Foreign Language Learning, Classroom Interaction and Lack of Motivation:
the Case of First Year Students of English at the University of Bejaia; LMD System Group

Nadia Idri, University of Bejaia

Abstract

This study treated the relationship Foreign Language Learning (FLL) has with both class interaction and lack of motivation in a university education course where English is taught as a foreign language. The setting was the University of Abderrahmane Mira, Béjaia taking the case of first year LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorat) students during the second semester's examinations (i.e. the end of the academic year 2005). Four objectives we aimed to reach for which we established two hypotheses. We used the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection with statistically-based software (SPSS) and a quantitative method. Results showed that our hypotheses were verified to some extent although most students did not reveal negative attitudes to the teachers' personality. There was a noticeable criticism to the teaching methods and the curriculum. Some of the participants criticised the group they belong to and others the teachers but their rate was low compared to the curriculum. As a result, teaching methods, course content, the teacher's personality and attitudes, and interaction among the students (i.e. to the group dynamics) showed to be the main factors which could either enhance or impede the students' motivation.

ملخص

تعالج هذه الدراسة العلاقة الموجودة بين تعلم اللغات الأجنبية بدرجة التفاعل وعدم وجود التحفيز لدى طلبة جامعيين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أجريت الدراسة بجامعة عبد الرحمان ميرة، بجاية آخذين طلاب السنة الأولى LMD كعينة خلال امتحانات الفصل الدراسي الثاني (أي نهاية العام الدراسي 2005). تهدف الدراسة إلى تحقيق أربعة أهداف و قمنا بإنشاء فرضيتين لهذا الغرض. قمنا باستخدام الاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات معتمدين على برنامج الإحصائيات (SPSS) وأسلوب كمي. وأظهرت النتائج أن لدينا فرضيات تم التحقق منها إلى حد ما رغم أن معظم الطلاب لم يكشفوا مواقف سلبية لشخصية المعلمين. وكان هناك نقد ملحوظ على طرق التدريس و البرامج الدراسية. كما أن بعض المشاركين انتقدوا المجموعة التي ينتمون إليها و آخرون انتقدوا المدرسين ولكن معدلهم أقل مقارنة بالبرامج الدراسية. نتيجة لذلك، تدريس أساليب ومحتوى الدورات الدراسية، وشخصية المعلم والمواقف والتفاعل بين الطلاب (أي ديناميات المجموعة) ظهرت كعوامل رئيسية التي يمكنها أما تعزز أو تعوق الحافز للطلبة.

Introduction

During at least the last six decades, there was a propagation of teaching methods in the field of foreign languages. Their vital aim and elementary objective has been to ensure a methodical and efficient learning of the target language they are exposed to. These methods focus mainly on the resources to be used, on the aspects of the language to be learned and the skills that the foreign language learners are expected to learn. However, in spite of the considerable amount of research undertaken on the field of FLL, little remains known about the role of educational psychology in determining the success or failure of the learners. The word that is basically advanced is motivation. It seems that one of the undergrounds in succeeding in FLL is much a matter of motivation before being its linguistic or didactic nature (i.e. teaching methods and the available material). In this, Chomsky says that: "The truth of the matter is that about 99 per cent of teaching is making students interested in the material" (Chomsky, 1989: In Arnold and Brown, 1999: 13). Thus, in this work, we aim at determining the level of motivation students have, attributing it to the language classroom where learners are face to face their classmates and their teacher. That is, we need to test the importance of the classroom atmosphere as well as the teaching methods and techniques in elevating or reducing the level of interest when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

1. Literature Review

1. 1. General Background on Motivation

Over the past three decades, a considerable body of research has been directed toward the role of such affective variables as attitudes, motivation and anxiety (Gardner, Day and MacIntyre, 1992: 197). Learners' motivation unflaggingly stands out as an important subject that receives much attention for its resilience in teaching/ learning enterprise. Using Dörnyei's words, motivation is "one of the most elusive concepts in the whole domain of the social sciences" (Dörnyei, and Clément, 2001: 402). In this, Van Lier (1996: 98) claims that most researchers and educators would agree that motivation "is a very important, if not the most important factor in language learning" (Van Lier 1996: 98). However, all the great deal of research done on the subject field of motivation, still debates in delimiting a short-cut definition are on. This is because the concept of motivation is a mystifying and a multifactorial one. Lamberth, McCullers and Mellgren (1976: 243) spell out that some psychologists have called for the deletion of the term motivation from the psychological literature. In the coming paragraphs, we-at least-supply the reader with a trial of defining it as provided by authors in the field.

To begin with, motivation is an internal state i.e. a want or a need that causes us to act, or it is a condition that activates behaviour and gives it direction. One of the definitions of motivation in language learning describes it in terms of the learner's overall goal or orientation. There is what we call *task motivation* where the interest felt by the learner in performing different learning tasks (Ellis, 1999: 300g). Moreover, Weiner defines it as: "Motivation is the study of the determinants of thought and action - it addresses why behaviour is initiated, persists, and stops, as well as what choices are made" (1992: 17).

For the reader not to be much confused and to gain more insight into the concern of the present article, we consider it convenient to point out that motivation can be interpreted in terms of negative or positive emotions. In other words, if negative feelings and emotions are more likely to prevail on the learning experience, we say that a lack or an absence of motivation might exist; a problematic case which we intend to investigate in our present study. Contrariwise, if positive feelings and emotions characterise the learning experience, a high motivation is more likely to be generated. Our focus is to tackle this possibly occurring negative feeling with another variable; that is classroom interaction. This comes out from the conception that motivation *is* "a psychological process in which personality traits interact with characteristics of the environment as perceived by the individual" (Lens 1996: 445). Taking the previous definitions as a ground, we can relate motivation to interaction. This phenomenon can direct our actions (whether to get integrated in the group or not), interaction can help

the learner whether to initiate the action or not (depending if it is positive or negative), it can also lead either to pursue the action or stop it, and finally it may lead the learner carry on taking the same action. Such feelings and emotions are more likely to emerge from the classroom interaction. They also determine the kind of the classroom climate or environment. Accordingly, in order to foster an interactive atmosphere that generates high motivation, 'we need an ambiance and relations among individuals [peers and teachers] that promote a desire interaction" (Rivers, 1987:9). For more clarification, motivation is attributed to interaction and teaching methods; things that constitute the core of our coming sub-section.

1. 2. Motivation and Interaction

As previously stated, many studies identify this process of motivation as an internal drive which pushes learners to accomplish a given task to achieve an already planned objective. In this case, Clement et al. (1994: 418) postulate that "increasing classroom relevance of the motivation research is certainly a worthwhile objective". Accordingly, concepts like subject matter, presentation skills, methods of teaching and more importantly learner's interaction become focal factors affecting motivation in the classroom.

Classroom is the real arena of human interaction; it serves as a small and complicated community group in which a student interacts both with his peers and his teacher (Pica, 1992 In Kral, 1999: 59). Its complexity resides in the different personalities, motives and expectations that exist at play. Accordingly, in order to foster an interactive atmosphere that generates high motivation, 'we need an ambiance and relations among individuals [peers and teachers] that promote a desire interaction" (Rivers, 1987: 9). As a logical consequence, the type of interaction results in the level of motivation (whether low or high).

Teacher-student interaction is a focal dimension that affects the learners' level of motivation. Thus, we can explain this interaction and its relationship with motivation through empathy and genuine interaction. The first dimension involves the caring quality of the teacher. Hence, a teacher who is friendly, genuine in dialogue and expresses high immediacy tends to generate positive feelings in learners, which in turn bolsters high motivation. Relating to this, Arnold and Brown (1999), in their definition of motivation, state that this latter and emotions are two intertwined dimensions. That is, if the positive feelings and emotions characterise the interaction, a high motivation is more likely to be generated and vice versa. Yet, a teacher is an aloof figure that is merely going through the motions of teaching heedless of the students may engender negative feelings such as shyness, anxiety and anger. Hence, this negative interaction tapers off the students' motivation. The point here is that if the nature of teacher- student interaction exemplifies empathy, it is more likely to affect positively their motivation.

The genuine interaction is the common theme that is expected in student-teacher interaction. This entails the teacher to be "active listeners, positive in error correction facilitator and stimulator genuine interaction". Succinctly stated, he should interact not only asking students to things for the sake of it. In this situation, the learner will be more aware of the his teacher's positive and actual involvement which results in high motivation. However, if the teacher, for instance, is very offensive in his way of correcting errors while interacting, he is more likely to inhibit the learner's desire for learning.

Peer-mediation or group interaction persistently plays a focal role in the process of motivation. Many researchers believe that this interaction develops a great understanding of others diverse social, interpersonal adjustments and learning needs, and more importantly learner's motivation. We can be best served by Gardner's quote:

> language is a defining behavioral feature of a cultural group, and thus acquiring the language involves taking on patterns of behavior of that group. As a consequence, an individual's attitudes toward that group and toward other cultural groups in general will influence his or her motivation to learn the language, and thus the degree of proficiency attained. (Gardner 2002: 160)

That is, the more positive the relationship among the group members is, the greater commitment to the group, feeling of responsibility is to be. That is, interaction exerts in learners a positive interdependence since they perceive that they can reach their goals if and only other individuals with whom they interactively linked also reach their goal. Therefore, they promote each other motivation. Yet, this interaction may also impede the motivation if it implies a more competitive and negative individualistic efforts. That is, learners perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only other individuals with whom they competitively linked lose. Accordingly, some learners who are involved in this interaction will certainly feel the pressure of their peers which certainly decreases their motivation. Besides, this type of interaction may also hold some non-humanistic characteristics (such as bullying, teasing, etc.) that taper off the target learners' self-esteem. When this occurs, their motivation automatically lowers down.

In a nutshell, we can say that interaction and motivation are interrelated; a positive interaction can increase motivation and vice versa. In other words, if it generates positive interpersonal relationship, feelings and healthy attitudes, this exerts a high motivation; whereas, an interaction that is characterized by irrational beliefs, dog-eat-dog relationship and negative emotions are more likely to deplete motivation.

1. 3. Group Dynamics, Teacher and Motivation
The difficult nature of FLL together with the number of the learners in the classroom and the multiplicity of the characteristics of each individual including the teacher is a recipe which makes the foreign language classroom a crucible. In this, we can refer to what Thomas (1991: 29) notes:

> The way that participants in classroom feel about each other, and about the situation they are in, has an important influence on what actually goes on in a classroom. Feelings and attitudes can make for smooth interaction and successful learning, or can lead to a conflict and a total breakdown of communication.

Of course, the interaction can in no way be smooth and successful without the instructor's powerful position. That is, one of the responsibilities of the teacher is to guide and motivate his students to work out the appropriate strategies to succeed in such a delicate assignment as FLL. It is, indeed, a difficult task to motivate the students or to maintain their motivation alive. The reason is that foreign language classrooms are "…complicated social communities. Individual learners come to them with their own constellation of native languages and culture, proficiency level, learning style, motivation and attitudes toward language learning" (Pica, 1992 In Kral, 1999: 59). To say it otherwise, learners are different from each other and the instructor is said to be aware of the individual learners' differences to succeed in teaching. Consequently, it is difficult for the teacher to deal with each individual solely and to motivate him successfully (Turner, 1978: 234) especially that what may help motivate a student may prove to be detrimental for another.

Accordingly, the students' motivation can be either high or low before attending the classroom and even once in the classroom. However, the interaction between the learners and the teacher may affect the students' level of motivation because everything depends on the emotions and feelings that this interaction generates. Additionally, the strains that the peers exert on the learner and the teacher's error-correction method have an effect on the beginners' motivation. This was just a brief account on the role of the teacher and the learners themselves in enhancing motivation. Our work is more likely to be practical and our interpretation of the situation is limited to our population which we hope be generalised for larger populations. In what follows, a full description is provided of the investigation we have conducted.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Setting and Subjects

To try to understand how motivation is affected in first year students learning EFL at university level, it is needed to focus more on the classroom setting where the bulk of the language is taught and learnt. This study is, then, aimed at displaying the points that might explain the reasons of the lack of motivation that students might feel. We have attempted to find out the main grounds that may engender the lack of motivation using a self-completed questionnaire designed for first year students learning EFL; inscribed in the new applied LMD system. The age range varies between 17 and 22 years old which might refer to a vital period of the individual's life where his strengths are relevant and motivation is to be present. To reach convenient answers, to attain our objectives which we are going to name bellow, and to try to validate our hypotheses; we have chosen the end of the second semester where the participants are said to be able to answer the questions we have constructed in the selected tool of investigation, i.e. the questionnaire. However, before stating the results obtained from our study, we need to present our statement of the problem, the objectives of the study and the determined hypotheses.

The central problem of this work is to know whether/how the students' lack of motivation is rooted from classroom interaction i.e. teacher-student and student-student interaction. In other words, we have started our questioning by:

> is the mere presence of the students in the classroom, their interaction with their peers and the relationship with their teacher to affect the students' motivation?

To obtain answers we, of course, have some determined aims we want to reach. Hence, the objectives we tried to cover in this work are grouped in:

1- Witnessing whether first year students of English in the university of Bejaia manifest some lack of motivation in the classroom or not;
2- Determining the main reasons that breed lack of motivation in the classroom in the new learners of a foreign language;
3- Glimpsing whether the teaching habits and the teacher's personality affect the students motivation or not; and
4- Spotting whether the kind of peers' interaction in the classroom is likely to affect (either positively or negatively) the students' motivation or not.

At this level, we have built our survey on the basis of two hypotheses. We, thus, hypothesise that:

1- If the students' motivation is affected in the foreign language classroom, the cause will be attributed, first, to the teaching methods and, then, to the teacher's personality and attitudes.

2- If the students' motivation is low or lowered in the classroom, this is partly due to interaction among the students (i.e. to the group dynamics).

2.2. Design

The nature of the subject at hand; motivation, leads us to use the quantitative and the statistical methods of investigation. Hence, be it difficult to measure, we have chosen the questionnaire as a means of data collection as we believe it is easier to conduct such complicated affective variables and less time and money consuming. To observe such a construct, we have chosen new learners of EFL in the Algerian university setting. This population; i.e. first year LMD students is exceedingly specific as we cannot find students inscribed in the LMD system in all universities be it a piloting phase endeavoured in just four universities during the academic year 2004-2005. This is to pay attention to the originality of our case study. Additionally, the subjects we are dealing with experienced many such inappropriate situations as repeated strikes, administrative and materialistic problems, and the like from. The investigation, then, comes to set up the link between motivation and lack of motivation more precisely and FLL in a group of 359 students inscribed in the LMD system in the English department of Abderrahmane Mira University; Bejaia. We have taken a number of 100 participants to whom the questionnaire is handed; a number which represents 27.85%. What should be noted here, however, is that the population that opted for the LMD system may react differently than students inrolled in the traditional system. That is to say, some of the subjects may welcome the new reform and, thus, they are supposed to be more motivated in the classroom whereas some others may not perceive the benefits of the system or in more extremes even reject it. Hence, we can evoke in such a case the problem of low motivation (i.e. diminishing motivation or losing it completely).

Back to the participants, the number of 359 is set in 14 groups where five groups contain 27 students each and 8 groups are made of 26 learners each. For the data collection procedure, we have gone as follows:

Data collection required some teachers' help (those who teach first year LMD students); of course, once in the classroom, we managed to explain the questionnaire items with recurrent explanations to avoid lack of understanding. Additionally, we have allowed the students to use any language other than English if they find difficulties in using this target

language. The procedure took 30 to 45 minutes in each class to complete the questionnaire adequately.

Before we move to the obtained results from the students, we need to hint at the questionnaire construction. We have been careful to make the questionnaire systematic by moving from general to specific. The questionnaire itself is made up of three sections containing 15 questions. The sections are entitled: *English Learning Background, Student-Student Interaction and Student-Teacher Interaction.* Concerning the first section, its aim is to diagnose the students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English. The second one tries to ask questions about the students' interaction in the classroom to see whether it enhances or lowers the participants' motivation. Finally, to try to understand the role of the student-teacher interaction and its effect on motivation, the third section's items are meant for such an aim. The questions vary between close (9 in number), open (4 items) and semi-open items (2 question).

2.3. Results

For reminder reasons, our questionnaire is made up of three sections which are respectively: *English Learning Background, Student-Student Interaction and Student-Teacher Interaction..* The first one aims at determining the motivation our participants may have (as we assume that a degree of motivation exists in the subjects in their prior stages of learning). Further, we opt to find some answers about the students' attitudes towards English and the obstacles they may face when they are their foreign language classrooms. This is what we have got indeed from the statistical reading and the interpretation of the obtained results. In what follows, we are going to present the data we got and the interpretation we made in accordance to the subject at hand, motivation.

To start with, we have started our questions by an introductory one where we ask the participants whether they like studying English or not. Of course, this item is intended to know whether students have positive attitudes towards the learnt language or not. Besides, it serves as a basis to the coming question where the kind of motivation students possess is showed. Statistically speaking, 99/ of the participants opted for the "*yes*" answer. This rate proves that our subjects have positive attitudes towards learning English and that they are motivated to start out their learning process. Once motivation is found in our case, determining its kind is also to be significant here. In the second question, we asked the participants about the reason behind learning a foreign language providing them with four options with an open one. Here, 58.01% of the learners (76 students) find English an interesting and fascinating language. This refers to the intrinsic motivation students have. The 22.14% of the learners who linked studying English to its usefulness in getting a job in the future indicates that they

relate their motivation to the extrinsic and/or the instrumental type. However, just 11.45 (15) informants opted for he option stating that learning English is due to the necessity to get integrated in an English speaking community. This choice shows that the students do not possess much of the integrative motivation. That is, learning English for them is more likely to be linked primarily the language at hand and, then, to the professional career. Only 3.04% (4 students) were oriented (against their will) to choose English at university level and this might affect their motivation. Yet, the rate is low and the motivation students have is significant and such negative feelings as low self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety might not characterise their classes. Hence, other factors may be the cause and not the students' prior motivation. After experiencing foreign language classes, students are asked about their attitudes towards the difficulty of learning English. Here, 22.25% (25 informants) find it easy, 33.33% (37 students) find it difficult. There should be no trouble for the first category, but the second one seems to meet more problems. Task difficulty may be a factor in diminishing the students' motivation, but we still feel unable to consider it so. To obtain more details about the respondents' answer, a third option is added which asks them depend their answer to a specific situation. In this option, we got a proportion of 42.34% (47 students). A number of reasons behind the students' difficulty in learning English are found. Among this number, some informants related the complication to the complexity of the taught subjects especially where the communicative skill is required such as Oral Expression and Grammar. Other respondents put forward that their difficulty is attributed to their lack of motivation in some cases and to their low aptitude in others. The teachers have also their part of responsibility as a number of students find learning easy with some teachers and difficult with others and this can be linked to our first hypothesis. That is, we can argue that these negative attitudes are due to the teachers' inappropriate method or failure to establish warmer links with students which might let the students to seek out more opportunities to get rid of their difficulties as it can be due to the teachers personalities where some students do not feel secure in their classes. The fourth question is made up of two parts where the first is about the possible reasons when failing in achieving a given task, and the second asks them justify their answers. Most of the informants refer their failure to task difficulty (they are 44 or 41.90%). A rate of 19.05% of the learners says that their failure in achieving a given task is due to their low learning proficiency. Our work is, however, based on the level of motivation learners have and for this we have added a third option lack of motivation is the reason. A percentage of 23.91% of the learners relate their failure to their lack of interest. Hence, if we compare the rate we get here and that got from the first item, we can see that the 99% diminishes to a great extent. Students are not motivated, so they do not make efforts and the result is failing in

achieving a task. If this persists in all tasks, failure will characterise the whole learning process. This low motivation here is neither due to the learning ability students have nor to the task's difficulty. From the participants' justifications, we could get four options which are respectively: lack of motivation, lack of understanding and preparation of the questions, lack of learning means and others. Unfortunately, we got only 27 answers. 73% of the learners did not provide a justification for their choice and this is another rate which shows their lack of interest. For the 27% we have, 7% are not motivated, 12% fail in performing a task when they do not prepare beforehand or when they do not understand the question. Only 4% refer to the lack of means they suffer from. Finally, 4% of the other option attributes their failure to over-confidence, under-evaluation of the task, and the question's forms (difficult vocabulary).

Our second section put focus on the interaction between the classmates. This section might help us test our second hypothesis. The inherent characteristics of the group might explain how motivation can be affected either positively or negatively. In nine items which vary between close and open, we got some data from we which we can draw a conclusion. However, we need to interpret the results first. We have first introduced the section by an item asking the students about how they prefer working in the classroom. Results show that a considerable number of the participants like to work either in pairs (32.67%) or in small groups (i.e. 40.59%). Both rates show that the subjects under investigation seem secure in the classroom when they work with their classmates. That is, working with another classmate is a beneficial learning strategy for some to work better, and sharing classroom activities with a group of learners is also a way out to achieve better. So, we can say that the student-student interaction is not a hindrance for learning to take place and, hence, it does not lower motivation because students' self-confidence seems to not be negatively affected. However, we can in no way ignore the 26% of the students who prefer working alone. We are not going to interpret the result here because we might just get the answer from the next item where asked the informants to justify their answers. We got 10% of the answers, a problem always met in open questions. From the remaining number, we could form four categories which justify the previous question's answers. The majority of the learners who are fifty-two in number (or 52%) prefer working in groups to exchange ideas and learn more with classmates. That is, students find more freedom to express themselves when being among their classmates. For them, discussion groups make them feel secure and they, then, learn better. Hence, the interaction here is a good motive for students and lack of motivation is not caused by the group. Another number of fourteen subjects (14%) lead to the same conclusion though the first option is cognitive and this one seems more affective. These participants prefer to work in pairs or in small groups because they are more encouraged when they are in the group and they also

seek security within the group. Of course, this shows clearly that students who are not affectively secure and find it an obstacle for them, pair works and group works are necessary strategies which the teacher should pay attention to. For the students who prefer to work individually, 17% need being alone while learning because they need more concentration on the one hand and they need to test their standard on the other. The remaining 7% shows the learners' a negative view of the group because they justify their answer by their 'dislike of the group'. This rate, though low, leads to a problem in the students' interaction. In their answers, they prefer to turn their direction to the teacher and that they really possess negative attitudes towards other learners who are not serious when discussing in the classroom and, thus, hinder learning as a result. All in all, most of the students like group works, but we need to go through the coming results before drawing a final conclusion. As a follow up to the above questions, this one tries to determine whether students are cooperative and competitive or not and this is after testing their attitudes towards the group. The extreme majority of the subjects possess a good view, positive attitudes towards the group they belong to. Now, students prove to like sharing ideas together and now 43% confirm this in this question. This is a very good sign of the cooperative relation that gathers learners. This also may show that the participants do not feel a considerable difference in level and this shows that homogeneity exists. There are 41.90% (44 students) of the informants who are interested in comparing their answers and knowledge once in the classroom. This is a good indication of the competitiveness students have. Competition is part of the learning process and it is motivating factor as well. Finally, only 6.7% of the participants (7 learners) try always to seek explanation from the students. This may be part of their learning strategies as they may face difficulties and try to seek explanation from the other classmates. When we asked the participants about making errors and the students' ridicule, almost the same rate appeared as 40% confirmed this behaviour shown from the classmates and 55% deny this fact to exist in case of errors. Being laughed at, in the classroom, leads to negative feelings. Perhaps, students who feel these negative affective disturbance may belong to the learners whose self-confidence is low or because their language proficiency is low. We would rather move to the coming question where we ask the subjects about their feelings in such a situation. Again, 27% of the learners did not provide us with an answer and this shows how the participants do not like requirements about affective issues. The remaining number varies between 42% feel relaxed and confident; a good sign of self-confidence and that the group does not affect it. A proportion of 15% feel rather humiliated and inferior. These are students whose self-confidence and self-esteem are affected in this situation. Because our options are not exhaustive, an "*other*" option is added. Here, 16% of the subjects whose

answers turn around carelessness about this reaction. They declare that they do not pay attention to these students. When asking the subjects who answered by "*yes*" for being laughed at, we got 72 answers to this here item. The question asks about their reaction after being laughed at when making an error. Most of the learners who are 43 (59.72%), fortunately, claim that they will avoid making the same mistake and try to participate. These seem to be good risk-takers and highly motivated to learn. Again, for these, the differences in the group members do not dramatically influence the students' motivation. Some of the subjects (12 or 16.67%) say that they feel indifferent and careless. Contrarily, six participants (8.33%) claim that they are still ready to take risks again though they are laughed at. Finally, some extreme positions where sensitive reactions appear make up 11.11% (8subjects) who declare that they will never participate in the classroom again and these students may fossilise as a result. Three learners (4.17%) say that they will have other reactions though still ready to take risks again. All in all, we can conclude from the answers we got in this section about the students-student interaction that the group dynamic is not a reason to lower motivation though very few students do not feel that secure. Hence, our second hypothesis is not validated at least in our case.

Our third section is, as afore-said, about the student-teacher interaction. Here, we go back testing our first hypothesis linked to the instructor's responsibility in affecting the learners' motivation, but with more details. We have, then, started our section with a direct item asking about what affects the participants' motivation providing them with three options ranging from the group, the teacher and the lesson content. Almost similar answers were given to the first two options (17.92% for the group and 16.98% for the teacher). Surprisingly, the majority of the learners that are 54 in number (50.94%) relate their lack of motivation to the content. Hence, this forces us refer to the teaching methods within the curriculum taught by the teachers; a fact that need be discussed in more details given its importance in our language classes. The first variable of our first hypothesis is validated here to a great extent. Concerning the teachers' personality and attitudes in the classroom, the second variable of this hypothesis, we have asked the subjects about the way they like their teachers to be. Here, 79% of the participants prefer to work with an understanding, friendly teacher. That is, most learners in a foreign language classroom like to feel confident and secure with the instructor because this leads to a better interaction in the classroom and make intake possible. 17% like their teachers just as guides and to come just to explain the lesson. These students may prefer to maintain a distance with their instructors and see the teacher as a mere source of information and advice. These students seem to not see the humanistic benefit and interaction with the teacher. Only 2% of the answers opted for the "others" choice without providing the reasons. A question like this needs a justification. 37% did not justify their answer. From remaining

number we could have four convergent options. 40% of the learners like friendly and understanding teachers because this helps them reduce frustration and elevate motivation. We can refer to Krashen's Affective Hypothesis here who relate low anxiety to high motivation to let intake in. we also got 9% of the participants who like such teachers who are more likely to help the students in the classroom. Another rate of 4% of the informants say that when they like the teacher, they also like the subject he teaches. Hence, most of the learners, though the reasons are different, relate good learning atmosphere created by the teacher is more likely to help students in diversified ways. This is indeed related to his teaching methods together with his personality and attitudes. Our first hypothesis is also valid through this item because motivation, lowered or enhanced, teachers have their responsibility in doing so. Only 10% participants who prefer no interaction with the teachers and like them just guides justifying this by the instructors role in keeping discipline in the classroom. In other words, these learners perceive the teacher's permissive behaviour as a factor causing disturbance and lack of organisation. They rather feel lack of concentration and give way to irrelevant, informal discussions in the classroom. To conclude this section and the questionnaire in its general terms, two items are added asking the subjects to compare the degree of their motivation before attending university classes and now requiring justifications in the last item. Most of the learners reveal that the level is in no way the same (they are 65%, 65 students). A proportion of 35% say it is the same. We, in fact, avoid interpreting the results here because the answer is in the following open item. 25% did not answer as usual. From the remaining number, 25% justified their choice of the "*yes*" answer and 50% justified the "*no*" answer. Again, we could divide the 25% into two rates referring to two options. The first one which makes 19% justifies maintaining motivation to personal vocation and sometimes to please parents and society. Here, the motivation is of the intrinsic and extrinsic type. However, 6% say that their motivation did not change because they did not notice any perceived progress. This shows that these students were not motivated right from the beginning and they are still unmotivated. The other 50% which we divide into three options reveal that they perceived a change in their motivation. The causes are the progress they felt for 34%- which means that their motivation changes positively, the feeling of consciousness and getting the degree (10%)-intrinsically and extrinsically rooted motivations, not the same (6%) for the poor curriculum which seems the same as in the secondary school.

Conclusion

Motivation, as an affective factor, plays a role in learning as central to it in the sense that it is a crucial force which determines the learner's initiation for taking action and persistence in it. We, then, should pay more attention in our foreign language classes. Through this study, we have seen that motivation can be high or low depending on a number of factors. These can be grouped in:

Students:

- Students should have a clear, realistic image of what the foreign language classroom is like at university prior their entry.
- Students should determine clear objectives through identifying the usefulness of learning EFL.
- Students should be aware of the importance of the group they belong to and the necessity of interaction for a better learning and application of the language.
- Students should interact with the teacher and ask for his help and guidance by participating in the classroom and even in their tutoring sessions.

Teachers:

- Teachers should explain right from the beginning the usefulness of his lectures, the objectives he intends to reach and the results he needs to reach.
- Teachers should control the group and try to create a healthy atmosphere where interaction is easy and effective.
- Teachers should adjust the methods, techniques and strategies according to the learners' needs.
- Teachers should adjust the content to the learners' learning needs and abilities.

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Appendix

Dear Students:

We would be highly honoured if you could answer sincerely and frankly the following questions behind which we aim at getting some information about your feelings as new learners of English as a foreign language, when facing the classroom for the first time. In addition, suggestions from your personal experiences on when, why and how these emotions of worry are lived, if any, are welcome for your viewpoint may be very useful to understand better foreign language learners' positions and attitudes.

Please, put a tick   in the appropriate box, or give a full answer whenever necessary.

I. English Learning Background

1. Do you like to study English as a foreign language?

    a. Yes

    b. No

2. Do you study it at university level because…

    a. you like English as a language (interesting)?

    b. learning English would guarantee a good job/career in the future?

    c. you need to learn English to get integrated in

        English-speaking communities?

    d. You are urged to do so?

3. Do you find learning English:

    a. Easy?

    b. Difficult?

    c. It depends on……..

4. In case of failure in achieving a task, is this because:

    a. Problem in your language learning proficiency/ability?

    b. Task's difficulty?

    c. Lack of interest?

    d. Others?

5. Justifyyouranswer:……………………………………………

B. Student-Student Interaction

6. In class, do you like learning…?

    a. individually

    b. in pairs

    c. in small groups

7. Please, say why:…………………………………… …

8. Once in the classroom, do you prefer to:

    a. share your ideas with your classmates?

    b.   Seek explanation from the classmates?

    c.   Compare your answers to theirs? ☐

9.   Do students laugh at you when you make mistakes?

    a.   Yes ☐

    b.   No ☐

10.   In such a case, how do you often react?

    a.   You stop participating in the classroom ☐

    b.   You try to avoid making the same mistakes ☐

    c.   You do not care and feel indifferent ☐

    d.   Ready to take risks again. ☐

C. Student-Teacher Interaction

11.   If you feel as not motivated to work in the classroom, is it because:

    a.   Your group? ☐

    b.   Lesson content? ☐

    c.   your teacher? ☐

12.   Do you prefer your teacher to be:

    a.   friendly and understanding? ☐

    b.   Just to guide and explain the lessons? ☐

    c.   Others? ☐

13.   Justify your answer………………………………

14.   Do you estimate your level of interest to be the same before you come to university and now?

    a.   Yes? ☐

    b.   No? ☐

15.   Please, say why……………………………………

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.