994a; Williams & Burden, 1997) is helpful in identifying these motivating characteristics of tasks.

Among these researchers, Dörnyei (1994a) is one of the first to extend the motivation concept to the classroom by identifying classroom components of motivation theory. In his framework, there are three components of the learning situation: course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components and group-specific motivational components. Within his framework, there are different sources of motivation in the classroom environment: course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components and group-specific motivational components. These components show that there are different sources of motivation in the classroom environment and as the first

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component explains teaching materials and tasks play an important role in students'

motivation level. Researchers and teachers seek various ways to increase

participants' motivation levels through the deployment of these teaching materials in

an efficient way. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) make this point in a study that they

carried out. They criticize Gardner's (1991; in van Lier, 1996) integrative and

instrumental motivation theories. These researchers claim Gardner's theory identifies

motivation only with long term purposes. In line with Dörnyei's emphasis on course-

specific motivational components in the classroom environment, they mention that

there is "here-and-now interest in task" and the users of language feel "the joy of

exploration or working together, natural curiosity" while performing tasks in the

immediate learning context (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

Motivation, then, is an indispensable element of learning and teaching

processes in the classroom. However, it is necessary to narrow the concept of

motivation down to task-specific motivation to understand the classroom applications

better and the motivating features of teaching materials and learning activities

(Crookes, 2003; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Yücel, 2003).

Instructional materials and learning tasks form a basis for efficient teaching

practices which can stimulate learners in the classroom atmosphere. The motivation

of language users is directly influenced by the motivating characteristics of tasks in

these materials. Julkunen (2001) points out that it is possible to use the term "task-

specific motivation" if the characteristics of tasks are the focus of attention. That is,

tasks contain some motivating characteristics which are intrinsic to them; therefore,

the accomplishment of these tasks leads to satisfaction of these underlying motives

of tasks (Ausubel, 1968). In other words, the learner's interest and motivation to

learn new things can be aroused by various task types, task content, task formats, and response modes (Julkunen, 2001).

Because teachers often have to follow certain curricula based on the course book activities that their institutions impose, the tasks in these materials should be analyzed and practiced with utmost care to optimize students' motivation levels. Although the type of instruction, the choice of tasks, and courses to be attended have a motivational structure in the processes of learning and teaching (Julkunen, 2001), there is another complementary element that makes these processes more meaningful and effective: students' perceptions of tasks. The success of learning activities and the general atmosphere in the classroom depend on both general motivation and students' own perceptions of tasks (Boekaerts, 1993; Marzano, 1991). Therefore, it is vital for researchers and teachers in EFL contexts to be aware of task characteristics for better instruction in the classroom.

Several studies (Appel & Gilabert 2002; Taşpınar 2004; Yücel, 2003) show the impacts of task-based teaching on the level of motivation and language production. Among these, Appel and Gilabert (2002) analyzed the use of a task-based web-based project and its effects of students' motivational levels. Taşpınar (2004) carried out a study on teachers' and students' perceptions of teachers' task-related motivational strategy use and students' motivational levels. Yücel (2003) also investigated teachers' perceptions of motivational strategy use and task characteristics. However, none of these studies concentrated on students' perceptions of tasks in EFL course books and the impacts of these learning activities on learners' motivation levels.

Statement of the problem

Research in second/foreign language teaching suggests that task-based instruction is an effective methodology in EFL contexts. As organized sets of activities, tasks can motivate learners to comprehend and use the target language efficiently. Although there are some important studies examining the impacts of task-based instruction on the development of different aspects of language (Chaikitmongkol & McDonough, 2007; Kasap, 2005; Myers, 2000; Özpınar 2006; Takimoto, 2006), on the relationship between motivation and task performance (Appel & Gilabert 2002; Taşpınar 2004); and on teachers' strategy use and motivating characteristics of tasks (Yücel, 2003), little research has been done to evaluate actual tasks in the course books that generally direct and organize most of classroom instruction in terms of students' motivation level. The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions of the main motivating characteristics of tasks in a commonly used course book and the degree to which they are motivated by these tasks.

In Turkey, many universities offer English-medium education. At preparatory schools, different course books are followed to teach English as a foreign language to prepare students for content instruction in English. If the overall class hours devoted to the main course study are considered, then learners spend a great amount of their time on classroom activities included in their course books. However, after a certain period, many of the learners seem to lose the motivation and desire to learn a foreign language that they may have had at the beginning of the year. This may result in part from students not finding some of these learning activities motivating. Although the instruction based on different tasks of course books seems to help students to

improve their foreign language knowledge, this instruction could be more effective and result in students' higher motivation levels if it can be determined which specific characteristics of tasks students find the most motivating. This study intends, therefore, to analyze the motivating characteristics of tasks in a commonly used course book and to investigate the students' perceptions of those tasks.

## Research questions

1. To what degree do students feel motivated in response to the tasks in their course books?

2. What are the characteristics of EFL course books' tasks that students perceive as motivating?

3. Do students' perceptions of motivating characteristics of tasks differ by proficiency levels (beginner, elementary, upper-intermediate)?

## Significance of the study

The study addresses the employment of tasks in course books in an EFL context and the paucity of research on students' perceptions of these tasks in terms of their motivating characteristics. One of the general objectives of foreign language education is to stimulate the motivational level of learners to internalize their foreign language knowledge and become users of this language. Instruction in the EFL context and the use of effective teaching materials are two main variables of foreign language education to fulfill these aims. However, there are no formal studies that evaluate the motivating characteristics of the tasks in a commonly used course book from students' perspectives.

At the local level, the study may provide general information for program planners in the process of course book selection. Also, in the curriculum renewal processes, curriculum designers may design the syllabus either by choosing motivating tasks in the course book or including additional tasks which can help students to become active participants of the learning process. The study may also assist teachers while they are teaching to increase students' motivation level because this study will provide a useful framework about students' perceptions of tasks with regard to their motivating characteristics. In addition, motivating characteristics of tasks described in the study can be incorporated into the syllabus design of the Foreign Languages Center of İstanbul Kültür University in terms of task choice and the course book selection to motivate students better.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief summary of the issues concerning the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the problem have been presented. In the next chapter, a review of the literature on task-based instruction (TBI), the premises and the cycle of TBI, and task types are presented. In addition, the concept of motivation with reference to its types and its development in psychology, its use in foreign and second language teaching, new constructs of motivation, classroom motivation and its components and task-specific motivation are reviewed. The third chapter explains the methodology of the present study in relation to participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The results of the present study are discussed and reported in the fourth chapter which contains a summary of collected data, an analysis of these data and the findings. The last chapter is the conclusion which covers the discussion of the

findings, pedagogical implications and limitations of this study, as well as

suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study examines students' perceptions of the motivating characteristics of tasks in a commonly used EFL course book. This study was conducted at Istanbul Kültür University to determine motivating characteristics of course books' tasks in three different classes of the Foreign Languages Centre of IKU in the academic year of 2009-2010.

This chapter presents a brief history of task-based instruction, its premises, its methodological procedures, and task types. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of motivation, sources of motivation, its development in the fields of psychology and foreign language education, new constructs of motivation in learning, classroom motivation and its components, and task-specific motivation.

Task-Based Instruction

*A Brief History of Task-Based Instruction*

Tasks are defined in various ways by different researchers in the literature. One of the most widely accepted definitions of tasks is provided by Bygate, Skehan and Swain. According to these researchers, a language task can be defined as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with an emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (Bygate, Skehan &Swain, 2001, cited in Ellis 2003, p. 5).

The use of tasks as a unit in instructional planning has a long history. In the 1950s, tasks started to be used for instructional purposes in vocational training for the first time. The tasks of this period were designed for training for new military

technologies and occupational specialties (Richards & Rogers, 2001). In developing these tasks, the occupational tasks were analyzed and adapted to teaching tasks. They were designed in detail and followed as instructional tools of classroom training. In the early 1970s, using tasks for vocational training was followed by their use for academic purposes. Academic tasks had four important dimensions, as stated by Richards and Rogers (2001):

    1. the products students are asked to produce

    2. the operations they are required to use in order to produce these products

    3. the cognitive operations required and the resources available

    4. the accountability system involved (p. 226).

These dimensions of academic tasks are very similar to the features of tasks that are used for task-based language instruction.

    The earliest applications of task-based instruction in language education were seen in the Malaysian Communicative Syllabus (1975) and the Bangalore Project (Prabhu, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The Malaysian Communicative Syllabus was designed for the upper-intermediate English classes in Malaysia. Its purpose was to teach English by using communicative tasks in order to improve students' communicative skills (Richards & Rogers, 2001). The importance of this project for task-based instruction is that communicative tasks became the basic instructional units in English language teaching for the first time in this syllabus. Similarly, the Bangalore Project had the goal of improving students' communicative competence by using tasks in which students internalize the meaning through practice in real-life contexts. It was a five-year project carried out with students from elementary and secondary English classes in India (Phrabu, 1987). During this project, two types of

tasks were used: real-life tasks and academic tasks. Although neither of these trials lasted for a long time, they are very important in the history of task-based instruction. Thanks to these projects, tasks started to be used in classroom applications to teach a foreign language.

*The Premises of Task-Based Instruction*

Task-based instruction has gained an important place in applied linguistics because of its distinctive features. The main premises of task-based instruction help us to understand its development as an approach on its own right. Willis (2004) identifies three underlying main elements (principles) of this alternative approach. These premises that task-based instruction is based on are as follows:

1. The process of foreign language learning does not follow a linear development. (Long, 1985; Lightbown, 2000, cited in Willis, 2004). Instead, learners go through a complex process. Therefore, students' exposure to the instruction of language structures does not necessarily lead to their perfect mastery of these items (Willis, 2004).

2. Learners' attention is drawn to form in the context of meaning (McDonough & Chaikitmongkhol, 2007). During the performance of different tasks, learners encounter various discourses, contexts, language structures or lexical items as comprehensible input. In this way, they learn these linguistic resources subconsciously.

3. In order to learn a target language, learners should be provided with opportunities in which they use their knowledge of this target knowledge for a real purpose (Swain, 1985, cited in Willis, 2004). Learners need to

be exposed to the type of real discourse that they will experience outside the classroom (Nunan, 2004).

As Willis suggests, task-based instruction constitutes a distinctive direction for language education.

*The Cycle of Task-Based Instruction*

The methodology of task-based teaching is another differentiating aspect of this instructional approach. The methodological procedures of task-based teaching mainly reflect how the activities chosen for a task-based lesson can be applied in actual lessons (Ellis, 2003). The organization of task-based lessons directs classroom practices to a great extent. Task-based lessons are composed of three important phases: 'pre-task', 'during-task' and 'post-task' (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996).

The aim of the pre-task phase is to provide learners with prior knowledge to prepare them for the activity. In this step, learners are informed about the procedures for accomplishing the task and its outcomes. The teacher introduces the topic and points out keywords to help students to understand the task instructions (Willis, 1996). The pre-task phase can be completed in different ways. Ellis (2003) suggests four different alternatives for the pre-task phase. These are:

1.  presenting a similar task to make students aware of the steps in main task,

2.  leading students to observe a model to understand how to carry out the main task. For example, teachers may present a text showing strategies for communication problems, conversational gambits or pragmalinguistic devices (Willis, 1996, cited in Ellis, 2003),

3. engaging students with non-task activities to prepare them for the real task. For instance, students might be provided with brainstorming activities and mind maps (Willis, 1996, cited in Ellis, 2003),

4. going through strategic planning for the main task performance in different ways such as leaving students alone to plan the activity, guiding them concerning the content and (or) the form (Sangarun, 2001, cited in Ellis, 2003).

According to Ellis (2003), this phase is a novelty for learners from a "traditional 'studial' classroom" because students are not familiar with such applications leading them to more exploratory studies (p. 244). This process also plays a prominent role in stimulating students' motivation because they become more conscious about the task that they will perform and its outcomes. Dörnyei (2001a) also points out that the method of presenting a task should be considered carefully because it may increase students' motivation level to a great extent. If the pre-task phase is completed using one of these four alternatives, students are likely to feel motivated to carry out and complete the task.

The next step in the task completion is the during-task phase. In this stage, students work on their own, in pairs, or in groups and carry out the main task. The instructor observes learners during the process (Willis, 1996). The performance of the task facilitates students' use of whatever linguistic resources they want to achieve their purpose. That is, students are not mandated by their teachers or any other authorities to use any particular language structures or lexical items while completing the task. The learners' goal is to obtain the previously defined outcome of the task (Kasap, 2005).

The performance of tasks includes some options in terms of time setting and the availability of input data. The time allotted to students for carrying out the task is a debated issue. Some researchers, like Lee (2000), are in favor of setting a time limit in the process of task completion because they think allowing students to complete a task in a limited time determines their choices of language structures. At this point, Ellis (2003) proposes two different choices for the task performance: (a) students might be allowed to complete the task in their own time if *accuracy* is the main emphasis of the task or (b) their teachers set a time limit when *fluency* is the target of the activity. For him, the unlimited time option is very useful for students because they can work on their language production and find proper words to express themselves better.

Another aspect of the during-task phase is the accessibility of input data. While performing the tasks, a text or some pictures might be provided to students. For instance, as they are narrating a story or describing a picture, they can get help from these input data (Ellis, 2003; Prabhu, 1987). Prabhu (1987, cited in Ellis, 2003) sees input data as valuable and labels this process as "borrowing". He suggests if input data are provided for students, they may borrow a verbal formulation from the input data to express their self-initiated meaning. In this way, they do not generate the formulation from their own competence. Learners benefit from these texts or pictures as input data in the process of borrowing to express themselves during the task accomplishment, so this process assists their acquisition.

In the last part of the during-task phase, students present their work. Learners who work individually, in pairs, or in groups during the task performance make their work public by means of presentations, written reports or group discussions to

complete the task. In this phase, they get feedback from their teachers. Willis (1996) argues that teachers' feedback should focus on strong points of these presentations or reports to increase the effectiveness of this process.

The post-task phase consists of options such as focusing on the language used for completing the task, repeating the performed task or reflecting on the task performance (Ellis, 2003). The focus on language can be achieved by providing students with form-focused tasks. These are based on the written or oral tasks that students have carried out in the during-task phase. Willis (1996) points out that this stage involves explicit language teaching; therefore, accuracy is being combined with fluency in this stage. Teachers who monitor learners during task engagement pay attention to errors and missing points in their language use and they focus on these points in the post-task phase.

As a second alternative for the post-task phase, learners might be given a chance to repeat the task to improve their fluency. In this way, there is a possibility that the complexity of their utterances might increase. Also, they may be able to express themselves better in the second trial of performing the same task (Kasap, 2005).

Another option for the post-task phase is reflecting on students' performance. This phase enables students to evaluate their performance during the task. Willis (1996) recommends that students should write reports to summarize the outcomes of the task. These reports may encourage learners to think about their task performance and evaluate its outcomes again. Ellis (2003) suggests inviting students to make comments about how they have found their performance and how their performance might be beneficial for their self-improvement. According to Ellis (2003), this

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process contributes to learners' "metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating" since they will think about their strong and weak points throughout the task performance (p. 259). A final suggestion is that students can respond to student-based evaluation forms to guide the teacher about further practices of the same tasks (Ellis, 2003). If they are not found effective by students, teachers can design the task in a different way or look for other tasks for future implementations in the classroom environment.

In sum, the stages in the accomplishment of the task direct and organize the whole methodology of a lesson. In order to understand task-based instruction's distinguishing features, it is also necessary to examine different types of tasks used for creating active language classrooms.

*Task Types*

There is a variety of ways to view tasks and several researchers have defined tasks in different ways. Some of them define tasks according to the processes they include, while others classify tasks according to the interaction that occurs during the process of task accomplishment. Table 1 shows taxonomies of tasks designed by different researchers in relation to the processes tasks include.

Table 1-Task designers and task types

| Task Designer | Task Types |
| --- | --- |
| Willis (1996) | 1. listing<br>2. ordering<br>3. comparing<br>4. problem solving<br>5. sharing personal experiences<br>6. creative |
| Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993) | 1. jigsaw<br>2. information-gap |

|  |  |
|---|---|
|  | 3. problem-solving |
|  | 4. decision-making |
|  | 5. opinion exchange |
| Nunan (2001) | 1. real world |
|  | 2. pedagogic |

Willis (1996) proposes six types of task: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. According to Willis, listing tasks help students to categorize words, things, qualities, people, places, actions, job-related skills, and so on. In this way, they can generate a list based on some criteria and explain their ideas. In the brainstorming part of this type of task, students have a chance to benefit from their own knowledge and personal experiences. They can share them with their pairs, groups, or with the whole-class. In addition, listing task is a very useful tool in fact finding, which can be realized by asking their peers or by looking up in surveys, or reference books, etc.

The second category of Willis' task classification is ordering and sorting tasks. In this type of task there are four kinds of processes to go through: ranking items, actions, or events in a logical or chronological order; sequencing items based on personal values or specific criteria; combining items in given groups and putting them under given categories; and categorizing items in different ways while the categories are not stated.

In the third category, Willis presents comparison tasks. Comparison tasks lead learners to compare information from different sources to find common or different points. Also, learners are involved in matching to find specific points and identifying a relation between them during comparison tasks.

Problem solving tasks include logic problems, puzzles, responses to advice-column letters and more complex case studies, etc. They require hypothesizing, reasoning, describing alternatives and evaluating, offering and agreeing on a solution (Willis, 2004). In sharing personal experience tasks, learners engage in social interaction in which they narrate, describe, explain their personal experiences to others and express their attitudes, opinions, and reactions.

Finally, creative tasks comprise the sixth type of tasks in Willis' framework. Some examples of creative tasks are projects and pair work or group work studies in which students attempt to create something new. These tasks involve more than one process for learners to experience and can include tasks from other categories such as listing, ordering, comparing, and problem solving.

Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993) categorize tasks according to the type of interaction that students go through in the process of task accomplishment. There are five task types in their classification: jigsaw, information-gap, problem-solving, decision-making, and opinion exchange tasks. In jigsaw tasks, learners bring different pieces of information together to construct a whole. For example, students who have different parts of a story work collaboratively to compose the story. Secondly, information-gap tasks are based on the idea of sharing information. Two groups of learners have different sets of information. They negotiate and find out the complementary part of information to complete the activity. Another type of tasks is problem-solving tasks. In a problem-solving task, students are provided with a specific problem and some information. Then, they are expected to reflect on the possible solutions to this problem and offer a solution. In decision-making tasks, there is a problem with different possible outcomes and students are encouraged to

come up with a solution by negotiating and discussing these outcomes. Learners are expected to make a decision together. The last type of tasks in this categorization is opinion exchange tasks. During a discussion, learners express their own ideas and share them with their peers. They try to understand each other's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions in the process of exchanging ideas; however, it is not necessary to reach an agreement at the end of the discussion since the aim of this activity is just the exchange of opinions to understand others' viewpoints.

Nunan (2001) came up with two major task types: real-world and pedagogic tasks. Real-world tasks are defined as communicative acts that convey information that is important for learners outside of school (Brophy, 1998). They are assumed to prepare students for real-life applications since these tasks are a good way of leading students to simulate target language use situations in the classroom (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). According to Long (1985), "filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter ... making a hotel reservation, writing a check, finding a street destination" can be regarded as examples of real-world tasks. They should be carried out in the classroom to create some opportunities for students to practice what they learn to accomplish real-life application (Spaulding, 1992). Pedagogical tasks, on the other hand, are composed of activities which are specifically prepared for language teaching with pedagogical requirements such as comprehension, manipulation, production, interaction in the target language to achieve some instrumental or instructional goals. Nunan (1989) defines pedagogical tasks as activities "which have a psycholinguistic basis in SLA theory and research but do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks" (p. 76). According to Nunan (1999), listening to a weather forecast

and deciding whether or not to take an umbrella and sweater to school might be a real-world task example, while listening to an aural text about the weather and answering questions afterwards on whether given statements are true or false might be its related pedagogical task.

As seen from the previous discussion, there are various tasks with different purposes, content and processes in the literature. Other researchers have categorized tasks by looking at variables within the task. While some researchers have noted that some tasks may cross over the distinctions among the variables, Table 2 nevertheless shows important task variables defined by different researchers.

Table 2- Variables within in the task

| Theorist | Variables |
|---|---|
| Long (1998) | 1. open (divergent) vs. closed (convergent)<br>2. one way task vs. two-way task<br>3. planned vs. unplanned task |
| Richards and Rogers (2001) | 1. one way or two way<br>2. convergent or divergent<br>3. collaborative or competitive<br>4. single or multiple outcomes<br>5. concrete or abstract language<br>6. simple or complex processing<br>7. simple or complex language<br>8. reality based or not reality based |

Long (1989; cited in Ellis, 2003) classifies tasks according to their outcomes: open (divergent) vs. closed (convergent), one-way task vs. two-way task and planned vs. unplanned task. Open tasks are ones which do not include pre-determined outcomes. The participants of these tasks have freedom of decision-making while accomplishing surveys, debates, making choice and ranking activities or general

discussions (Ellis, 2003). Learners are allowed to decide on the solution and they may arrive at multiple solutions because these tasks are open in nature. On the other hand, closed tasks lead learners to reach a conclusion, a solution, or sets of solutions at the end of the activity. An example of closed tasks is information-gap, activites, where students reach a conclusion to construct a whole story or to describe two pictures in order to find similarities and differences. In these activities, students are required to describe their pictures with sufficient precision so that their partners can decide whether they are holding the same or different pictures (Ellis, 2003). They try to reach a common conclusion. According to Duff (cited in Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Long, cited in Ellis, 2003) closed tasks involve more negotiation since they encourage learners to make a decision or reach a solution like deciding what to take on to a deserted island. Therefore, they result in more turn taking, questions, and confirmation checks. In the case of open tasks like experience-sharing tasks, or anecdote-telling tasks, participants have the opportunity to control the topic (Willis, 1996). They may discuss the topics briefly, switch the topic, or quit the task completely if it becomes too difficult to pursue. As a result, learners may not try hard to negotiate the meaning in open tasks, in contrast to closed tasks where students are required to make themselves understood in greater precision to agree on a solution (Ellis, 2003).

One-way or two-way tasks involve information exchange. In this type of task, it is important who holds the information to be shared. For example, during listen-and-do tasks, only the teacher has all of the information, so these are called "one-way tasks." During same-or-different tasks, which can be defined as "two-way

tasks," all participants have to contribute to the task to find the precise information because it is not held by only one person (Ellis, 2003).

The last category in Long's classification is planned and unplanned tasks. Planned tasks allow students to have enough time for thinking about the issue of their written or oral performance. For example, during a debate, students are allotted enough time for the formation and organization of their arguments while negotiating with others (Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). However, unplanned tasks do not provide them with these opportunities. Therefore, learners do not have a chance to focus on meaning as they do in planned tasks.

In Richards and Rogers' list, task characteristics related to one-way or two-way tasks and convergent or divergent tasks have similar features with those of Long's list. Collaborative or competitive variables seen in tasks refer to the way students carry out tasks. During tasks in which collaboration is the main emphasis, students work together to reach an outcome at the end of the process. When competition is at the center of a task, learners compete against each other to accomplish it. In another category, there are single or multiple outcome tasks. In these tasks, the number of goals attained during the task changes from one to more than one. Richards and Rogers (2001) point out that some tasks require the use of abstract language whereas some others can be accomplished by the use of concrete terms. In another category of task variables, simple or complex processing of cognitive skills are underlined. Accordingly, some tasks require simple cognitive processing whereas others demand complex cognitive skills from learners to cope with them. Similarly, the complexity of used language might change from one task to another. Some tasks demand highly complex linguistic structures while others can be

fulfilled by using very simple language structures. In the last category, there are the variables of reality based or not reality based tasks. As also emphasized in Nunan's categorization (2001), tasks can involve real-world activities or pedagogical activities that are not a part of the real world, but a part of classroom work.

In sum, tasks can be viewed from a variety of perspectives, in terms of their types and variables. All these different features provide teachers with a wide-range of activities to practice in the classroom environment. If tasks in course books are examined in light of their types and characteristics by teachers, they can be applied more consciously since teachers will be aware of the content, purpose, and outcome of these tasks.

Motivation

Task-based instruction provides a suitable environment to motivate students in the language learning process. In order to understand the relationship between task-based teaching and motivation, it is necessary to analyze in detail the concept of motivation, the sources of motivation, its development in psychology and foreign language education, and new motivational constructs in the classroom environment and task-specific motivation.

The term "motivation" is not an easy concept to define because there are lots of diverse opinions and disagreements on the sub-elements constituting it. However, Dörnyei (2001a) offers a definition of motivation that many researchers would agree on. He relates motivation to "the *direction* and *magnitude* of human behavior" in terms of people's choices for particular actions, their persistence and the effort they spend on it (p. 7). As can be inferred from this definition, if human beings decide to do something, the time, effort, and desire that they spend on it become the main

factors of their motivation level. In this sense, the concept of motivation plays a prominent role in teaching because learners' willingness and persistence to internalize a foreign language are the most important variables of the classroom environment. Students who are willing and determined to learn a foreign language put more effort into and actively participate in the learning process. For this reason, as Dörnyei (2001a) points out, there is a need for "motivation-sensitive" teaching practices to encourage students to learn the target language successfully (p. 135). In order to comprehend how it might be possible to achieve this goal, the sources of motivation should be examined first.

*Intrinsic Motivation*

Intrinsic motivation is defined as "the behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure or satisfaction" (Dörnyei 2001b, p. 27). "The joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity" are given as two main behaviors of this kind of motivation by Dörnyei (2001b, p. 27). Intrinsically motivated people are eager to learn new things. They like engaging in activities for the satisfaction of understanding something new. In addition, intrinsic motivation leads people towards achievement because they engage in activities to explore new ideas and to expand their knowledge (Wu, 2003). These positive outcomes of intrinsic motivation make language learning possible (van Lier, 1996). If learners are not intrinsically motivated, they may not develop positive attitudes towards the learning process, so they do not become a part of this process.

*Extrinsic Motivation*

Extrinsic motivation results from environmental factors. In this type of motivation, the behavior is performed as a means to obtain an end, either for getting a reward or for avoiding punishment (Dörnyei, 2001b). Externally motivated learners perform the activities for instrumental reasons such as getting higher grades or passing an exam (van Lier, 1996). They do not show a real interest in activities, but they engage in them for some pragmatic benefits.

Intrinsic motivation is favored more than extrinsic motivation by the educators in the field because intrinsically motivated learners show a genuine interest in activities. They can develop their knowledge and language skills better (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrinsically motivated students, on the other hand, do not get engage in tasks unless there are some rewards, praise, or punishment. Therefore, teachers should look for a responsible course of action to establish a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (van Lier, 1996). Students might be provided with interesting and attractive tasks matching their interests. In this way, they may perceive the language as more than a tool to realize their academic goals, and instead they may seek to develop competence for its own sake (Bandura, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Both types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, compel people to act. After examining the concept of motivation and its two major sources of motivation, it is necessary to understand the development of the concept of motivation in psychology.

The Development of Motivation in Psychology

*Mechanistic/Organismic Motivation Theories*

Early psychologists researching motivation tried to explain human nature and behaviors by observing animal behaviors in laboratories (Williams & Burden, 1997). Researchers observed how animals meet their basic biological needs. They tried to develop methods to reinforce these behaviors of animals and transfer them to other activities or events. Psychologists were inspired by the behavior of animals and derived explanations for human motivation based on their observations of these behaviors. They related the motivated behavior of human beings to their biological needs that must be met during the early learning years (Williams & Burden, 1997). Some mechanistic theories of motivation appeared which perceived human beings as passive creatures obeying physiological drives and environmental stimuli (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to this theoretical orientation, motivated behaviors of human beings resulted from four main drives: hunger, thirst, sex, and avoidance of pain (Hull, 1943, cited in van Lier, 1996). For a long time, drive reduction theories were very popular in the theory and research on motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997). However, in time this approach was found insufficient by the experts in the field. Researcher thought that mechanistic theories could not explain some motivated behaviors in human beings because some of these behaviors did not stem from these four main needs. Based on experiments on monkeys and rats, psychologists showed that animals exhibited curiosity-related behaviors, although they endured hunger and pain for the sake of satisfying their curiosity (Berlyne, 1950, cited in van Lier, 1969). Such findings paved the way for the new motivation theories of a more organismic kind.

Organismic theoretical orientations perceived human beings as active individuals who can make decisions freely and initiate behaviors (Deci& Ryan, 1985). The term "intrinsic motivation" started to be used by some researchers in the field to explain the curiosity-related behaviors of animals and their attempts to explore and manipulate things simply for the enjoyment of these behaviors in and of themselves (Harlow & Hunt, 1971, cited in van Lier, 1996). Adherents of organismic theories started to put some concepts like "intrinsic motivation" and "ego energy" into the center of their pedagogical writings to explain the motivated behavior of human beings.

*Achievement Theories*

In light of this emerging research, early theories of motivation were extended and reformulated by several researchers in the field. Atkinson (1964, cited in Williams & Burden, 1997) was one of the pioneers in the field and introduced a new notion to explain motivated behaviors: the notion of the need to achieve or achievement motivation. According to this approach, people are motivated to various degrees based on the differences in their needs to achieve or to be successful (Williams & Burden, 1997). While the drive to succeed dominates some people's lives and turns out to be the ultimate goal in their lives, for others being successful and doing something well do not seem as meaningful. Therefore, some individuals become high achievers in everything since they are motivated by their drive to achieve whereas other do not place value on success and successful outcomes, so they do not put effort into being successful.

Achievement motivation for any person might be determined by another factor: the fear of failure. From this perspective, a person might avoid doing any

activity if he/she perceives it as too challenging to cope with. Since there is a possibility of failure, they do not perform the activity. Therefore, they do not feel motivated to put effort in that kind of activity because of the relative difficulty of the task. They avoid carrying it out to not risk being unsuccessful (Williams & Burden, 1997).

### *A Cognitivist View of Motivation*

In contrast to some motivation theories which explain human motivation with various external factors such as biological drives, the feeling of curiosity and novelty or the drive to achieve, a cognitive perspective gives central importance to choice. According to the main premise of this approach, people can make their own choices over the way in which they behave, so they can control their actions (Williams & Burden, 1997). Cognitive approaches to motivation perceive people as individuals making decisions about their acts (Williams & Burden, 1997). From this perspective, human beings have the capacity to make informed choices and they are motivated by the goals that they set on their own. They see value in putting effort in some actions since they decide to do it and feel prepared to spend some efforts to achieve their goals.

### *Social Constructivist Perspective of Motivation*

A social constructivist view of motivation suggests that an individual's motivation is subject to social, contextual, and cultural influences (Williams & Burden, 1997). According to this approach, the culture, the context, and the social situation of the society in which people lead their lives and their interactions with other members of society have a great influence on their motivation level. Since this

perspective gives value to the individuality of human beings, it emphasizes that people can set their own values for the external conditions that surround them. Therefore, they react to these external factors s according to their own internal disposition and personal attitudes towards them (Williams & Burden, 1997). It is worth noting that the basic premise of this view is that each individual is motivated differently by taking these socio-cultural factors into consideration on their own when they desire to act any behavior.

In sum, many different theories of motivation have emerged in the field of psychology and each theoretical orientation has attempted to offer different explanations for the motivated behaviors of human beings. After examining the development of motivation theories in psychology, the concept of motivation should be analyzed in language teaching to understand its great importance in this area.

<div align="center">Motivation in Foreign and Second Language Teaching</div>

The importance of motivation in language learning has led to the appearance of many motivation theories investigating the direct relationship between motivation and language learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1996). One of the most important theories dominating theory and research on foreign language and motivation is Gardner's social-psychological theory. This theory perceives learning a foreign language as a social act since it sees language as a part of people's identity shaped by their society's social and cultural structure. Therefore, it associates motivation to learn a foreign language with an individual's desire to be in contact with the community of speakers of the target language and to become a part of its culture (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Gardner, 1985; Williams & Burden, 1997). According to Gardner (1985), learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects because

while internalizing this target language's skills and behavior patterns, the characteristics of another community are also acquired. As a result, motivation to learn a foreign language and the success of individuals in learning it are directly determined by their attitudes towards the community of that language's speakers (Williams & Burden, 1997). This situation is defined as "integrative orientation" in Gardner's motivation theory. Integrative orientation concerns learners' positive feelings towards the community of the target language and their willingness and interest in social interaction with the speakers of that language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a; cited in Dörnyei, 2001b).

In the 1990s, the socio-psychological theory started to be criticized by some researchers who were carrying out studies in motivation in language learning. A number of researchers argued for broadening the theoretical perspective and research on motivation in education (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994a, 1994b; Oxford 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). They drew attention to other variables stemming from the classroom environment, which arouse and sustain students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

The borders of social-psychological approach were expanded by new motivation theories drawing on different branches of psychology, such as general education and cognitive developmental psychology. They included other variables that had been ignored by social-psychological theory, specifically those stemming from the classroom environment (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Dörnyei, 1994a; Williams & Burden, 1997). Dörnyei (1994a) introduced the concept of classroom-specific components of motivation including course, teacher and group dynamic motivation variables. Crookes and Schmidt

(1991) underlined learners' enjoyment of the learning tasks and working with their peers as another source of motivation in the classroom. Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde (1993) noted that present and emergent sources of motivation in the classroom were ignored by most motivational theories. As another important source of motivation, they put emphasis on flow as an experiential state that learners go through "when they are totally absorbed in the activity, time seems to be suspended and everything happens just the right way" (van Lier, 1996, p. 106).

The social-psychological approach contributed to motivation theory to a great extent and improved the concept of motivation in language learning. However, it overlooked classroom-specific or personal factors that are influential in increasing students' motivation level. New constructs of motivation shed light on some aspects of motivated behaviors of language learners that are observed the classroom environment.

*New Constructs of Motivation*

Researchers of motivation in language learning have recently become interested in other branches of psychology. New theories have come to the fore dealing with language learning and motivation in specific ways, as well as analyzing students' behaviors in classroom contexts. Goal theories, expectancy-value theories, and intellectual curiosity are three of these new constructs which help us to understand students' attitudes towards language learning and the learning tasks that they engage in the classroom environment.

*Goal Theories*

Recent research on motivation theory puts emphasis on the concept of 'goal' because goals are perceived as an important part of motivated behavior. In the process of making a decision to engage in an activity, goals which are set appropriately can lead learners to carry out and spend effort to sustain them (Williams & Burden, 1997). Goal-setting theory suggests that human action is triggered by purpose and carefully determined goals which provide people with an incentive to start an action. In learning contexts, if students are directed by specific goals, they see value in accomplishing activities since they are directed by the clear purpose of these goals. When learners are provided with specific goals either personally or externally, their chances of achievement will also be higher (Dörnyei, 2001a). Therefore, students need to set appropriate goals either by themselves or in the context of other sources, like learning tasks in the classroom environment.

*Expectancy-value Theories*

According to expectancy-value theories, individuals decide to engage in tasks if they find them worth performing. There are two main conditions that influence these decisions. First of all, they carry out tasks if they expect success at the end of their performance. Secondly, they put effort into them when they give value to the success which will be attained from these tasks. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between individuals' level of motivation and their expectancies from tasks with regard to success and value attached them. Dörnyei (2001a) suggests a converse relationship between these two factors. He emphasizes that individuals should not be expected to spend effort on tasks that they do not expect to obtain

success from and whose outcomes they do not find valuable. In this sense, there is a need for providing learners with tasks that they perceive as worth doing because of the possibility of success that they may get when they complete them. They may value these tasks if they match their interests, needs and goals.

*Intellectual Curiosity*

Curiosity is a feature of all human beings because people have a natural inclination to understand the unknown (van Lier, 1996). According to this premise, individuals desire to learn new things; they look for optimal challenges and show an interest in activities that attract their attention. However, in learning contexts, it is a very common situation that learners do not sustain their intellectual curiosity and after a while, they lose interest in learning. They do not find what they learn interesting or necessary. The tasks that are imposed on them seem very boring and unnecessary, so they feel unwilling to participate in activities which do not stimulate their intellectual curiosity and their desire to explore new things. At this point, students' interest should be triggered with surprising and interesting tasks that will provide them with different opportunities to experience new aspects of language (Williams & Burden, 1997).

As seen here, researchers have introduced new constructs of motivation theory that broadened the scope of language learning motivation by focusing on students' classroom learning behaviors (Dörnyei, 1996). The motivational factors in the language classroom should also be explored carefully to recognize what causes these behaviors of learners.

Classroom Motivation

Recent research on motivation gives more importance to classroom-specific motivational variables. Earlier motivational theories put emphasis on past and future sources of motivation such as drives, needs, responses programmed in human beings, or getting a job, a promotion or passing an exam (van Lier, 1996). However, they ignored immediate sources of motivation which exist in the classroom environment such as the joy of dealing with a task, exploring it, and collaborating on it in the immediate learning context (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). van Lier developed a categorization using past, present and future sources of motivation that included new elements of motivation. Table 3 describes each group of motivation sources and their sub-elements.

Table 3- Sources of motivation

| Past | Present | Future |
| --- | --- | --- |
| drives, needs, learning, or other responses programmed in the individual | enjoyment of the performance in the present; intrinsic motivation, emergent motivation (=FLOW) | goals in directing action, instrumental, integrative |

Starting in the 1990s, researchers wanted to diminish the gap between theories of motivation in educational psychology and in the L2 field (Dörnyei, 2001a). They began to focus on motivational sources existing in the class environment. Dörnyei (1994a) developed a model of classroom-specific components of motivation. He categorized these components into three groups: (a) course-specific motivational components, (b) group-specific motivational components and (c) teacher-specific motivational components.

*Course-specific Motivational Components*

Course-specific motivational components consist of the syllabus, teaching materials, teaching method, and learning tasks presented in the classroom environment (Dörnyei, 1994a). Dörnyei (2001a) suggests that at the learning situation level, these components are highly important factors for increasing students' interest in the course. If the syllabus is designed according to the needs of students, they may find learning tasks relevant to their own needs. As a result, they may feel more motivated to actively participate in classroom activities since their needs and interests are addressed. In addition, the choice of course materials has certain impacts on students' motivation level, as it plays an important role in implementing the goals of the syllabus to the classroom environment. If materials are chosen carefully in accordance with students' needs and interests, they can provide students with interesting tasks that better draw students into the learning process. These tasks may lead students to have the joy of exploration that they can experience in "here-and-now interest in the task" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, cited in van Lier, 1996, p. 105).

Teaching method is another factor which affects students' motivation levels. Teachers need to adopt proper teaching methods to meet the needs of students according to their language learning purposes (Dörnyei, 2001a). For instance, if students learn an L2 to develop communicative competence, teachers might present their lessons with the help of communicative techniques and strategies to keep their attention during the lesson. In this way, they can create motivational conditions for learning.

Lastly, tasks play an essential role in classroom practices and directly affect students' attitudes towards the learning process. Therefore, they should be chosen with utmost care to stimulate students' interest and to make their learning experiences effective. According to Egbert (2003), it is necessary to use attractive tasks in order to provide students with opportunities to experience 'flow'. As an experiential state, 'flow' occurs when the learner is immersed in an activity by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement and success in the process of accomplishing it. Students, who experience flow, are so engrossed in the activity they do not realize how time passes. In this way, they may learn both how to use the language more effectively and enjoy the activity. Also, the presentation of tasks by teachers is very effective in the task accomplishment. If tasks are clearly presented in terms of their procedure, purpose and outcome, students have a tendency to engage in the process and complete them. In addition, various tasks can be employed to make the learning process entertaining and to arouse and sustain students' motivation (Brophy, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001a; Williams & Burden, 1997).

<p align="center"><em>Group-specific Motivational Components</em></p>

The composition and internal structure of the learner group can change the class atmosphere to a great extent. As a part of group-specific motivational components, group dynamics refers to the behaviors and development of a group. The dynamics of the learning group affect individual student's performance and attitude towards the learning process (Dörnyei, 2001a). One important aspect of group dynamics is closely related to individual student motivation: group cohesiveness. If group cohesiveness is achieved in the classroom environment, students feel a strong sense of unity with their group. Since they are a member of this

cohesive group, they feel secure and comfortable (Clement & Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b). As a result, they enjoy the learning process. The anxiety of learners decreases, so the level of their participation in class and their achievement increase because of their feeling of safety in their groups (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Another aspect of group-specific motivational components is group norms. These norms determine acceptable behaviors in the class group to enable the completion of tasks (Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998; cited in Dörnyei, 2001a). In every classroom a range of norms are established. If some students reject these norms, this situation may result in their isolation from others in the classroom environment. *"Group norms are worth noting because if constructive"* group norms can be established in the classroom, they may make cooperative learning possible (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 45). According to Dörnyei, provided that these norms are "*explicitly discussed*" and "*willingly adopted by group members,*" these norms turn into efficient rules of conduct that contribute to both group motivation and the success of individual students (p.46). For example, norms such as "let's help each other," "let's respect other's ideas and values," or "let's not make fun of other's mistakes or weaknesses" might be accepted as a set of class rules for everybody in the classroom. Group members might avoid violating them and feel more motivated thanks to these norms if they discuss and come to an agreement on them.

*Teacher-specific Motivational Components*

Teacher-specific motivational components include the teacher's personality, teaching style, feedback, and relationships with students (Dörnyei, 1994a). Williams and Burden (1997) point out that since language learning is interactive by its nature, teachers are very influential figures in the teaching and learning processes. A

teacher's personality and teaching style determine the level of students' motivation in some way, either positively or negatively. In authoritarian and controlling learning contexts, students are not likely to become more motivated and willing to learn new things, in contrast to autonomy-supporting learning contexts (Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; van Lier, 1996). Therefore, if teachers are less authoritarian and controlling, students may become more autonomous. Modeling and positive feedback are two other factors that teachers can provide. Since teachers are models for their students, every behavior they do in the classroom influences the motivation level of students (Dörnyei, 2001a). If students receive positive feedback for their performances, their feeling of self-efficacy can increase and they feel more confident to engage in tasks more (Bandura, 1997; Brophy, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001a).

Classroom motivation is a combination of these elements which complement each other for better foreign language structure. However, there is one more element of classroom motivation which makes the process of language learning more effective if considered carefully: task-specific motivation. In the next section, the concept of task-specific motivation will be examined in terms of its definition in the literature, its elements and its importance in classroom practices to stimulate students' motivation effectively.

*Task-specific Motivation*

Some researchers point out that there is a direct relationship between general motivation orientation and task-specific motivation (Julkunen, 2001). They suggest that in addition to activities and instructional materials, individual tasks as well are the source of motivation in the classroom environment (Dörnyei, 1994a; Ellis, 1985; Julkunen, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001). To explain the term "task-specific motivation,"

Julkunen defined it and suggested that "when task characteristics are the focus of attention, the term task-specific motivation can be used" (Julkunen, 2001, p. 33). From this perspective, tasks themselves may contain some characteristics that encourage the individuals to complete them. Since tasks hold specific motives which are intrinsic to them; the accomplishment of tasks leads to satisfaction of the underlying motive (Ausubel, 1968).

The design of tasks is one of the determinants of learners' motivation level (Julkunen, 2001). Tasks, such as language games, which include a maximum amount of uncertainty and unpredictability, seem more attractive to learners (Maehr, 1984, cited in Julkunen, 2001). There are other determinants which affect students' motivation with regard to the task accomplishment. These are interest (attention), relevance, expectancy (confidence), and outcomes (satisfaction) (Julkunen, 2001). Interest refers to the curiosity of learners aroused by the tasks. Generating and sustaining this interest throughout a task, an activity, or a course are two critical points in task-related motivation. Relevance is another element of task-specific motivation which is strongly related to students' personal needs. In task-specific motivation cases, learners are likely to perceive that their needs are met by learning tasks. By performing tasks, learners may obtain their personal goals (Keller, 1983, 1984, cited in Julkunen, 2001). Expectancy refers to students' expectation of success or failure and the control of learners over the learning process when they decide to put effort into the task completion process (Keller, 1983, 1984; cited in Julkunen, 2001). Lastly, the outcome of the learning refers to the degree which students experience a feeling of satisfaction intrinsically or not (Keller, 1983, 1984, cited in, Julkunen, 2001).

The relationship between task characteristics and students' levels of motivation is another dimension to be taken into account. Tasks' content and format play a prominent role in arousing students' motivation. Erickson and Shultz (1992) suggest that in planning instruction and in task design, tasks should be evaluated in terms of both their content and format. To reach a high motivation level of students in the classroom environment, tasks' format and content should be attractive enough to draw students' interest into the completion of the task. For example, simply formatted tasks can be cognitively demanding in content or the same content may be presented in a more interesting or easier format (Good & Brophy, 1990). To illustrate, a guessing game like "20 Questions" in which the answerer has to respond to different questions about the same subject with "Yes" or "No" has an easy format, but it encourages deductive thinking and creativity (Julkunen, 2001). At this point, there should be a balance between the subject matter structure of a task and its format.

In sum, task-specific motivation is a highly important component of the learning process. Tasks' characteristics, such as their design, their specific features- such as relevance, expectancy, and learner attention-, and their content and form change learners' behavior in the classroom and bring them into learning process more actively.

## Conclusion

Tasks play an important role in affecting students' motivation levels. Learners in EFL contexts find many opportunities to internalize target language with the help of effective tasks if they have sufficient motivation to achieve this goal. Therefore, practitioners and syllabus designers should consider tasks carefully in order to

address their students' interests and needs and create an effective language learning atmosphere in the classroom.

In this chapter, task-based instruction, the instructional task cycle, task types, motivation concepts, sources of motivation, the development of the concept of motivation in psychology and foreign language education, new constructs of motivation, and classroom motivation and task-specific motivation were discussed in detail to present the context for the present study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explores students' perceptions about the motivating characteristics of a commonly used course book's tasks. In the study, the answers to the following questions were investigated and reported:

1. To what degree do students feel motivated in response to the tasks in their course books?

2. What are the characteristics of EFL course books' tasks that students perceive as motivating?

3. Do students' perceptions of motivating characteristics of tasks differ by proficiency levels (beginner, elementary, upper-intermediate)?

This chapter includes information about the study participants, the instruments used to obtain data, the data collection procedure, and the data analysis procedures.

Setting

İstanbul Kültür University (IKU) Foreign Languages Center was founded to meet the foreign languages learning requirements of the students in the English Preparatory Classes and in all the degree classes of four-year faculties and two-year vocational schools at IKU. The English Preparatory Classes consist of A-Level (upper-intermediate), B-Level (intermediate) and C-Level (beginner) classes of the Foreign Languages Center. The education in the English Preparatory Classes lasts one academic year. Students are given a placement test before the fall semester to determine their language levels and they are placed into one of these three groups to

receive their preparatory education. A-Level students who meet the attendance and grade average requirements are entitled to take the English Proficiency Exam at the end of the fall term and all students who meet the attendance and grade average requirements are entitled to take the English Proficiency Exam at the end of the academic year. A- and B-Level classes do 26 hours and C-Level classes do 28 hours of class work in a week. A- and B-Level students are offered 12 hours of Main Course class and C-Level students are offered 14 hours of Main Course class in a week. Main Course lessons are done by using a course book series which addresses all the four language skills. Focus is especially on the grammar, listening, reading, and speaking sections of the series. In A-, B- and C-Level classes, students have four hours of Reading and six hours of Writing courses. A- and B-Level students attend two hours of Listening and Speaking classes while C-Level students have four hours of these classes. Also, A- and B-Level classes have two hours a week of Workbook lessons which follow up the material covered in their Main Course classes. There are course coordinators to maintain the coordination between the administration and teachers who present different courses and a testing office to plan testing processes and prepare exams. The education in the English Preparatory Classes at IKU is obligatory for the students of English Language and Literature Department, all Engineering Departments, and International Relations Department. These students have to pass the English Proficiency Exam given at the end of the academic year to become freshman students in their departments during the following term. Students from other departments may attend the English Prep Class on a voluntary basis. However, they have to take the English Proficiency Exam and get the necessary grade to pass it if they choose to attend the English Prep Classes.

Participants

The participants for this study were 50 students of İstanbul Kültür University's Foreign Languages Center from three different proficiency levels. Before the main study, two pilot studies were carried out with 27 students in two beginner classes. The motivation questionnaire, which included five-point Likert scale type questions, semi-structured interviews, and student journals were piloted with these 27 students in January, 2010.

The fifty students of the main study were from three different classes. Fifteen of these students were in one upper-intermediate class, and seventeen of them were in one intermediate class while eighteen of them were in one beginner class. Their levels were determined by a standard proficiency test conducted at the beginning of the year. Therefore, their language proficiency levels were similar. Summary information about the participants of this study is shown in Table 4.

| Table 4- Background information about participants | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Educational Background | State High School | Anatolian High School | Private Anatolian High School | Super High School |
| Number of Students | 21 | 21 | 4 | 4 |
| Proficiency Level | Upper-Intermediate | Intermediate | Beginner |
| Number of Students | 15 | 17 | 18 |
| Departments | English Language & Literature | Civil Engineering | Industrial Engineering |
| Number of Students | 13 | 6 | 14 |

| Departments | Electronical Engineering | Computer Engineering | International Relations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Departments | Law | Business Management | |
| Number of Students | 4 | 1 | |

The willingness of teachers to take part in the study determined the choice of the classes serving as subjects in this study. The instructors had the experience of from 1 to 5 years to more than 20 years. The instructors of the upper-intermediate and intermediate classes had an MA degree in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language while the instructor of the beginner class was attending an MA Program of American Culture and Literature during the course of this study.

Instruments

In order to collect data in this study, a motivation questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and student journals were used. The motivation questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to measure the motivation levels of students in response to the course books' tasks that they engaged in their main course classes. After a brief survey done among 16 university instructors from 14 different institutions, it was realized that the course book of the present study was used by the majority of them. Therefore, the course book, called "Success" (2007), was chosen as the main source of the present study since it was commonly used by different institutions at tertiary level. Before administering the first questionnaire, an informed consent form which provided students with general information about the study, the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and student journals was given (see Appendix C).

Students were ensured that participation in this study was voluntary and their responses would be kept confidential. The informed consent form also included a general background survey. This survey solicited data about students' age, sex, educational background, proficiency levels, and departments.

The first instrument of this study was the motivation questionnaire. This questionnaire gathered data about students' level of motivation as a response to different tasks chosen from their course book. The data collected from the motivation questionnaires were intended to answer the first question exploring students' motivation levels stemming from their course books' tasks. The motivation questionnaire was administered to all students who participated in the five different tasks from the course book. Students who were absent for the classes in which tasks were carried out did not fill in the questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered after each task in the treatment, and consisted of 10 items.The students were asked to select from five possible Likert scale responses, ranging from "not at all" to "very much." The motivation questionnaire was adapted from a previous motivation questionnaire developed by Büyükyazı (1995). This questionnaire was chosen and adapted by the researcher because it was used in a similar study that also measured the level of students' motivation in response to the tasks that had been carried out. However, some questions were altered by the researcher because in Büyükyazı's thesis the relationship between students' motivation levels and tasks were analyzed in the light of communicative strategies. Therefore, the researcher omitted one question which investigated the students' responses about their teachers' communicative strategies. Instead of this question, question 8 was formed which sought information about students' completion of tasks according to the instructions

in their course books. In addition, the wording in question 9 was also modified to make the statement more explicit and clear for students.

Interviews were the second instrument used in the study. Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) were carried out among randomly chosen students who participated in the classroom tasks. The purpose of these interviews was to get students' perceptions of motivating characteristics of the tasks in which they participated. This part of the data aimed to answer the second research question, the perceptions of the students about the motivating features of their course books' tasks, and the third research question, the effects of their proficiency levels on their perceptions. Focus group interviews were conducted with 45 learners chosen by the researcher randomly after their completion of fifteen different course book tasks. This procedure elicited perceptions of a cross-section of students, rather than from only students who had the highest or lowest motivation levels. This assumed that the attitudes of extreme cases would not be likely to be typical of the group as a whole. Semi-structured interviews were held in order to obtain learners' detailed ideas and feelings about the motivating characteristics of tasks. With the help of this method, the researcher could elicit more in-depth information about what students liked or disliked about the task and how their course books' tasks influenced their motivation. Semi-structured interviews were preferred because in this kind of interview researchers are not limited by pre-set questions and it enables them to ask other follow-up questions as the interview proceeds (Dörnyei, 2007; Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

The questions of the semi-structured interviews were adapted from a perception questionnaire developed by Webster, Trevino, and Ryan (cited in Egbert,

2003). In Egbert's study, the aim was to measure "students' experience of flow" in language classes. The researcher decided to employ some of the questions of this perception questionnaire to learn students' detailed ideas about the motivating characteristics of their course book's tasks. The original questionnaire had 14 items. During the semi-structured interviews of this study, 13 items of this perception questionnaire were turned into seven separate questions and the researcher added three different questions in order to elicit answers related to the second and third research questions. Questions, 8, 9, and 10 were formulated to investigate the demotivating characteristics of tasks, students' perceptions of difficulty of the tasks, and their descriptions of motivating aspects of these tasks.

Student journals are also a source of data in the study (see Appendix G). Six students from each group kept journals regularly after their performance of each task during the whole treatment process. The purpose of these journals was to get students' detailed descriptions of task engagement, their insights and feelings that they experienced during the task completion process and the effects of tasks' characteristics on their motivation. This part of the data was used to answer the second question, the perceptions of students in respect to the motivating characteristics of the task, and the third question, the effect of their proficiency level on their attitudes towards the tasks. The content, the format, and the length of the student journals used in this study were dictated by the researcher. Students wrote their journals in Turkish, and these journals were translated from Turkish to English by the researcher. According to the feedback obtained from the two pilot studies in January, the researcher created an outline for student journal entries to enlighten students about steps to follow while writing their journals. As inferred from the two

pilot studies, students were in need of directions to organize their ideas, feelings, and perceptions about the tasks to answer the second research question of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The formal permission to conduct the study at İstanbul Kültür University was received on January 8th, 2010. The first piloting study was carried out with nine students from one beginner class on January 11th, 2010. The second piloting study was conducted with 18 students from another beginner class on January 13th, 2010. The participants in the two different classes were engaged in the same task chosen by the researcher. The piloting study served to provide information about the effectiveness of the motivation questionnaire for the study. This included the establishment of the reliability of the motivation questionnaire, which was found to be .66.

The piloting also checked the procedures of the semi-structured interviews, such as the appropriateness of questions, procedures for selecting students for the interviews, and the flow of the semi-structured interviews. Also, the format of the student journals was also checked in two pilot studies by presenting one group with some prompts to write down their feelings and opinions about the task while setting the other group completely free to keep their journals.

In January, the instructors of three different classes were given a brief workshop by the researcher about the main premises of task-based instruction, the features of tasks, the types of tasks, and the methodological procedures for carrying out the tasks. Following this step, the researcher showed some examples of tasks available in course books to instructors and they collaborated to choose five different tasks in the course book to employ in each class. Then a schedule for the application

of tasks, the administrations of motivation questionnaires and semi-structured

interviews and student journals were arranged for each proficiency level group by the

researcher and instructors. In addition, teachers were informed about how to apply

tasks during classroom instruction. They were required to follow the instructions in

the teacher's guidebook to carry out the tasks. Thus, teachers' influence on students'

motivation level and their task performance was reduced.

In the upper-intermediate class, tasks started on February 19, 2010 and ended

on March 12, 2010. The description of the tasks in the upper-intermediate class is

displayed in detail in Table 5.

| Table 5- Tasks in the upper-intermediate class | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tasks-Task Types<br><br>Name-Dates | Purpose | Description |
| Task 1<br><br>Group Discussion<br><br>(Opinion Exchange)<br><br>February 19, 2010 | To form ideas individually and discuss them in groups by employing the structures and vocabulary items in the unit. | This task concludes the unit. Students are provided with three different opinions related to the unit topic which are about keeping secrets, the need for privacy, and somebody to confide in. They are supposed to discuss one of these ideas in their groups by showing their arguments to support their opinions. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Task 2<br><br>Information Gap<br><br>(Information Gap)<br><br><br><br>February 23, 2010 | To enable students to guess one set of information which their partners have. They negotiate and find out the complementary part of the information to complete the activity. | Each student is given four different situations about what they should stop doing to lose weight, remember to do before going on holiday, try not to do in English lessons, and never forget to do before an important exam. They are directed to choose only two of them. Then, they tell their partners only two things and their partners are expected to guess two situations related to the two things. |
| Task 3<br><br>Role Play<br><br>(Real World & Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br><br><br>February 24, 2010 | To raise students' consciousness about a hotly debated topic and to give the opportunity to negotiate for meaning through role playing. | Students are assigned different roles about a controversial issue, the stricter control of the press in terms of people's privacy, and they are expected to defend their viewpoint by using the prompts given in the book. Also, they are free to add their personal viewpoints while acting out their roles. |
| Task 4<br><br>Interview<br><br>(Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br><br><br>February 25, 2010 | To practice how to ask and answers some questions in the format of an interview and enable students to get to know each other by getting detailed information about their peers' habits through the interview. | In pairs, students prepare six questions about films and their cinema going habits to ask their partners. They ask these questions to each other. |
| Task 5<br><br>Group Work<br><br>(Collaboration- | To enable students to practice previously learned structures in | Each student in pairs is given eight different sentences with blanks and they are expected to |

| | contexts and to guess the lacking elements by using the clues in these structures both in pairs and in groups. | fill in the blanks with previously learned structures. They are about two household objects without giving their names. After each student completes all sentences, they are supposed to guess the object described in eight different sentences as quickly as possible. Then their partners test their guessing ability by forming some sentences with blanks. After students complete their pair work, they are put in groups of three to try to think of a different product to write about. A time limit is set and groups join up with different groups and they take turns to read out their sentences and guess the other groups' products. |
|---|---|---|
| Cooperation & Competition) March 12, 2010 | | |

In the intermediate class, tasks were carried out between 19 February, 2010 and 12 March 2010. Table 6 shows the types, purpose, and descriptions of the tasks performed in the intermediate class.

| Table 6- Tasks in the intermediate class | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tasks and Task Types Name-Dates | Purpose | Description |
| Task 1 Group Discussion (Opinion Exchange) February 19, 2010 | To form ideas in groups by employing the information given throughout the unit and to negotiate the meaning while forming their arguments. | This task concludes the unit. Students are provided with a discussion topic about the theme of the unit. In groups, students discuss whether young people have enough patience to cope with the necessities of real life. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Task 2<br><br>Interview<br><br>(Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br>February 25, 2010 | To practice how to ask questions in the forms of previously learned structures in order to exchange meaning and share personal experiences. | Students study in pairs and ask some questions to each other about their peers' personal life experiences in education, sports, and daily life. |
| Task 3<br><br>Information Gap<br><br>(Information Gap)<br><br>February 26, 2010 | To practice the structures and adjectives used for the person description and to improve students' ability to process the given information in order to guess the missing information. | Each student describes one person given in five different questions to his/her partner. Students try to guess the person from their partner's description and they compete with each other to find the figure described in the shortest time. |
| Task 4<br><br>Role Play<br><br>(Real World)<br><br>March 01, 2010 | To practice the following target structures: offering, refusing, or accepting something politely. | Students are given real-life situations such as how to fix a flat tyre, to solve a complex Sudoku problem, or to decide what to buy as extraordinary birthday gifts.  They are expected to come up with interesting ideas to help their partners in these situations and to use proper expressions to have a real-life conversation with their partners. |
| Task 5<br><br>Group Work | To practice how to ask questions in the forms | In groups, students work on different situations that they |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (Collaboration-Cooperation & Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br><br>March 12, 2010 | of previously learned structures in order to exchange meaning and share personal experiences. | experienced in their lives: to start an argument, to start laughing, start crying, etc. |

Similar to the upper-intermediate class and the intermediate class, tasks started on February 19, 2010 and ended on March 12, 2010 in the beginner class. The description of the tasks in the beginner class is displayed in detail in Table 7.

| Table 7- Tasks in the beginner class | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tasks and Task Types<br><br>Name-Dates | Purpose | Description |
| Task 1<br><br>Group Work<br><br>(Collaboration-Cooperation & Opinion Exchange)<br><br><br><br>February 19, 2010 | To foster cooperative learning, to give the opportunity to negotiate for meaning, to enhance their creative thinking skills. | Learners are given a situation, a natural disaster, and required to come up with a creative idea to cope with its dramatic consequences. In groups, they organize a project throughout which they discuss their ideas to make their project effective for getting rid of the situation. |
| Task 2<br><br>Information Gap<br><br>(Information Gap)<br><br><br><br>February 22, 2010 | To enable students to guess the information about their peers. They negotiate and find out the correct information to verify their guesses. | Each student is given four different papers and directed to write a different New Year resolution on them. Then, they take turns reading aloud the resolution and try to guess who wrote them. |

| Task 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Role Play<br><br>(Real World & Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br><br><br>March 01, 2010 | To enhance real-life rehearsal on the given topic and build fluency in using the target expressions. | Through eliciting the expressions in the previous lesson and using them, they go through a conversation in pairs, and role play it with their partners. |
| Task 4<br><br>Group Discussion<br><br>(Opinion Exchange)<br><br><br><br><br>March 11, 2010 | To form ideas individually and discuss them in groups by employing the structures and vocabulary items in the unit. | Students are provided with a hotly debated issue: alternative punishments for different kinds of crimes. They are supposed to work in groups, form their own arguments, and offer their alternatives they think would be fairer for each crime and discuss this controversial topic to negotiate their ideas. |
| Task 5<br><br>An Interview-Like Role Play<br><br>(Real Life & Sharing Personal Experiences)<br><br><br><br>March 12, 2010 | To enable students to practice the elicited target language functions like asking and answering questions through role playing. | Students are supposed to prepare some conversations for acting out an interview in which they will use target functions elicited in pre-task language activities. |

All tasks were chosen from the course book by the researcher with the participation of the class teacher. Before the performance of each task, students engaged in pre-task language activities. In the pre-task phase, students were provided with prior knowledge to prepare them for the activity. They engaged in different language activities that serve as input for actual task performances. Additionally,

learners were informed about the procedures for accomplishing the task and its outcomes. Teachers introduced the topic and pointed out keywords to help students to understand the task instructions. Students were given only one task to complete in one class hour during their main course classes. Immediately after learners had completed the activity, they were given the motivation questionnaire. All students who participated in the activity completed the motivation questionnaires. Students from each class completed 5 motivation questionnaires by the end of treatment. The class teachers distributed the questionnaires after each task and collected them. The researcher filed these questionnaires chronologically and analyzed the responses in these questionnaires at the end of the study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with focus groups consisting of three randomly chosen students from each class. At the end of the performance of each task, semi-structured interviews were held with these students on a voluntary basis. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes with each sampling group and they were recorded by a voice recording device. The interviews were carried out in Turkish and they were translated from Turkish to English by the researcher. These data served the aim of learning more about students' feelings and attitudes towards the motivating features of their course book's tasks and the effect of their proficiency level on their perceptions towards these tasks.

Journal sampling groups were also formed and students were asked to keep journals about the task that they had dealt with. Sampling groups and focus groups for each task were composed of three different students in each class in order to get as many different perceptions about the tasks as possible. After the accomplishment of each task, students were provided with the journal outline and informed by the

researcher about the content, the format and the length of their pieces of writing. Students wrote their journals at home and the researcher gathered them the next day.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences, 11.5(SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected from the motivation questionnaire. In measuring the quantitative data gathered from the experimental part of the study, students' responses to these questionnaires were analyzed by finding the mean scores of the questionnaire items to determine the students' levels of motivation. The data from the semi-structured interviews and the student journals were analyzed and interpreted by the researcher qualitatively.

The statistical data gathered through the Likert scale questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS. The averaged mean scores and the standard deviations of all students' responses for the five different task types were compiled. In this way, students' responses were examined for their motivation levels as a response to the five different task types. In order to measure the students' motivation levels towards the similar task types and compare the results among these three proficiency levels, an ANOVA test was used. In this way, it was possible to measure students' motivational response to particular tasks and task types. When significant results were revealed in the ANOVA test, LSD was used for post hoc analysis in order to determine the location of the reported differences.

The researcher employed the method of categorization for the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data collected through interviews were examined to find recurring patterns obtained from these interviews. In the first part of the interviews, recurring comments related to the motivating characteristics of the

course book's tasks were looked for. In the second part of the interviews, the existence of some aspects of these tasks which students did not find motivating was inspected. In the last part of the interviews, the effect of students' proficiency levels on their perceptions of tasks and their motivating aspects were investigated to answer the third research question. The researcher transcribed all interviews and coded the students' comments about the tasks. Then the recurring themes that were found in the transcriptions were categorized; these categorizations contributed to answering the second and the third questions.

The purpose of student journals was to provide more detailed information about the motivating characteristics of the course book's tasks. Students described their engagements with the tasks in their own words. They explained their feelings that they experienced in the process of task accomplishment and some underlying reasons for finding tasks motivating or demotivating. Their journals were analyzed carefully and the recurring patterns of the interviews and the data from the student journals were matched in the case of similar comments.

Conclusion

This chapter presented general information about the aim of the study, stating the research questions the researcher tried to answer, the participants in the study, the instruments used to gather data and the data collection and data analysis procedures. The next chapter will provide detailed information about the results found with the analyses.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS


Introduction

The major focus of this study is to investigate the motivational levels of students towards the tasks of a commonly used course book. Additionally, students' perceptions are used to identify motivating characteristics of the tasks in this course book. This chapter presents the qualitative and quantitative analysis carried out in order to address the three research questions proposed in the present study:

1. To what degree do students feel motivated in response to the tasks in their course books?

2. What are the characteristics of EFL course books' tasks that students perceive as motivating?

3. Do students' perceptions of motivating characteristics of tasks differ by proficiency levels (beginner, elementary, upper-intermediate)?

This study was conducted with students from three proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, and upper-intermediate. There were 50 participants from three different classes of İstanbul Kültür University Foreign Languages Center. Each group completed five different tasks from their course books in their main course classes during four weeks. These activities included a sample of group discussion, group work, interview, role play, and information-gap tasks. Table 8 shows the descriptions of five different tasks used in this study.

| Table 8- The description of five different tasks used in the study | | |
|---|---|---|
| Task Type | Organization | Process |
| Group Discussion | Small Groups | Students discuss some controversial topics and state their viewpoints. |
| Group Work | Small groups | Students work in a collaborative way to achieve the task provided. |
| Interview | Pairs | Students ask and answer some questions to each other about their personal experiences, life styles, likes and dislikes. |
| Role Play | Small groups | Students are assigned different roles to act out some situations about real life processes. |
| Information-Gap | Pairs and small groups | Students hold different pieces of information and exchange them to complete the task. |

This chapter includes the findings about students' motivational levels towards their course book's tasks and the motivating characteristics of these tasks from students' perceptions. In the first part, the findings from the quantitative data are presented and interpreted. In the second part, the qualitative data are presented and interpreted.

The quantitative data for this study were gathered through a motivation questionnaire. This instrument was administered to all students from three different proficiency levels immediately after their completion of each task in their course book. The aim was to measure their motivation levels as a response to their course book tasks. In the motivation questionnaire, there were 10 questions. These questions

used a five-point Likert scale with values ranging from "not at all" to "very much".

The items in the questionnaire were examined for reliability and the Cronbach's alpha of reliability measured at .87. This result showed that the motivation questionnaire was highly reliable because conventionally it is interpreted that if the Cronbach's alpha is between the scales below, the instrument is labelled as follows:

If the Alfa ($\alpha$) is between

- $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the instrument is not reliable.
- $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, the instrument has a low reliability.
- $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, the instrument is reliable.
- $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the instrument is highly reliable.  (Kalaycı, 2005, p. 405)

In order to analyze students' motivation level towards five different task types, the mean values and standard deviations for each task in each class and for all tasks from all proficiency levels were calculated. Additionally, an ANOVA test was run to compare the motivation level of all students to similar task types and different classes towards different task types. The analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaires shed light on the first and third research questions which examine the motivation level of students as a response to five different tasks and whether their motivation levels differ by proficiency levels.

The qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and student journals were analyzed by the researcher. First, recurring patterns about the motivating characteristics of tasks were found both in the interviews and student journals. Then similar comments that were recurring in the data from these two instruments were matched to describe both motivating and demotivating aspects of tasks from students' perceptions. The interview questions had three focuses: the

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motivating characteristics of tasks, the demotivating aspects of tasks, and the effect

of students' proficiency levels on their motivation level.

Quantitative Data Analyses

In order to rank the three proficiency levels according to their general

motivation level after the completion of five different task types, the mean values

and standard deviations of all students' responses in all questionnaires were

calculated. According to the mean values and standard deviations of students'

responses in the questionnaires, the three proficiency groups were ranked with regard

to their motivation levels as a response to five different tasks. Table 9 shows the

motivation levels of students from three different proficiency levels.

Table 9- The means of students' motivation levels as a response to five different
tasks

| Students' Proficiency Level | N | M | sd |
|---|---|---|---|
| Upper-Intermediate | 72 | 3.60 | .68 |
| Intermediate | 83 | 3.74 | .68 |
| Beginner | 82 | 3.70 | .82 |

Note. N: number; M: mean; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4,
Some=3,A little=2, Not at all=1.)

Table 9 indicates that when examining questionnaire responses to all the tasks

in all groups, intermediate level students were the most motivated group as indicated

by their responses to five different tasks in their course books with a mean value of

3.74. In other words, students at this proficiency level reported the highest level of

motivation towards their course book tasks. The overall mean value for the

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motivation level of students in the beginner level is 3.70. On the other hand, compared to the other two groups, the upper-intermediate level students had the lowest level of motivation with a mean value of 3.60. However, there was not any statistical difference between these groups in terms of the average of their motivational levels. As these results show, the intermediate class had a higher motivation level than those of the upper-intermediate and beginner groups.

In order to investigate students' motivational attitudes towards task types, the mean values for each task as reported by the three groups were also calculated. According to the mean values and standard deviations of students' answers in the questionnaires, tasks were ranked from most to least motivating. Table 10 shows the responses of all students from the three different proficiency levels towards the five different tasks.

Table 10- The motivation levels of all students towards task types

| Task Types | M | sd |
|---|---|---|
| Group Work | 3.85 | .75 |
| Group Discussion | 3.75 | .73 |
| Interview | 3.70 | .69 |
| Role Play | 3.61 | .73 |
| Information-Gap | 3.52 | .74 |

Note. M: mean values; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4, Some=3, A little=2, Not at all=1.)

As can be seen in Table 10, the group work task was the one that students from all proficiency levels found the most motivating (M=3.85). It was followed by the group discussion task with a mean value of 3.75. Interviews had a mean value of

3.70 while the role play had a mean value of 3.61. The information gap task had the lowest mean value of 3.52.

Additionally, the motivation levels for the three different groups were computed to compare their motivation levels for each type of task. An ANOVA test was run to investigate the impact of different kinds of tasks on students' motivation levels and to compare the groups in terms of their levels of motivation. Table 11 shows the motivational levels of students in the upper-intermediate class towards five different task types in their course book.

Table 11- Students' motivation levels towards different task types in
the upper-intermediate class

| Task Type | M | sd |
|---|---|---|
| Group Work | 4.01 | .38 |
| Interview | 3.78 | .61 |
| Group Discussion | 3.76 | .60 |
| Role-Play * | 3.33 | .65 |
| Information Gap* | 3.10 | .73 |

Note. M: mean values; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4, Some=3, A little=2, Not at all=1.)
* Significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 11 shows that upper-intermediate level students found the group work task the most motivating with a mean value of 4.01. Motivation for the interview and group discussion tasks was quite similar with the mean value for the interview at 3.78 and for the group discussion task at 3.76. Despite these apparent similarities, there is a statistical significant difference between students' motivational levels towards the five different tasks in this proficiency level. Specifically, according to

the ANOVA results, students' perceptions of the last two tasks, role play and

information-gap, were statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .001.

Further, Table 12 indicates the statistically significant difference in students'

motivational level as a response to five different tasks in the upper-intermediate

group.

Table 12- ANOVA results of students' motivational levels towards different task types  in the upper-intermediate class

| Anova Average | *df* | *F* | *Sig.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| Between Groups | 4 | | |
| Within Groups | 67 | 5.24 | .00 |
| Total | 71 | | |
| *Note.* Significant at the p< .05 level. | | | |

In this group, it is seen that the group work was the task that motivated

students the most (M= 4.01). The interview and group discussion tasks were found

slightly less motivating by students at nearly the same levels with the mean values of

3.78 and 3.76, respectively. On the other hand, ANOVA test results (Table 12) point

out that there is a significant difference among different activities (p<.000) in

response to the tasks of role play and information-gap in the upper-intermediate

class. The post-hoc LSD test reveals that that role play task is significantly different

from the group work (p<.006) and the information-gap task is significantly different

from the  group work (p<.000), the interview (p<.003) and group discussion (p<.004).

The same ANOVA test was run for the intermediate level students' motivational levels towards different task types. Table 13 shows the motivational level of the intermediate group in response to the five different tasks in their course book.

Table 13- Students' motivation levels towards different task types in the intermediate class

| Task Type | M | sd |
|---|---|---|
| Interview | 3.89 | .49 |
| Group Discussion | 3.88 | .44 |
| Information-Gap | 3.86 | .67 |
| Role Play | 3.54 | .72 |
| Group Work | 3.45 | 1.00 |

Note. M: mean values; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4, Some=3, A little=2, Not at all=1.)

Table 13 indicates that students in the intermediate group found the interview activity to be the most motivating task. The mean value of this task was 3.89. The group discussion task is the second most motivating task with a mean value of 3.88. The information-gap task followed the group discussion with a mean value of 3.86. On the other hand, role play and group work tasks are the last two activities that students found less motivating with their mean values of 3.54 and 3.45, respectively. However, in this proficiency group, there was not any statistical difference in students' motivational levels towards these tasks as it is seen Table 14.

Table 14- ANOVA results of students' motivational levels towards five different task types in the intermediate class

| Anova Average | df | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| Between Groups | 4 | 1.33 | .270 |
| Within Groups | 8 | | |
| Total | 62 | | |

Finally, the motivational level of the students' in the beginner level towards the five different tasks was examined. Table 15 demonstrates the motivational level of students in this class in response to the five different task types in their course book.

Table 15- Students' motivation levels towards different task types in the beginner class

| Task Type | M | sd |
|---|---|---|
| Group Work | 3.99 | .73 |
| Role Play | 3.86 | .75 |
| Group Discussion | 3.61 | 1.01 |
| Information-Gap | 3.57 | .65 |
| Interview | 3.41 | .89 |

Note. M: mean values; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4, Some=3, A little=2, Not at all=1.)

Table 15 shows that the group work was the most motivating type of task for the students in the beginner level with a mean value of 3.99. The students in this group found the role play as the second most motivating activity. Its mean value was 3.86. The group discussion and the information-gap tasks were found motivating by students to a similar degree. The mean value of the group discussion task was 3.61 and for the information-gap activity, it was 3.57. In the beginner class, students found the interview to be the least motivating type of task, with a mean value of 3.41. However, the ANOVA results show that the difference between students' motivational levels towards task types is not at a significant level. Table 16 demonstrates that there is no statistically significant difference in response to the five different task types in the beginner level.

Table 16- ANOVA results of students' motivational levels towards different task types in the beginner class

| Anova Average | df | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Between Groups | 4 |  |  |
| Within Groups | 77 | 1.2 | .28 |
| Total | 81 |  |  |

Table 17 summarizes a comparison of the five different activities in each class in terms of students' motivation levels.

Table 17- The motivation levels of the students from all proficiency levels to each task

| Task Type | Upper-Intermediate | | Intermediate | | Beginner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | sd | M | sd | M | sd |
| Group Work | 4.01 | .38 | 3.45 | 1.00 | 3.99 | .73 |
| Group Discussion | 3.76 | .60 | 3.88 | .44 | 3.61 | 1.01 |
| Interview | 3.78 | .61 | 3.89 | .49 | 3.41 | .89 |
| Role Play | 3.33 | .65 | 3.54 | .72 | 3.86 | .75 |
| Information-Gap | *3.10 | .73 | 3.86 | .67 | 3.57 | .65 |

Note. M: mean values; sd: standard deviation
(The five possible Likert scale answers were as follows: Very much= 5, Much=4, Some=3, A little=2, Not at all=1.)
* Significant at the p<.05 level.

As Table 17 shows, in the upper-intermediate class the motivational level of students towards the group work task was 4.01. In the intermediate class, the mean value was 3.45 while in the beginner class it was 3.99. The results show that there is no significant difference in mean scores among three proficiency levels towards the group work task ($p =. 10 > .05$). For the group work task, the upper-intermediate and the beginner groups' mean values were higher while the intermediate group's mean value was a little bit lower.

The motivation level of students from three different proficiency levels as a response to the group discussion task was also investigated. Table 17 indicates the level of students from three main proficiency levels towards the group discussion

task. As seen here, the mean value for the motivation level of the upper-intermediate group in response to group discussion was 3.76. The intermediate group had the mean value of 3.88 and the beginner level had the mean value of 3.61. The results indicate that intermediate level students found this task the most motivating one whereas the beginner level students had the lowest motivation level with a mean value of 3.61. The upper-intermediate class' mean score fell between the scores for the other two groups. However, there is no significant difference in students' motivational level as a response to the group discussion task ($p =. 57 > .05$).

The effect of the interview task on students' motivation level was also computed to compare the reactions of students from all levels towards this task. As can be seen in Table 17, the motivation level of students in response to the interview task in the upper-intermediate level was 3.78. The intermediate level students found this task more motivating than beginner and upper-intermediate level students with a mean value of 3.89. The lowest motivation level towards this task was seen in the beginner level group, being over 3.41. However, the mean difference for this task was not significant. ($p =. 17 > .05$).

Three proficiency levels were also compared with regard to their motivational level towards the role play task. As Table 17 indicates, students' motivation level towards the role play task in the beginner level was 3.86. This group was the most motivated by this task. Intermediate students were the second most motivated group by the role play task with a mean value of 3.54. On the other hand, the upper-intermediate level had the lowest motivation compared to the other groups and had the mean value of 3.33. The difference between the groups was not statistically significant. ($p =. 12 > .05$).

Finally, the effect of the information-gap task on students' motivation level was also investigated. As can be seen in Table 17, students' motivation level towards the information-gap task shows a difference. The ANOVA results show that the difference is at a significant level *(p =. 01 < .05)*. While the motivation level of students in the intermediate class was 3.86 and in the beginner class is 3.57, in the upper-intermediate level the mean value of students' motivation level was 3.10. Table 18 shows the statistical difference between three main proficiency levels as a response to the information-gap task.

| Table 18- ANOVA results of the motivation level of three groups in response to the information - gap task | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anova Average | *df* | *F* | *Sig.* |
| | | | |
| Between Groups | 2 | | |
| Within Groups | 45 | 4.82 | .01 |
| Total | 47 | | |
| *Significant at the p<.05 level | | | |

ANOVA test results (Table 18) point out that there is a significant difference among proficiency levels (p<.012) in response to the information-gap task. The post-hoc LSD test reveals that the difference seen between the upper-intermediate and intermediate classes is significant (p<.003) and between the upper-intermediate and

beginner levels is significant (p<.063) with regard to students' motivational levels towards the information-gap task.

As all these results show students have different motivation levels towards different task types in each group. Between the upper-intermediate class and intermediate class and the upper-intermediate and beginner class, there is a statistical significant difference in students' motivation levels (see Table 18) due to the divergent responses of these three groups to the information gap activity. For other task types, no statistically significant differences were detected.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data for this study were gathered through two kinds of instruments. The first set of instruments comprised semi-structured interviews which were carried out with three different students, at each proficiency level, after the completion of each task, for a total of 45 students. The questions of these semi-structured interviews were adapted from a perception questionnaire developed by Webster, Trevino, and Ryan (cited in Egbert, 2003). The questions from the semi-structured interview for this study investigated motivating characteristics of tasks from the students' perceptions, and the effect of their proficiency levels on their perception of tasks. The second set of instruments comprised student journals kept by six different students in each class for a total of eighteen. They were meant to gather students' detailed descriptions of task engagements, their insights and feelings that they experienced during the task completion process and the effects of tasks' characteristics on their motivation. The results of the interviews and student journals will be presented in this section according to recurring comments in each task and the comments from the journals that match those in interviews.

*Motivating Characteristics of the Group Work Task*

Students from all proficiency levels completed a group work task in which they collaborated and cooperated with their peers throughout the performance of it. This type of task scored the highest mean value in the rank order of task with regard to their effects on students' motivation levels (see Table 10). In the process of the qualitative data analysis, it was found that there were some recurring comments about the group work task in interviews of students from all three groups. These comments also were very similar to the comments in student reflective journals from the three groups.

*Sharing Ideas and Personal Experiences*

During the semi-structured interviews with students from all proficiency levels, one of the recurring themes about the motivating aspect of the group work task was related to students' chance to share their ideas and personal experiences. Students viewed this sharing positively and felt motivated to complete the task. One of them said:

> The task was very interesting because it was a great opportunity to form some ideas in groups and share them with the members of other groups. This feature made the task very appealing because different people come up with different ideas and look at the same issue from different perspectives. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student also agreed that:

> It (referring to the group work task) was about our personal life experiences and helped us to share our real life experiences in groups. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student commented:

> It was interesting to share our ideas about real life matters and learn from others. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

These recurring comments matched students' comments in the reflective

journals. For example, one student supported these ideas in his journal and wrote:

> I liked this group work task because it made us think about the issue in a
> creative way and share our creative ideas with the members of our group and
> other groups. I mean I tried hard to think in English in such a creative way
> that it could be a real contribution to our group work study. (S1from the
> Beginner Class)

*Wondering about Others' Ideas*

Another commonly made comment was related to students' desire to learn

about their peers' ideas throughout the task performance. During the analysis of

qualitative data, it was noted that students made lots of similar comments about how

the group work task increased their curiosity. This seemed to be because they did not

know beforehand what group members would say about the issue and what kind of

ideas they would generate. Therefore, they found the group work task very

motivating because this type of task meant sustained inquisitiveness during the task

completion process. One student said:

> It (referring to the group work task) made us reflect on the issue and to
> wonder about how other groups would complete the task and what kind of
> interesting ideas they would come up with. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student added:

> I realized that other people could generate very original ideas that I could not
> think of individually. This task increased my curiosity about innovative ideas
> of others. (S3 from the Beginner Class)

In students' reflective journals, there were some similar comments about this

motivating aspect of the group work task. One of the participants stated:

> Throughout the whole task, the most intense feeling that I felt was wonder.
> Since we were dealing with an issue about personal features and experiences,

I wondered a lot about my peers' answers and learnt some details about their past. (S4 from the Intermediate Class)

*Appealing to Each Other for Grammatical and Lexical Support*

In semi-structured interviews, students all agreed that in the group work task they had a chance to appeal to each other for grammatical and lexical support. The task turned into a beneficial collective study in which they could ask their questions about grammatical structures and words/phrases that they were uncertain about. One student's comment supported this idea:

Thanks to this activity (referring to the group work task), I had a chance to observe how my classmates use some newly learnt structures and vocabulary items. These features had made the task more informative and it aroused my desire to learn new things. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

A similar comment was made by another student:

I believe that this group work task helped us to extend our limits. We did our best to express our ideas with very complex sentences and high level of vocabulary, so we collaborated with each other about their proper use to make our group the winner of that activity. (S3 from the Beginner Class)

Some parallel comments could be found in students' reflective journals about their experience of scaffolding. One student stated that:

I liked the activity very much because I wondered about the objects that other groups gave their definitions for and made us to guess them. However, what I admired more about the task was my peers' descriptions of these objects with different structures and words in a very witty way. It made the task very entertaining and informative. (S4 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student added:

This task made me to think about the objects that other groups chose to describe and some clues about them. I was very interested in the general information that my friends provide for us and what I could learn from them about how to use certain structures and words for describing objects in a very clever way. I tried hard to learn new things from them. (S5 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

As can be inferred from all these comments, the group work task highly motivated students due to its motivating characteristics that have been described in students' words. Furthermore, they did not mention any negative impact of the activity on their desire to learn new things during semi-structured interviews. Additionally, it should be noted that the results of quantitative analysis also showed that in the ranking of task types with regard to all students' motivation levels, the group work task had the highest mean value (see Table 10). However, only in the intermediate class, the motivation level of students was very low compared to those of in upper-intermediate and beginner classes. When the qualitative data of this task were analyzed carefully for this task, it was not possible to find recurring comments about its demotivating characteristics attributed to this type of task. There was only one individual comment made by one student and this student stating the physical conditions that affected his learning desire negatively. This comment may have resulted from students' feeling of fatigue and the timing of the task which was carried out in the last lesson of the whole week. These physical factors might have had a negative impact on their motivation level.

*Motivating Characteristics of the Group Discussion Task*

Another task type that students carried out was the group discussion task. Each group participated in a group discussion task from their course book and three students from each group participated in semi-structured interviews and three students from each level wrote student journals. In the analysis of the data gathered from these two instruments, several recurring comments about the motivating characteristics of the group discussion task were found by the researcher and categorized.

*Providing an Opportunity to Discuss Topics from Real Life*

In semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, one of the most commonly mentioned aspects of the group discussion task was about its content. The majority of students from all levels favored this task to a great extent because they found the topics of their group discussion activities very current, so they addressed their interests. One student said:

> The topic of our group discussion task was very appealing to me. For example, it was about everyday matters and took its origins in real life experiences; thus, I could use my personal experiences in daily life while forming my arguments. In this way, we could discuss the matter with my peers either from their parallel views or from their contrary perspectives. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

A similar idea was voiced by another student:

> In our main course book, every unit has its unique theme. …This task was about the theme of this week's unit and I found the task and its topic very attractive because it was about everyday matters that we might encounter in daily life. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student also mentioned:

> Since this group discussion task was closely related to everyday matters, we could find the chance of learning some details about our peers' personal lives from their examples. I wanted to carry out the task to get to know my peers better. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

A parallel comment was made by another student:

> Thanks to this task, I realized that I could form my own ideas about a topic from the real world, namely the level of young people's patience and build some sentences to discuss this topic with other group members. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

*Learning Peers' Contrary and Parallel Views*

Students mentioned that one of the motivating aspects of the group discussion task was related to getting their peers' similar or opposing ideas. In semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, they underlined their feelings that this type of task provided them with an opportunity to learn their classmates' point of views on some debated issues and gain new insights about the topic. One student reported:

> This task enabled me to observe how my classmates take stances about hotly debated issues like some crimes and their proper punishments. I realized that people had diverse opinions on such controversial issues and they were totally different from my point of view. (S2 from the Beginner Class)

Another learner added:

> The task was interesting in itself because it was possible to discuss the topic from two opposite perspectives. I could even argue against my friends and their claims in our own group. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

This type of task created contexts for learners to share their opposing ideas in a comfortable environment. In student journals, learners made similar comments as can be seen in the statements of one beginner student:

> While performing this group discussion task, I recognized that people had distinct perspectives and these perspectives were very subjective. For example, some of my peers even called for capital punishment whereas others like me argued against it. Therefore, this task was very useful for me since each person could assert his/her own opinion and interpret a controversial issue from his/her point of view. (S5 from the Beginner Class)

*Being Tolerant towards Others' Views and Showing Politeness in a Group Discussion*

Another motivating characteristic of the group discussion task was about specific characteristics of the discussion during the activity. This type of task was found to be very motivating by learners since it taught them to be tolerant towards

opposing ideas and to be polite during the discussion. According to students'

reflections on the group work task, this task helped them for real life processes. This

is because they are likely to be involved in such kinds of discussions in real life and

these tasks help them to show respect to others ideas. One student said:

> In this task, it was necessary to be tolerant towards the other party's opinions and their counter-arguments to our claims. Thanks to this task, we learnt that we must not impose our own ideas on them, but we learnt how to convince them about the existence of contrary ideas. (S1 from the Beginner Class)

Another student expressed it by saying:

> It (referring to the group discussion task) was very instructive since we learnt how to conduct a group discussion politely. I liked the task because I realized that there was not any competition among group members about being completely right or wrong. It was a matter of mutual respect and tolerance towards divergent ideas that appeared throughout the discussion. (S2 from the Beginner Class)

This motivating aspect of the task was interpreted by another learner in the following way:

> The task taught me how to be very polite while arguing against other people's opinions. We must value their perspectives and discuss even very controversial issues in a very polite manner. I learnt how to use some phrases and idioms properly while performing a group discussion task in a polite way. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

There were other matching parallel comments about this motivating aspect of the

group discussion task. One student wrote:

> I gained new insights while we were talking about different ideas of other group members. This activity created a desire to learn new things because I learnt to be sympathetic towards other perspectives and to look at the same issue from different angles. (S4 from the Beginner Class)

A similar comment was made by another learner:

> The task was very appealing because it made me reflect on various crimes and alternative punishments for them. While pondering the types of proper

punishments, I wondered about my friends' suggestions and put myself in their shoes. (S5 from the Beginner Class)

All these reflections and comments reveal that students liked the group discussion task since it improved both their language skills and communicative abilities. Students all agreed that this type of task was useful for their language development and it aroused a desire to learn new things. This is consistent with the quantitative data analysis where students from all proficiency levels found the group discussion task motivating (see Table 10). Following the group work task, it was the second most motivating task. In line with these results, no negative comment was recognized in the analysis of semi-structured interviews and student journals.

*Motivating Characteristics of the Interview Task*

The interview task was another type of task that was performed by the students in this study. Learners completed an interview task from their course book and they reported features of the task that increased their desire to learn new things. In the process of analyzing and categorizing the qualitative data, recurring patterns were found in students' reflections on the task.

*An Opportunity to Get to Know Classmates*

One of the motivating aspects of the interview task was about classroom interaction. Students from different proficiency levels made similar comments about how the interview task helped them to get to know their peers better. Since the format of the task had students asking and answering questions and the content of it related to their peers' past, personal life experiences, and likes and dislikes, they wanted to complete the activity willingly. One student mentioned:

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Thanks to this interview task, I learnt my partner's likes and dislikes about films and cinema habits. When we realized our common interests about the issue, we started to ask more questions in detail and we could get to know each other better. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student supported this idea by saying:

Before this task, I had never asked such kinds of questions to my partner. In fact, if we had not performed this task, I would have never thought of asking these questions. Learning new facts about my partner's life brought some novelties into our relations. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student added:

The topic of the interview made it very attractive for me. For example, I was interested in different types of sports in the past. Thanks to this task, I had the opportunity to share this piece of information with my partner. I felt really comfortable while talking about these in a foreign language. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

This motivating characteristic of the interview task was interpreted by another learner in the following way:

The interview task was fun for me when my partner gave very interesting answers about her personal life, her experiences in the past and her likes and dislikes. We had lots of things to share about such an interesting topic from real life. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

In reflective journals, there were similar comments to those made in semi-structured interviews. One student emphasized this motivating aspect of the task by saying:

Since the activity was an interview, I learnt some details about my partner's habits in the past and present. Thanks to this interview task, I know very well now what kind of films, sports and pastime activities he likes and which competitions he participated in. My partner's favorite sport types and hobbies aroused my interest and made me think about what I should state in the task as my favorite ones. (S4 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student voiced a similar comment in these words:

The interview was very interesting for me because I found out what my friends' aspirations were in their lives and what kind of departments that they would want to attend instead of their own departments. (S5 from the Beginner Class)

As all these similar comments from the semi-strcutured interviews and student journals show students liked the interview task. This type of task enabled them to go through social interaction, so they could find a chance to get to know their peers.

*Improvement of Speaking Ability*

Students all agreed that the interview task helped them practice "live" language. They revealed that thanks to this interview task, they improved their speaking skills. The common sub-skills in speaking they mentioned were related to fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary growth. One of them stated:

I think this task helped me extend my limits in speaking skill. Although I found my speaking ability poor in other exercises, I felt comfortable while giving answers to my partner's questions. I realized that I was speaking very fluently and accurately for the first time. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student added:

This task enabled me to use some newly learnt words, phrases and idioms accurately while expressing my thoughts during the interview. In this sense, it helped me to extent my limits in speaking ability. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

It is apparent that the interview task created contexts for learners to improve their speaking ability in a more comfortable environment. One student also mentioned that:

I can say that this task increased my self-confidence in speaking skill. The more I tried to express myself better in my answers, the more accurately and fluently I spoke with my partner. I felt very happy when I expressed myself appropriately in English. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Students made similar comments in their journals related to the improvement of their speaking skills. One learner wrote:

> Nothing could motivate me better than this interview task, even the things that I do in our breaks. During the interview, I realized that I could express all my thoughts in an accurate and fluent way. I felt very content when our classes ended and while I was returning to my house because I recognized that I could express myself in another language appropriately, which means I have been fulfilling my aims in my prep education. (S4 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

As all these similar comments from the interviews and journals about the interview task show, this task enabled students to practice language in real-life contexts, which reinforced the learning of some vocabulary items and particular structures.

*Increase in Classroom Interaction*

The interview task was found useful by students since it seemed to increase classroom interaction. They appreciated this feature of the task very much because the interview task turned into a conversation-like activity. Thus, they could express their thoughts and practiced language with little anxiety. One learner pointed out this fact by saying:

> According to the format of the interview activity, we had to ask some questions to our partners about interesting topics from real life. However, one question brought other subsequent questions. For example, when I provided an answer about how I can keep fit, my partner asked lots of different questions about the same issue. Thus, our interaction with my partner increased. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student supported this idea and added:

> Since this interview task was about real life matters, I felt as if I had been having a conversation with one of my friends… and found out some details about my partner's likes and dislikes, habits, favorite pastime activities. We

could come up with new questions and talked about related issues while performing this interview task. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Students all noted the positive effects of this task on their communication with their friends and felt comfortable in actively participating during the performance of the task. One of the students interpreted the task in a similar way and said:

> After a while, our interview with my partner turned into a conversation that we could conduct in a foreign language. It was very pleasant that we could keep this communication going in another language on our own. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Comments that are similar to the ones in semi-structured interviews were found in student journals. Students revealed that they profited from the interview task to promote their interaction with peers in the classroom. One student underlined this point and said:

> I prepared six questions to ask my partner about her interests in cinema, drama, and TV shows. ....However, the most appealing side of this task for me was about my partner's questions. I thought thanks to her questions I could understand easily what she desired to learn about me. Therefore, I wondered a lot about her questions, which aroused my curiosity to a great extent. S5 (from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student raised a similar idea and recounted:

> In my opinion, interviewing someone about cultural life and being interviewed about such an interesting topic became an important type of activity for us. I believe that talking about these topics and their roles in our lives and learning my partner's perspectives on these issues are worth doing and these aspects of the task I enjoyed a lot. S6 (from the Upper-Intermediate class)

In brief, the interview task was found rather motivating by all proficiency level students. In line with the high mean value of the interview task in the ranking of

task types, (see Table 10), students did not mention any negative aspects of that task in semi-structured interviews and student journals.

*Motivating and Demotivating Characteristics of the Role Play Task*

The role play task was the fourth type of task whose effects on students' motivation level was also investigated. In the ranking of task types with regard to their effects on students' motivation level, the role play has one of the lowest scores among the five types of tasks (see Table 10). Although students recognized several motivating features of this task type, they also mentioned some of its demotivating aspects in the interviews and reflective journals. Also, in the analysis of upper-intermediate level students' motivation levels, it was possible to find a statistically significant difference in their response to this task type. Therefore, in this part both motivating and demotivating features of the role play task are presented, respectively.

*Practicing Authentic, Daily Language Use*

Students reported that they liked the role play task and wanted to perform it because this type of task was built on authentic daily usage. They had a chance to practice their speaking skills when discussing some common events that they might encounter in real life. Moreover, they were content that they could practice newly learnt vocabulary items, structures, and idiomatic expressions. Since learners found these elements of language very beneficial to cope with similar situations in real life, they evaluated the task as very useful to improve their ability of using language for real life purposes. One of the learners emphasized this by saying:

> If we think about the processes of job life that we might encounter in real life, this activity has taught me how to use certain words and structures in order to

convince customers to buy a company's service. In this sense, I found the task quite beneficial for learning the authentic use of language. (S1 from the Beginner Class)

Another student shared this idea and made a similar comment:

I think our role play activity was very useful since it was mainly about the daily use of language for common situations. In real life, you might need to ask for help from other people or accept or reject their offers. These are very frequent events in real life. Thanks to this task, we could practice and improve our language knowledge related to these topics. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

One of them also mentioned that the role play task can be accepted as a kind of preparation for real life situations:

In my opinion, it (referring to the role play task) was very informative because I learnt how to use the language in an effective way to convince the people with opposing ideas. While defending my ideas, I paid attention to the use of words and language structures efficiently to persuade opponents and agree on my standpoint. I can experience similar processes in real life, so I tried hard to speak to fulfill these goals. (S3 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

In reflective journals, another student made similar comments which suggested that the role play task reflected the language used in an authentic way:

This task enlightened me about extreme sports and how to persuade the customers to buy one of the organizations for doing these sports. I think both the extreme sports and the participations in the tours organizing such activities are common events. I might encounter them in real life. I learnt the ways of both convincing people about these ordinary events, and extreme sports and use the language for daily purposes like that. (S4 from the Beginner Class)

*Gaining Self-Confidence to Speak in front of an Audience*

According to the students' reflections on the role play task, it helped them to gain self-confidence and improve their communicative skills to a great extent. As learners emphasized many times in semi-structured interviews, speaking skills are

one of the most difficult skills to develop. However, with the help of the role play

task, students realized that they not only started speaking about real life situations

fluently, but also gained self-confidence to perform their roles in front of an

audience. This aspect of the task was interpreted by a learner like this:

> One of the most interesting features of this task (referring to the role play task) was that it forced us to act out our roles in front of an audience. I think this aspect of it encouraged me a lot to perform it because I might also experience similar situations in real life. In this sense, it was very beneficial for me to make us familiar with speaking in front of an audience confidently. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

Another student made a similar comment:

> In my opinion, the most important aspect of this role play task is related to our presentation skill. I learnt how to express myself in real life situations and I feel confident enough to speak in front of a group of people. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Students also connected this aspect of the task with the types of behaviors that they

would need to perform in real life. One learner reported:

> I can say this task aroused my curiosity because we were able to use some newly learnt structures and words by acting out our roles in front of an audience. I believe that we must gain this habit from now on to be successful in social life. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

A similar comment was made by another learner:

> I found the task very entertaining. If your speaking ability is not well-developed and you feel rather uncomfortable while expressing your thoughts in front of people, you feel content when you realize that you gain enough self-confidence to act out your role and even contribute new things from yourself. This task turned into a fun activity when I realized that others were listening to me and showing great respect to me and my performance. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

It can be inferred from all these comments that students liked the role play

task. They found this task type very useful for both their language development and

their communicative skills. They revealed that they gained or improved different language skills through the role play task. However, in the ranking of task types with regard to students' motivation level, the role play was ranked towards the bottom (see Table 10). Students recognized demotivating features of the role play task in semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. In the analyzing the qualitative data, some recurring themes about these tasks were found and categorized by the researcher.

*Strictly Defined Roles*

Students were assigned different roles to act out during the role play tasks. However, many students pointed out these roles were strictly defined by their course book. This situation was perceived by students as a limit to their creativity during their performance of the role play. They felt quite restricted due to their assigned roles since these roles required them to take certain positions throughout their performance of the task. They mentioned that sometimes in the role play, their partners were able to persuade them and they wanted to change their stance or their attitudes. However, they could not act this out accordingly because of their strictly defined roles. Therefore, they found the book too directive to perform a natural interaction shaped in the course of the role play. One learner stated that:

> There were only two roles that had been strictly defined by the book. Since we had to work in pairs, I had to act out a role that required defending some thoughts which I do not approve. I do not think that this task helped me to extend my limits. It was mainly because I had to act out a role in which I had to defend an argument which is invalid for me. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

This idea was supported by another student:

> Actually, the role of the book in our performance is very important. I believe if it had not guided us about our assigned roles, some problems might have appeared. I mean we had to spend time to imagine some situations and create certain contexts to act out a role play on our own. This would be very time wasting and worse than our situation with assigned roles. On the other hand, if the book becomes too directive about our roles as it happened in our role play activity, the task loses all its interesting aspects and your role neither excites you nor your audience. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

Students revealed some specific reasons for their lack of motivation during their task performance and added their comments about how to make the task more motivating and appealing for them:

> Since every detail about your assigned role was given by the book, we could not wonder about how our role play would progress. While acting it out, we knew that what I had to say, and what my partner's reaction would be, we could not make our own decisions to complete task. The task did not excite my curiosity due to these strict roles. If our roles in the next stage had not been shaped by our book, our performance would be more interesting and exciting for both players and the audience. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

The comments in student journals also supported these criticisms about the

assigned roles in the book:

> This role play task did not create any positive feelings in me because I was acting B Person and his main argument was that there should not be stricter control on the press about the privacy of celebrities. Although I did not agree with this idea personally, I had to act out my role as if I had been approving it. Therefore, I perceived the task only as a speaking activity that I had to do and tried to defend thoughts that I do not believe in unwillingly. (S6 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

There was another comment revealing students' lack of motivation in student

journals. One of the journal writers expressed his ideas in these words:

> I did not like this activity and found it very boring. It might be because of my role which did not address me. It was strictly defined and made me argue for some cliché ideas. I did not try to act it out in a lively manner because I thought I was voicing some ideas that had already been known and defended by the majority of our society and they were not original to me. (S5 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

*The Provision of Arguments, Phrases, and Expressions to be Used in the Book*

Another demotivating aspect of the role play task concerned the arguments and phrases and expressions provided by the book. Student agreed that their course book was too guiding in terms of arguments, phrases, and expressions that were required to be used in the performance of their role play task. In semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, one of the commonly made criticisms about these arguments, phrases, and expressions was that they turned the task into a mechanical activity. Thus, there was no place for individual creativity and any student initiative in expressing their own perspectives. They felt restricted from using the words or phrases from their own linguistic resources. One student supported this idea and stated:

> I found the task quite odd in terms of the phrases and expressions that we were required to use by our course book. I think in real life people may not use such diplomatic expressions in order to make a request and accept or reject others' suggestions. I do not think that in a natural conversation they would use such formal expressions. Therefore, we could not act out a role play that was full natural and spontaneous reactions to the sayings of other party. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

This deficiency of the task was recognized by another learner and she criticized it:

> The book provided me with all arguments that I had to use throughout our role play activity. I was assigned to convince the other person by using these arguments. Therefore, even if I had added my own ideas in the conversation, my attempt would not make any sense. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Student also made suggestions to make the task more beneficial for their language development and exciting for the class atmosphere. One of them said:

> Instead of giving certain phrases, expressions or structures to be used, if some pictures showing some people's faces with agreement, disagreement, and

anguish or happiness, were provided by the book, we could form our own roles and sentences according to them and the task would better excite our curiosity. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

It is clear from all these negative and positive comments that the role play task was motivating for students, but also had some notable limitations.

*Motivating and Demotivating Characteristics of the Information-Gap Task*

All proficiency levels completed an information-gap activity either in pairs or in small groups. Students who hold different pieces of information negotiated with each other and tried to guess the missing element throughout the activity. This type of task had the lowest mean value, 3.52 (see Table 10) in the ranking of task types. Additionally, it was found the least motivating task by the upper-intermediate class (see Table 11). In this class, there was a statistically significant difference in students' motivation level towards the five different tasks that learners carried out. The upper-intermediate level students perceived the information-gap task as the least motivating task. They recognized some demotivating characteristics of the information-gap task. Learners described these demotivating features both in interviews and reflective journals. In contrast, the intermediate level students evaluated the information-gap task as a motivating one and they made frequent comments showing positive effects of this type task on their learning desire and its motivating features. In this class, the information-gap task had a very high mean value, 3.86 (see Table 13) and students recognized its motivating characteristics in interviews and reflective journals. For beginner students, the information-gap task was one of two least motivating tasks with a mean value of 3.52 (see Table 15) though there was not any statistically significant difference in their motivation levels

towards different task types. Similar to the upper-intermediate level students, they underlined some demotivating aspects of the information-gap task in addition to its motivating characteristics. In this part, both motivating and demotivating features of the information-gap task will be discussed respectively.

*Guessing Element*

One of the recurring comments about the motivating aspects of the information-gap task was the guessing element that it included. Students agreed that they liked the task to some extent because they had to guess some missing piece of information to complete it. Also, they found the task quite thought provoking while trying to guess the information that their peers held. One student said:

> I think the task was quite thought provoking because I had to think about the things that I had forgotten to do like before leaving the house, taking an exam, or going on a holiday and give some piece of information that my pair would guess what it was. Also, I had to concentrate on what my partner said since I had to guess her situation, as well. I tried hard to find the information that she did not reveal. It was fun to guess some situations in my partner's life and make my partner guess my situation, as well. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

This idea was supported by another learner:

> This task (referring to the information-gap task) aroused my curiosity because I had to guess what my friend would do in different situations. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

There was a parallel comment made by another student:

> Even if it were not required to do this information-gap task, I would do it. I found the task very appealing because it forced me to think about the situation provided by my partner very carefully and guess it correctly. (S3 from the Intermediate Class)

Another learner added:

> This task (referring to the information-gap task) was very entertaining because it made me think about and guess who wrote the given New Year

resolutions and what my peers might have written as their New Year resolutions. (S3 from the Beginner Class)

In reflective journals, students made similar comments. One of them wrote:

We had tried to guess what the given situation was until we came up with the correct guess. We liked the task very much because we laughed a lot when our assumptions were very far from our partners' real situations. Some of our guesses seemed very weird when we learnt the real situation from our pairs. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another learner expressed his idea in these words:

It was quite interesting to guess from one of my partner's sentences what he would do next and to come up with new ideas until I found the real situation which my partner experienced. (S3 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

This motivating characteristic of the task was described by another student as in the following lines:

In this task (referring to the information-gap task) we had to describe some people like one of our classmates, lecturers or some celebrities to make our partner guess who this described person was. I found the task quite entertaining and interesting when we showed our utmost creativity to describe people in such a different way that our partner would not guess it easily. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

*Game-like Feature*

Students perceived the task as motivating because of its game-like feature. The students from all proficiency levels found the information-gap task game-like. They enjoyed participating in the task very much because they experienced a feeling of flow while performing it. They pointed out this feature in their different comments. One student told:

I think the most motivating characteristic of this task was its game-like feature. It was like the Taboo game. The task excited my curiosity because I perceived it like a game in which I was trying to guess who wrote which New Year resolution. (S2 from the Beginner Class)

Another learner said:

> This task (referring to the information-gap task) was like a game. This made it different from other activities that we had done in our main course book. At the same time, it created a kind of competition between our peers to guess the situation correctly, which turned the task into a very entertaining and interesting activity. (S1 from the Intermediate Class)

A parallel comment was made by another learner and this student told:

> Since the activity was like a game, it did not bore me. Therefore, I can say that I would do the task voluntarily even if it were not required. (S2 from the Intermediate Class)

In student journals, students underlined the entertaining aspect of the task and its positive effect on their desire to learn new things due to its game-like feature. One learner wrote:

> This task (referring to the information-gap task) was very entertaining for me because we attempted to guess our friends' New Year resolutions correctly. I liked it very much it was very enjoyable to mix all papers that our classmates wrote their resolutions on and guess who might have written that resolution. It was like a game. (Student 3 from the Beginner Class)

As these recurring comments show, students found the task motivating since they recognized some elements in the task that made it game-like. However, learners also underlined its demotivating characteristics during the interviews and in their journals.

*Ambiguous Format and Procedures*

During the semi-structured interviews, learners underlined the difficulty that they experienced in understanding the format and procedures of the information-gap task. They stated that they could not understand both the format and procedures of this task type; therefore, they were not able to perform it properly. Also, in student journals, similar comments about this demotivating characteristic of the information-gap tasks were identified by the researcher. Additionally, it should be noted that the results of quantitative analysis also showed that students had the lowest level of motivation in the information gap task among all task types (see Table 10). The analysis of quantitative data of the upper-intermediate level students' motivation levels revealed the difference in their response to five different tasks was at a statistically significant level (see Table 11). This situation might have resulted from students' not finding this task motivating enough to participate in the task performance eagerly. One learned provided an explanation for this situation by saying:

> I liked the previous task more than this pair work task (referring to the information-gap task). This is because I could not understand what was to be done in terms of its procedures (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another learner expressed a similar concern with regard to this demotivating characteristic of the task and told:

> One of the limiting aspects of this information gap task was about its procedures. It limited us to do the task first in pairs and then in the groups of four. I believe that this made the task very dull because we had to guess our peers' New Year Resolutions, but since we did it in very small groups we could easily find the correct answer. (S3 from the beginner Class)

One final comment about this demotivating characteristic of the task was recognized in the interviews. One learner said:

> This activity (referring to the information-gap task) did not help me to extend my limits due to its format and procedures. It was too short to understand due to both its objective and format. We tried to guess some facts about our partner's life in two or three sentences, which neither entertained me nor taught me new things to improve my language ability. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Similar comments were also found in student journals. One journal writer underlined that point by saying:

> I found the task partially entertaining. If it had been performed by more people than pairs or the groups of four, it would have better stimulated our curiosity because it would have been more difficult to guess the facts about our peers' lives. (S1 from the Beginner Class)

Another student expressed a parallel idea and said:

> I can say that though the task (referring to the information-gap task) improved my imagination power and forced me to ponder the situation to guess its writer correctly, it was not fun for me. If the papers on which people's New Year resolutions were written had been distributed to the whole class, it might have been more entertaining for us to participate in. (S4 from the Beginner Class)

*Unfamiliar Task Type*

Finally, the participants of this study evaluated the information-gap task with regard to its familiarity and they pointed out that the task type was too new to them to perform it properly. During the interviews and the analysis of student journals, this aspect of the task was highlighted by learners. Students reported that they found the procedures of the task difficult to comprehend, so they could not participate in the task eagerly to learn new things. One learner reported:

> I should admit that I encountered this type of task for the first time. Before this information-gap task, we had never performed a similar task throughout which we asked and answered some questions to guess the situation correctly.

This feature of it made the task very different from previous tasks. (S3 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

Another student added:

During my high school education, we engaged in grammar and vocabulary exercises. These types of tasks are very new to me and especially, the last task that we did (referring to the information-gap task) seemed to me very different from our previous activities. (S1 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

In their reflective journals, students described their task engagement process in their own words. There were some parallel comments made by students about the demotivating characteristic of this task with regard to finding the task type very new. One student wrote:

I found the task partially entertaining because I felt bored most of the time. The task was very different from previous activities that we had done from our course book. I could not figure out how to complete it since I was not familiar with such type of task. (S1 from the Beginner Class)

A similar comment was made by another learner and she wrote:

The task was thought provoking, challenging and a little bit boring for me since it had a different procedure that I am not used to. I mean if I had not come up with a proper sentence to guess the situation of my partner, I felt really bored. (S2 from the Upper-Intermediate Class)

As all these consistent comments show, there were some demotivating characteristics of the information-gap task that can be inferred from students' comments throughout the interviews and in their reflective journals.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the motivating characteristics of a commonly used course book tasks and their effects on students' motivational level. In order to explore the motivating characteristics of this course book's tasks, first the

motivation level of students in a response to task types was computed. Also, for a comparison of different task types in different classes and all students' reaction to similar tasks an ANOVA test was run.

Mean values for the groups' average motivation levels showed that the intermediate class had the highest level of motivation while the other two groups, beginner and upper-intermediate groups, had lower motivation levels if they are compared to the upper-intermediate level. This might show that this group found the tasks more motivating and these tasks addressed their needs more. With regard to ranking of task types, group work and group discussion tasks were two most motivating tasks although there was not any statistical difference among task types. There is evidence in the qualitative data that students from all proficiency levels were interested in these two tasks thanks to their specific motivating characteristics. They perceived these tasks as an opportunity to share ideas and personal experiences, to wonder about others' ideas, to get support for lexical and grammatical structures, to learn about their peers' opposing and similar ideas, and to discuss the topics from real life.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The objective of the present study was to investigate the effect of tasks in a commonly used course book on students' motivation levels. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether different task types –pair work, group work, group discussion, role play, and information-gap tasks– have different impacts on the motivation levels of students from three proficiency levels and what the motivating characteristics of this course book's tasks are according to students.

This study can be regarded as a small-scale perception analysis study that aimed at investigating the motivating characteristics of tasks in a commonly used EFL course book. In keeping with recent developments in practice, both quantitative and qualitative results were collected and analyzed.

The participants in the present study were students in a beginner, intermediate, and upper-intermediate level class at İstanbul Kültür University. Five different tasks were implemented by the teacher of each class in the main course class. A motivation questionnaire was distributed after the completion of each task from the course book. In order to gather qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three different students from all proficiency levels immediately after their task performance. Also, another six students from all groups kept a student journal to reflect their ideas, feelings and insights about the task completion process that they had gone through.

So as to address the first and third research questions focusing on the degree of students' motivation level as a response to five different tasks and the existence of

any differences in students' motivation levels by proficiency levels, the data obtained

from the motivation questionnaire were submitted to a quantitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis revealed each group's motivation levels towards all tasks; each

group's motivation levels to each task; and all group's motivation levels to each task.

This analysis was used as the basis for qualitative analysis which addressed the

second research question examining the motivating characteristics of a commonly

used course book from students' perceptions. Qualitative data were analyzed by

coding recurring comments in semi-structured interviews and student journals, which

were matched later and presented together.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the main findings of the present

study. This chapter is divided into four main sections. Section one includes the

findings and the discussion of these findings. Section two outlines the pedagogical

implications. Section three presents the limitations of the study and section four gives

suggestions for further research.

Findings and Discussion

L2 learners' motivation is prone to be affected by a number of factors. From

these, the course book tasks may be considered one of the main factors that can

affect learners' desire to learn new things (Dörnyei, 1994a). As mentioned above, the

present study attempts to demonstrate how different task types influence students'

motivation levels and what kind of motivating and demotivating characteristics these

tasks include since they play an important role in increasing or decreasing students'

learning desire.

The main findings obtained from the results of the present study are stated

and discussed subsequently in terms of the three research questions posed. The first

research question proposed in the present study asked to what degree students feel motivated as a response to tasks in their course books. In the present study, it was found that the intermediate and beginner level students felt more motivated as a response to the five different tasks when compared to the upper-intermediate group. This finding can be taken as evidence that internal structure in a class environment may affect students' attitudes towards the tasks in a course book. The composition and internal structure of the learner group can change the class atmosphere to a great extent. As researchers such as Clement and Dörnyei (1994) and Dörnyei (1994a, 2001a, 2001b) state, students feel secure and comfortable because they are a part of this cohesive group. The high level engagements of these two groups may suggest greater group cohesiveness, which the research has suggested is closely related to individual motivation. It seems that these groups enjoyed the learning process more than the upper-intermediate group. This is also consistent with informal discussions done with the main course teachers. During informal interviews with the main course teachers, differences between the upper-immediate class and the beginner and intermediate classes emerged. Teachers suggested that there was a clear lack of class cohesiveness and students' general unwillingness to learn and practice in the upper-intermediate group. This contrasted with the sustained desire to learn new things and strong feeling of achievement in the beginner and intermediate classes. However, it is worth mentioning that there was not any statistical difference between these groups with regard to their motivation levels. All groups felt motivated on a scale between "some" and "much" although the intermediate and beginner groups' degrees of motivation were a little bit higher than the upper-intermediate group.

Another finding gathered from the quantitative data analysis showed that different task types led to different motivation levels of learners. The results of statistical analyses revealed that the group work task implemented in the present study was the task type most preferred by the participants. In their discussion of task types and variables, Richards and Rogers (2001) identify collaboration as one of the variables that some tasks include. As Richards and Rogers' (2001) list of variables within tasks indicates, the main emphasis during the group work task of the present study was collaboration; that is, this task required students to work together to reach an outcome at the end of the process in a collaborative way. From the interviews with students and journals, it could be inferred that during the group work task of this study, students liked to work together in a collaborative way to appeal to each other for grammar and lexical support. Thanks to this group work task, they could discover present sources of motivation existing in the classroom environment and they enjoyed dealing with the task and collaborating on the immediate learning context as suggested by Crookes and Schmidt (1991). Also, they found sharing their personal experiences with their peers motivating to reach an outcome as stated in the literature. This finding is consistent with Pica and Doughty (1986) and Seedhouse (1999) who point out the importance of group work tasks in classroom practices. According to Seedhouse (1999), Pica and Doughty (1986) rightfully claim that language classrooms provide a suitable atmosphere for interaction and for introducing the negotiated comprehensible input. Seedhouse (1999) underlines the vitality of group work for enhanced interaction. In the present study, the group work task was found the most motivating task type by all learners due to this interaction element. From the interviews and student journals, it was concluded that students

preferred the group work task that allowed them to share their ideas and personal experiences with their peers to complete the task and to interact with their peers to get their ideas.

The second most motivating task was group discussion. In the task type taxonomy of Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993), group discussion is defined as an opinion exchange task in which students exchange their ideas and negotiate to learn their peers' ideas, attitudes, or beliefs on certain issues. In completing this task type, the participants of the present study reported that they could discuss some current topics of interest, learn about their peers' contrary and parallel ideas, and learn how to be polite in manner during a discussion. The results of this study were parallel to those from the study conducted by Appel and Gilabert (2002), who used a task with a current topic addressing students' interests to see if it stimulated students' desire to learn new things. The participants of this study liked the group discussion task and described its three main motivating characteristics: the opportunity to discuss real life topics addressing their interests, learning about their peers' contrary or parallel ideas, learning to be tolerant towards others' views and be polite throughout a discussion. Since tasks' ability to arouse and sustain students' interest is a critical point, this finding can be taken as evidence that the nature of group discussion tasks led the participants to enjoy this type of tasks and show positive attitudes towards them.

The third most motivating task implemented in the present study was the interview. This activity asked students to work in pairs. In Willis' (1996) task categorization, this type of task falls under the category of sharing personal experiences. In this type of task, students go through a social interaction with their peers in which they explain their personal experiences by asking and answering

questions. During the performance of this task, students shared their personal experiences and increased their interaction with their classmates in line with the definition of this task type given by Willis (1996). Additionally, this type of task can also be seen as a two-way task in terms of the variable it includes as defined in the list of Richards and Rogers (2001). Two-way tasks make the exchange of meaning obligatory. In the present study, students asked and answered some questions in pairs to get the information that they requested. As Fotos & Ellis (1991) suggest, in these types of activities when students negotiate meaning in a mutual relationship by requesting and supplying information, they reported that they found the task motivating because they had a chance to get to know their peers and increased their interaction in the classroom environment.

Foster (1998) deals with the issue of interaction specifically and argues that communicative language tasks enable students to develop their L2 ability in several ways. Through conversational adjustments, learners check and clarify their utterances during task performance, which make it possible to produce meaningful output while working on a task in pairs. The results obtained from the present study were the same as those from the study conducted by Myers (2000), in which an interview task promoted social interaction and provided learners with an opportunity to talk about meaning and form together. The interpretation of qualitative data revealed that students responded positively towards the interview task since it improved their speaking ability. As Myers (2000) stated as one of the results of her study, the interview task enabled the participants of the present study to use the form by paying attention to the meaning. This finding can be accepted as partial evidence that when learners are provided with a goal and completed the interview task

according to its procedures and objectives, their chances of achievement in social interaction and speaking ability became higher as researchers like Dörnyei (2001a) suggest.

The role play task was another type of task implemented in the present study. The results revealed that this task type included both motivating and demotivating characteristics according to the evaluations of the participants. According to Nunan's task classification (2001), role play tasks are categorized as real world tasks through which learners deal with target language use situations. Some researchers like Spaulding (1992) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) believe that this type of task prepares learners for real life applications and they provide students with opportunities to use what they learn to practice real-life applications. The results of the present study justified these claims in the literature with regard to these task types and their impacts on learners' L2 development. The participants reported the opportunity to practice authentic and daily language use and to gain self-confidence to speak in front of an audience as two important motivating characteristics of the role play task. Keller (1983, 1984, cited in Julkunen, 2001) put forwards the notion of relevance as an important element of task-specific motivation. In his studies, he pointed out that in task-specific motivation cases, learners are likely to perceive that their needs are met by learning tasks and they could obtain their personal goals by performing these tasks. In line with these claims, the participants of the study found the role play task appealing since they thought the role play task met their needs to use the language in an authentic way for daily purposes and improved their presentation skills. The results of this task are parallel with those found by Kasap (2005), who used a role play task to examine the effects of certain tasks on the

improvement of students' speaking skill. Similar to the comments made by the participants of the present study, in Kasap's study (2005), learners highlighted the benefits of role play tasks in the improvement of their speaking skills and all students agreed that they liked role play tasks because they enabled them to practice "live" language for real-life processes. This finding can be taken as evidence that the content and the skills that the role play task address may increase students' learning desire because they are perceived to meet their needs.

On the other hand, the results revealed that though the role play was found to be one of the most motivating types of tasks by the beginner class, the intermediate and upper-intermediate classes recognized certain demotivating characteristics of the role play task throughout the semi-structured interviews and in student journals. Additionally, in the upper-intermediate group's responses to different task types, a statistically significant difference was found in the degrees of their motivation level. The design of the task plays an important role in students' motivation levels (Julkunen, 2001). The tasks including a maximum amount of uncertainty and unpredictability seem more attractive for learners (Maehr, 1984, cited in Julkunen, 2001). However, the role play tasks chosen for this study provided students with the arguments, phrases, and structures to be used during the activity and pre-determined strictly defined roles. Students did not find the role play task appealing in the intermediate and upper-intermediate groups because of the features mentioned above. It can be claimed that these two demotivating characteristics of the task related to their designs may lead to students' unwillingness to complete them since learners do not see value in performing the task which excludes the elements of new, different, unexpected or totally unusual experiences (Dörnyei, 2001a).

The last type of task implemented in the present study was an information-gap task. According to the taxonomy of Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993), information-gap tasks are based on the idea of sharing information. Learners who hold different pieces of information negotiate and guess the complementary part of information to complete the activity. As researchers like Williams and Burden (1997) suggest, students' curiosity should be sustained and provoked by introducing surprising and interesting tasks to provide the opportunity to explore the unknown. In the present study, it seemed that the intellectual curiosity of learners was aroused by the information-gap task as suggested by Williams and Burden (1997) and the participants put effort into completing the information-gap task due to the guessing element it included. Learners liked to discover the situation given by their pairs and attempt to make correct guesses to explore the unknown. The results obtained from this study were similar to those from the study conducted by Yücel (2003), in which the nature of information-gap activity promoted students' curiosity and could motivate the participants. As Yücel (2003) pointed out as one of the conclusions of his study, students' curiosity was stimulated by guessing the missing information. It kept them in suspense until they satisfied their curiosity. Another motivating characteristic of the information gap task was its game-like feature. This characteristic of the task eliminated the monotony of the classroom in line with Dörnyei's claim (2001a) and led the participants to perceive the task not just as a subject of study, but also as a source of enjoyment and recreation (Ur, 1984). The task brought the fun element into the classroom and enabled students to enjoy themselves while learning. Similarly, Yücel (2003) concluded that some learning tasks were motivating since they included game-like features and created fun in the

classroom. Students enjoyed these information-gap tasks, in ways similar to what was seen in the present study. These findings can be taken as partial evidences that the information-gap task helped learners to sustain their efforts to do the activity because of its two motivating characteristics as described by the learners themselves.

Despite the high level of motivation in the intermediate class as response to the information-gap task, the motivation levels of students in the upper-intermediate and beginner classes were not very high. The results of the upper-intermediate class even showed a statistically significant difference due to their low motivation levels. The reasons behind such low rates could be inferred from the students' comments in interviews and student journals. In the literature related to task-specific motivation, it is assumed that the content and the format of tasks play an important role in stimulating students' motivation. Erickson and Schultz (1992) suggest that in planning the task instructions and task design, the content and the format of the tasks should be evaluated carefully. They argue that to obtain a high level of student motivation in the classroom environment, the format and content of the task should be attractive enough to draw students into the task. The results of the present study verified these assumptions in the literature, as the participants reported two demotivating characteristics of the information-gap task: its ambiguous format and their unfamiliarity with this task type. It is obvious that although students did not find the content of the task cognitively demanding, they found its format rather challenging. This situation caused students' to be reluctant to complete the task smoothly and prevented their willing engagement in the task. Additionally, the task was found very unfamiliar in terms of its type by the participants. Similar to Özpınar's conclusion (2006) from her study related to students' familiarity with task

content and students' effective production of L2 oral speeches, this findings can be taken as partial evidence that besides the necessity of being familiar with task content, learners may also need to be familiar with its format in order to find it motivating.

<center>Pedagogical Implications</center>

As mentioned above, this study was carried out to investigate the motivation levels of students as a response to different task types in a commonly used course book and students' perceptions of the motivating characteristics of the tasks in it. According to Dörnyei (2001a), learning tasks presented in the classroom environment play an important role in increasing students' interest in the course. Therefore, understanding the nature of tasks in course books and their motivating or demotivating characteristics from students' perspectives become important tools when deciding how to use them to direct and organize classroom instruction.

This study shows that it is worth experimenting further with the tasks of the course book in classrooms and exploiting the role of tasks to increase students' motivation levels for better classroom learning. Based on the results of the present study, teachers may evaluate and employ course books' tasks more knowledgeably since this study describes the motivating and demotivating characteristics of these tasks from students' perceptions. Teachers can thus attempt to stimulate their learners' motivation by using the appropriate task types in the course book according to the needs and interests of their students. The group work, group discussion and interview tasks might be used more frequently since they better address students and motivate them. On the other hand, the role play and information-gap tasks may also be employed by teachers, but teachers need to pay attention to the format or

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procedures of these tasks and the restrictive nature of the book with regard to the arguments, phrases, and structures to be used in task. As the findings of this study show, these features of the tasks in a commonly used course book decrease students' motivation levels. The study may also assist teachers while teaching their courses to increase students' motivation level because it will provide a useful framework about students' perceptions of tasks with regard to their motivating characteristics. Teachers might utilize the tasks in the course books since they become conscious of their motivating and demotivating aspects based on the findings of the present study. The group work tasks might be used by teachers knowledgeably since they allow students to share their ideas and personal experiences with their peers, to wonder about others' ideas and to appeal to each other for grammatical and lexical support. Because the group work task enhance learners' ability to discuss the real life topics, to learn their peers' contrary and opposite views, to be tolerant towards others' views and have a polite manner during the discussion, teachers may exploit them effectively. Teachers can also use role plays since they help learners to get to know their peers, increase in classroom interaction and improve their speaking ability. However, they need to be careful about strictly defined roles and the provision of arguments, phrases, and structures to be used given by the book. Teachers may use these tasks by eliminating these demotivating features of the tasks and adapt them according to the needs and interests of their students. The information-gap tasks might also be emergent sources of motivation in the classroom environment because they include guessing element, and game-like feature that make these tasks interesting for learners. Because of these motivating features of the information-gap task, teachers can utilize them to increase students' motivational levels. However, if

these types of tasks have ambiguous format and procedures or students are unfamiliar with them, teachers need to adapt these tasks to eliminate their demotivating features. Also, teachers might direct the classroom instruction by choosing the tasks including some characteristics that could better motivate students for creating effective learning settings which are mentioned above. They can adapt the tasks by considering both the motivating and demotivating characteristics of them from students' perceptions.

This study may also contribute to course and syllabus design in schools and institutions. The findings of the present study might be used by the curriculum and syllabus designers in the process of choosing course books or appropriate tasks from the course books that are used. The idea of choosing appropriate course books can be considered as a contribution to course and syllabus design. Curriculum and syllables designers can choose appropriate course books that include tasks which address learners' needs and interests. In the curriculum renewal processes, curriculum designers may design the syllabus either by choosing motivating tasks in the course book or including additional tasks that can help students to become active participants of the learning process. They can also adapt the tasks in course books by paying attention to the motivating and demotivating characteristics of them. Materials developers may make use of the findings of this study when designing tasks for different skills. In order to arouse students' interest in the course or the general learning process, then material developers and task designers may take motivating characteristics of the tasks into the consideration while designing various tasks of different types.

With regard to program design, implementation of task-based instruction (TBI) as an alternative teaching approach can be regarded as a part of most contemporary teacher training programs. TBI may help all teachers, both novice and experienced ones, to become more familiar with this kind of alternative instruction and to see tasks as effective tools while implementing it within current approaches. Teachers can be trained about the type of tasks, their procedures and the phases of task-based instruction to exploit the course materials effectively or designing or implementing new tasks to make them a part of their current syllabi. Also, teachers can evaluate their students' performances by using the premises and methods of task-based instruction as an alternative teaching approach. Besides teachers, if students are taught by task-based instruction (TBI), they need to be informed about the task-based instruction in terms of the types of learning tasks, their procedures, and their objectives for the achievement of tasks effectively when they are taught by this approach. If stimulating students' interest and increase their motivation level by means of different tasks in course books or other materials is the aim in the classroom instruction, they should be informed about different tasks types and provided with practice as to what they are expected during the task accomplishment process.

After the discussion of the findings and pedagogical implications of the present study, some limitations of it are presented in the subsequent section.

## Limitations of the Study

This study had certain limitations in examining the motivation levels of students in response to the tasks of a commonly used course book and students' perceptions of motivating or demotivating characteristics of them. The limitations of

the study resulted from the duration of the study, the number of groups and participants, the selection of tasks and the number of course books chosen, and the inability of the researcher to observe the implementation of the treatments and teachers' performance.

One of the important limitations of this study was related to its short duration. Excluding the two weeks of piloting, the time given to the implementation of the tasks was limited to four weeks. In a longer period of time, the researcher could have had the opportunity to implement more than one task of the same type. This might have given more reliable results to analyze students' perceptions of them to check whether they are consistent with their comments about the motivating characteristics of the tasks in their course book and whether they show similar motivation towards the tasks with same types.

The number of participants was another important limitation of this study. Only students from three main proficiency levels at IKU participated in the present study. If there had been more than one class from the same proficiency levels or some other classes from other institution(s), the results would be more generalizable with a larger sample.

The limited number of tasks and their types also contributes to the limitations of the study. Due to time constraints, only five different tasks of different types were selected by the researcher in consultation with the thesis supervisor and main course teachers. Therefore, students' perceptions of different task types in their course book were not collected apart from the five tasks of this study. This study was also designed so as not to destroy the natural flow of the instruction in the main course classes. Therefore, the syllabi followed by three main course teachers were taken as

bases to choose the tasks from the main course syllabi of the weeks in which the experimental part of the study were being carried out. Therefore, some tasks had to be chosen which may not have reflected the highest quality task for each type. This is supported by that claims of Erickson and Schultz (1992) about the influence of the content and format of particular tasks on students' motivation levels. With regard to the content, the topics of the tasks were different among proficiency levels. This issue needs to be examined in future research to assure that students are responding to aspects of task types instead of the specific content of the task.

After a brief survey done among 16 university instructors from 14 different institutions, it was realized that the course book of the present study was used by the majority of them. Therefore, the course book, called "Success" (2007), was chosen as the main source of the present study since it was commonly used by different institutions at tertiary level. However, if the time period of this study had been longer, it would have been better to compare two or three different main course books that are used in different institutions in order to determine whether the course book choice had an impact on students' perceptions of the tasks in their course books.

In addition, the researcher could not observe the implementation of the treatments and teachers' performance. Since the main focus of the present study was to get students' perceptions of the tasks in their course book, making regular observations in classes during the task performance was determined to be unnecessary. Furthermore, one of the concerns of the present research was to conduct the study in normal classroom conditions. In this sense, the presence of a researcher during the implementations of the tasks could have affected the participants'

performance and decreased the neutrality of the study. For these reasons, the researcher did not observe the implementations of the tasks during the experimental part of the study. However, in order to eliminate teacher factor or differences among three teachers, each teacher was provided with a lesson plan showing the activities of pre-task, during-task, and post-task stages and the directions about how to apply them in the class environment taken from the teachers' guidebook of the course book. The tasks were implemented according to the teachers' guidebook by the main course teachers. These efforts were made to reduce the teachers' influence on students' task performance way although it was not possible to eliminate them completely.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and the limitations of this study, some suggestions for further research can be made.

Further research should again investigate students' motivation level as a response to different course books' tasks and the motivating characteristics of its tasks with a large number of participants at different levels of proficiency by studying on more than one task of the same type over a longer period of time. In this way, it might be possible to evaluate whether students are consistent about their perceptions of the motivating or demotivating characteristics of tasks in the chosen course book. In addition to a large number of participants, the types of the tasks, whose motivational impact on learners and their motivating characteristics are investigated, can be various. In addition to the group work, group discussion, interview, role play and information-gap tasks, some other task types like story telling, picture narration, and communication games can be used in course book to

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find their motivating characteristics from students' perceptions. In this way, it can be possible to examine more task types and their impacts on learners' motivation as well as their particular motivating characteristics.

Further research is also necessary to investigate teachers' perceptions of the motivating characteristics of different course books' tasks in addition to their students' perceptions of them. Similar to what students are required to do, a motivation survey about students' motivation levels for each task can be prepared for the teacher, as well. The teacher fills in the survey based on his/her observation related to students' motivation level towards each task like what learners have to do. The teacher can also be interviewed after each task about their students' desire to learn new things in addition to students' semi-structured interviews about motivating characteristics of the course book chosen. The teacher should also be required to keep journals about their observations in term of their students' level of motivation as a response to each task like students do. Thus, teachers' and students' perceptions of the motivating characteristics of the tasks in different course books might be compared to determine similarities and differences in both parties' perceptions.

An experimental study might also be conducted with various tasks of the same type from different sources to determine whether tasks of the same kind lead to similar motivation levels of students. This might permit a better understanding of the nature of movitating characteristics that may be intrinsic to task types.

Lastly, another interesting research area would be to explore the attitudes of students towards both the exercises of different course books designed on the premises of traditional approach of presentation, practice and production (PPP) and their tasks to investigate the effectiveness of task-based instruction (TBI) as an

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alternative approach. Thus, the experiences of the students who are involved in both the exercises and the tasks of the same course book provide valuable information about the implications of a traditional approach and an alternative approach to compare their effects on students' L2 development from learners' perspectives.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impacts of different task types on students' motivational level and students' perceptions of the motivating characteristics of these tasks in a commonly used course book. As shown by the results, students' motivation levels towards different task types differed by their proficiency levels and students' evaluated each task motivating, demotivating or both with regard to their own particular characteristics. Considering the findings of the present study, it can be claimed that different task types in a commonly used course book lead to different motivation levels though all of them motivated students on a scale between "some" and "much." A commonly used course book, thus, is capable of motivating students to a certain degree and stimulating students' interest in the process of second language learning.

The present study attempted to shed some light on the strong relation between students' motivation and a course book's tasks to enhance classroom instruction. It aimed at providing some useful insights for the researchers and practitioners in the field of English Language Teaching. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a better and useful understanding of the course books' tasks and their motivational impacts on L2 learners.

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