



Full Length Research Paper

Attitudes of English language teachers to motivational strategies in language teaching

Yener Keleş

Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Muğla Turkey

E-mail: yenerkeles@gmail.com

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This study was aimed at investigating attitudes of English language teachers in Muğla University, preparatory School to motivational strategies in language learning. Teachers' attitudes to motivational strategies has been found to be effective in terms of increasing students' success in language learning because success, to some extent, depends on motivation in language learning contexts, and motivation can be increased through motivational strategy use. Data used in this study was collected from 35 teachers of English at Muğla University, Preparatory School. A questionnaire consisting of Likert scale type questions derived from the literature was used to solicit teachers' attitudes to motivational strategies. Data collected by the questionnaire was analyzed by the use of spss (statistical programming for social sciences) was used to analyze the questionnaire. The subjects of this study developed positive attitudes to the strategies; they will be convinced to use them in their language teaching. The use of motivational strategies by the teachers in language teaching will pave the way for the students learning English at the institution to be motivated to learn the language and sustain this motivation throughout the whole one- year period of language learning. This prolonged process of motivation achieved by the application of motivational strategies will provide a means for the students to increase their rate of success in English learning and there for the success of Muğla University, Preparatory School since being motivated to learn a language is directly in proportion to being successful in learning and mastering the language. However, another study could be conducted to see how often teachers use these strategies when they teach English. Further research can be carried out through classroom observations to find out significant differences between teachers' attitudes to motivational strategies and their real use of those strategies. Another study can be carried out to see the effect of materials prepared in accordance with motivational strategies.

Key words: Motivation, motivational strategies

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of foreign language teaching every institution or individual in the business of teaching a foreign language has done a lot to reach its goal, that is, to teach foreign language. A lot of money has been invested in teaching a foreign language. Teachers have been trained. Buildings equipped with laboratories and full of materials concerning foreign language teaching have been designed and allocated for teaching languages. Curricula have been designed (Graves, 1996) to plan the step by step language teaching processes in

advance, much research into linguistic and psychological aspect of language learning have been done so far. Ranging from Grammar Translation Method to Communicative Language Teaching, language learning theories have been developed (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) Concisely speaking, a lot of time, effort, money and labour have been invested in teaching foreign languages. However, alongside these efforts, we need to bear in our minds the fact that students, as the subjects of teaching foreign languages, are not empty boxes to be filled with

ready-made rules, systems, regulations, and assumptions. For attaining the goal of teaching a foreign language successfully, we need to come to the realization that, apart from preparing necessary conditions for language teaching, we should regard the issue of foreign language teaching from the perspective of students as much as we do from the linguistic and technical side. That is to say, learners should be triggered to acquire and internalize linguistic elements because success in language context depends, to some extent, on how motivated the learners are.

Starting from this point of departure, motivational strategies help all people concerned with teaching a foreign language – whether teachers, institutions, or educationalists- to understand the very nature of students and, as result, to teach languages with a certain degree of success. These strategies remind us that students are social beings who share the sense of belonging to a group or becoming members of a group. So teachers who are informed of these strategies will first of all have good relations with students and will respect them as individuals deserving the right to express themselves freely (Maslow, 1962), will help students to know each other and form group norms to be obeyed by members of the classroom as a small unity of a society.

Those teachers who are acquainted with motivational strategies keep in their minds the fact that students have needs, desires and will accordingly take those needs and desires into consideration while planning lessons and choosing and sequencing activities for teaching a foreign language. The same teachers will be cognizant of the fact that students have language learning- related fears coming from the past experiences (Bandura, 1993) and they will create opportunities in order for those students to overcome this fear of making mistakes and therein, will help them experience success needed for acquiring high performance.

Maintaining student motivation until the end of a long course is another troublesome issue faced in teaching a foreign language since even those students are highly motivated at the beginning might lose motivation as the course evolves. In order to prevent this, implementing motivational strategies is a means in our service to maintain student motivation during the learning period as motivated students who have the intention of learning a language should be shown what steps to take for action-specific strategies in the future (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998).

Research Question

What are the attitudes of English teachers at Muğla University, Prep School towards motivational strategies?

METHODOLGY

Setting

This study was conducted in English preparatory School of Muğla University, teaching English to the students who

failed in the exemption exam at the beginning of the academic year. For some departments such as Tourism and Hotel Management, Civil Aviation, Tour Operating, and Electronics and Computer teaching, English preparatory classes are compulsory, the students have to succeed in the proficiency exam to be graduated from the university, otherwise they don't get graduation certificate. However, for Economic and Administrative Sciences' students, preparatory classes are voluntary. Although they may fail in the proficiency exam, they attend their undergraduate program. Both voluntary and compulsory students don't have to repeat the class that means they are allowed to start their undergraduate education.

Participants

Thirty six teachers working at the Preparatory School of Muğla University participated in this study. The questionnaire was administered to 36 participants and all of the 36 participants returned their questionnaire for a return rate of 100%. The instructors participating in the study ranged from 25 to more than 45 years of age and had experience ranging from 1 and 5 to more than 20 years. For most of the teachers the bulk of their experience has been at Muğla University.

Instruments

Two data collection instruments, a questionnaire and interviews, were drawn on in this study to gather data. The questionnaire technique is often used because little time is required for the implementation of this technique, participants are not required to perform extended writing in this technique, and it is easy to process. Moreover, it is an efficient and viable way of gathering data from large sample groups (Oppenheim, 1992; Nunan, 2004). The interview technique is usually employed to provide participants with the change to express their thoughts in their own words to obtain more detailed data (Seidmen, 1998; Nunan, 2004).

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of two parts: in background information part, the purpose was soliciting background information relating the participants. Five items were included to obtain data about participants' age, total years of teaching experience, qualifications in teaching, other schools worked at, and total years of experience of teaching in present institution. In part B, there were 49 questions derived from the literature (Brophy, 1998, Dörnyei, 2001a; Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Littlejohn, 2001; Spaulding, 1992). The aim of this section was to solicit the attitudes of teachers towards motivational strategies. Therefore, different terms were used in the five-point Likert scale by the researcher. Participants were asked to rate the items from 1 to 5 corresponding to the terms not important at all, not very important, neutral, important, very important. The data collected in this part of the questionnaire was intended to help obtain the answer to the research question.

Questions used in the questionnaire were sequenced in the order of using strategies before, during and after a lesson. Questions from 1 to 7 were related to strategies used by teachers before teaching a class, questions from 8 to 38 were related to the strategies used while teaching a class, and questions from 39 to 49 were related to the strategies used for feedback or after teaching. It is also possible to categorise the questions in the questionnaire according to the strategy types employed. Questions from 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 35, 41, 45, 48, and 49 cover strategies for building good social relations with students. Questions 18, 19, 39, 40, and 41 are related to strategies for improving teacher commitment. Questions 15, 17, 20, 23, 28, 42 and 43 comprise anxiety-related strategies and strategies for improving students' self-confidence. Goal-related strategies are involved in questions 11, 12 and 16. Task-related Strategies are included in questions 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36 and 37. As for feedback-related strategies there are questions 44, 46 and 47.

Besides questionnaires, interviews (see Appendix B for an interview schedule) were employed in this study. Interviews were used in this study to get the viewpoint of the interviewees. Through the use of interviews, four participants were provided with the opportunity to express their attitudes towards motivational strategies in their own words. The interview questions were semi-structured. That is, depending on the answer provided by the interviewees, the questions were put another way if the answers were not satisfactory or too obscure to understand.

Procedures

The questionnaire items were structured by drawing on the relevant literature in motivational strategies. Then the questions were organised in line with the literature review section of the study in constructing the questionnaire. In order to overcome any potential deficiencies of the questionnaire, and to ensure its working as intended, it was piloted on November 16th, 2006 with 10 English teachers. The teachers were all teaching English at Muğla University, Prep School, with at least two years teaching experience. Their comments were evaluated, and as a result of this evaluation, the wording of five items was adjusted to make them less ambiguous.

After that, the questionnaire was delivered to 36 English teachers of Muğla University's prep-school on November 6th, 2006. The researcher held a meeting with the participants before delivering the questionnaires in order to inform them about why they were being asked to complete the questionnaires. In this meeting, participants were also requested to take the questionnaires seriously. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants. After the questionnaire was completed by the participants, the researcher collected them the same day. Thirty six questionnaires were returned. Then, the data obtained through questionnaire was analysed by the

researcher through Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The researcher structured the interview questions according to the data obtained from the questionnaires to understand participants' attitudes towards motivational strategies. The interview questions structured by the researcher were also piloted with the help of an English teacher at Muğla University to see whether they were understandable and appropriate to obtain the intended data. Four teachers who had been chosen randomly were interviewed on February 10th, 2007 to solicit their attitudes towards motivational strategies. The interviews were tape recorded then transcribed by the researcher On February 15th.

FINDINGS

Teachers' Attitudes towards Motivational Strategies

The questions in part B of the questionnaire was designed to investigate teachers' attitudes towards motivational strategies. There were 49 Likert-scale questions in this part. The following scale was used in this part of the questionnaire:

Not important at all: 1 Not very important: 2
Neutral: 3 Important: 4 Very important: 5

For each question, frequencies and chi-squares were computed, and the results were interpreted. In [Table 1](#), the results of the analyses of the teachers' responses to the questions aiming to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards motivational strategies are presented.

Great deals of the results obtained from the analysis of the questions aimed at investigating the teachers' attitudes towards motivational strategies are either significant or highly significant. These significant or highly significant results are a reflection of the strong positive attitudes of the teachers towards almost all of the motivational strategies. However, the teachers reported stronger attitudes towards some of the strategies than they did for the others. For the strategies covered in 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49 the majority of the participants reported that they find the strategies very important. These strategies and their types are presented in [Table 2](#).

Two of the strategies for building good relations with students were found by the majority of the teachers to be very important for motivating students. A significant number of the teachers participating in the survey considered A22 and A48 to be effective in developing good relations with their students. A22 is concerned with making students feel that the teacher really cares about them as people. Most of the teachers attached great importance to the strategy, which means that they regard their students as individuals worthy of being respected and taken into consideration. A 48 is a remark postulating that teachers should praise their students when they succeed. Likewise, most of the teachers

Table 1: The Teachers' Attitudes Towards Motivational Strategies

| Que. No. | Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | χ^2 |
|----------|--|---|---|----|----|----|----------|
| A1 | Involve students in creating the rules to be obeyed in the classroom at the beginning of the term. | 2 | 2 | 8 | 13 | 11 | 14.27 |
| A2 | Try to learn what students think about learning process. | 0 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 13 | 10.44 |
| A3 | Emphasize the usefulness of the language in finding a job. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 13 | 19 | 38.44 |
| A4 | Involve students in decision making about the learning. | 0 | 0 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 3.167 |
| A5 | Consider students' needs rather than tests while preparing tasks. | 0 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 13 | 17.77 |
| A6 | Consider students' interests rather than tests while preparing tasks. | 0 | 1 | 12 | 16 | 7 | 14.00 |
| A7 | Prepare for lessons in such a way as to promote learning. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 19 | 0.111 |
| A8 | Raise students' curiosity by introducing unexpected tasks | 0 | 0 | 7 | 14 | 15 | 3.16 |
| A9 | Give clear instructions for tasks to students. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 30 | 40.66 |
| A10 | Provide guidance about how to complete tasks for students. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 24 | 23.02 |
| A11 | Set up learning goals that are both clear and achievable for students. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 20 | 14.00 |
| A12 | Encourage students to select specific, short-term goals for themselves. | 0 | 0 | 7 | 14 | 15 | 3.167 |
| A13 | State the purpose of every task. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 13 | 22.77 |
| A14 | Vary instruction style. | 0 | 1 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 14.88 |
| A15 | Communicate a belief to my students that everyone can learn when required effort is demonstrated. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 24 | 37.55 |
| A16 | Teach my students learning strategies. | 0 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 16 | 21.11 |
| A17 | Bring humour to the classroom to help decrease student anxiety | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 | 11 | 9.50 |
| A18 | I demonstrate that I enjoy what I do in the classroom. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 17 | 25.11 |
| A19 | Show my students that I value L2 learning as a meaningful experience. | 0 | 1 | 3 | 20 | 12 | 25.55 |
| A20 | Show my students that L2 learning produces satisfaction in my life. | 0 | 2 | 6 | 18 | 10 | 15.55 |
| A21 | Develop a good relationship with my students. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 20 | 12 | 10.66 |
| A22 | Make my students feel that I really care about them as people. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 20 | 14.00 |
| A23 | Encourage my students to take risks without fear of feeling stupid. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 25 | 24.50 |
| A24 | Share my personal interests in the L2 with my students. | 0 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 5.571 |
| A25 | Share my interests with my students. | 0 | 2 | 15 | 8 | 11 | 10.00 |
| A26 | Be willing to talk to my students about their personal problems. | 2 | 3 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 11.50 |
| A27 | Help my students to get to know one another. | 0 | 2 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 10.44 |
| A28 | Use tasks that do not exceed my students' competence. | 0 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 12 | 14.00 |
| A29 | Make tasks challenging enough for my students. | 0 | 9 | 17 | 9 | 1 | 14.22 |
| A30 | Offer a variety of tasks. | 0 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 13 | 20.66 |
| A31 | Use tasks that allow my students to have fun in the classroom. | 1 | 1 | 5 | 22 | 7 | 41.77 |
| A32 | Use tasks that are interesting for my students. | 1 | 0 | 4 | 21 | 10 | 26.00 |
| A33 | Use game-like competitions in the classroom. | 1 | 0 | 9 | 17 | 9 | 14.22 |
| A34 | Use tasks that allow students to interact with each other. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 17 | 17 | 12.50 |
| A35 | Avoid comparing my students to one another. | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 22 | 12.66 |
| A36 | Use authentic tasks (tasks that are believed to prepare learners for real life applications). | 1 | 2 | 5 | 22 | 6 | 40.38 |
| A37 | Regularly use group activities where students can mix. | 0 | 1 | 6 | 22 | 6 | 28.65 |
| A38 | Invite native speakers to classes whenever it is possible. | 6 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 7 | 12.56 |
| A39 | Prepare additional materials for my students who need more exercises. | 0 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 18 | 18.88 |
| A40 | Meet my students who need help individually outside of class time to explain subjects that are not understood clearly. | 0 | 3 | 14 | 12 | 7 | 8.222 |
| A41 | Organise out-of-class activities with my students. | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 2.611 |
| A42 | Make sure that my students experience success regularly. | 0 | 0 | 6 | 17 | 12 | 5.200 |
| A43 | Communicate a belief to my students that mistakes are a natural part of learning. | 0 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 23 | 17.16 |
| A44 | Show my students how much they have learned. | 0 | 0 | 3 | 18 | 15 | 10.50 |
| A45 | Be consistent in my reactions to my students. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 16 | 18 | 12.66 |
| A46 | Give immediate feedback that does not embarrass my students. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 12 | 20 | 10.66 |
| A47 | Give feedback to my students in such a way as to enable them to improve their performance. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 23 | 20.16 |
| A48 | I praise my students when they succeed. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 27 | 30.16 |
| A49 | I show my disapproval to my students when they demonstrate undesirable behaviours. | 0 | 1 | 6 | 13 | 16 | 15.33 |

 χ^2 = Chi-square

Table 2: Strategies Towards Which the Teachers Reported the Strongest Attitudes

| Que. No. | Questions | Strategy Type |
|----------|---|--|
| A22 | Make students feel that I really care about them as people. | Strategies for building good relations with students |
| A48 | Praise students when they succeed. | |
| A11 | Set up learning goals that are both clear and achievable for students | Goal-related motivational strategies |
| A16 | Teach my students learning strategies. | |
| A3 | Emphasize the usefulness of the language in finding a job. | Strategies for improving teacher commitment and integrative/instrumental motivational strategies |
| A18 | Demonstrate that I enjoy what I do in the classroom. | |
| A16 | Teach my students learning strategies. | |
| A19 | Show my students that I value L2 learning as a meaningful experience. | |
| A20 | Show my students that L2 learning produces satisfaction in my life | |
| | Prepare additional materials for my students who need more exercises. | |
| A39 | Be consistent in my reactions to my students. | |
| | Show my disapproval to my students when they demonstrate undesirable behaviours. | |
| A45 | | |
| A49 | | |
| | Give clear instructions for tasks to the students. | Task-related strategies |
| | Provide guidance about how to complete tasks for students. | |
| A9 | State the purpose of every task. | |
| A10 | Consider students' need rather than tests while presenting tasks | |
| A13 | Offer a variety of tasks. | |
| A5 | Use tasks that allow my students to have fun in the classroom. | |
| A30 | Use task that are interesting for my students. | |
| A31 | Use tasks that allow my students to interact with each other. | |
| A32 | Use authentic tasks (tasks that are believed to prepare learners for real life applications). | |
| A34 | | |
| A36 | Regularly use group activities where students can mix. | Anxiety-related strategies and strategies for student increasing self-confidence |
| | Vary instruction style. | |
| A37 | | |
| A14 | Communicate a belief to my students that everyone can learn when required effort is demonstrated. | |
| A15 | Encourage students to take risks without fear of feeling stupid. | |
| | Avoid comparing students to one another. | |
| A23 | Communicate a belief to my students that mistakes are a natural part of learning. | |
| A35 | | |
| A43 | | |
| | Give feedback to my students in such a way as to enable them to improve their performance. | |
| A47 | | |

reported a positive attitude towards this strategy, which safeguard students' sustained motivation. However, it is interesting to notice that the same teachers reported A1, A4, A21, A24, A25, A26 and A27 to be just important rather than very important.

As for goal-related motivational strategies, the teachers reported A11 and A16 to be very important for student motivation in language teaching. It is also vital to set up learning goals that are both clear and

achievable for students' extended student motivation and successful completion of language learning process. Twenty teachers out of thirty six teachers the questionnaire was administered to reported their strong attachment to A11 stressing the importance of setting up realistic achievable goals for students. This may show the teachers' believe that when the students have a goal to achieve they are more likely to put more effort because goals are initiatives that make students know why they do

what they do in the classroom. Reasonably enough, students who are not trained to get learning strategies are mostly demotivated in language learning. Teachers in the survey expressed their deep concern for the importance of teaching students learning strategies in A16 by a majority of sixteen teachers out of thirty six teachers responding to the strategy. What sounds interesting about goal-related strategies is the lack participants reporting positive attitudes under the scale of very important for A12.

Participant of the survey also showed their strong positive attitudes towards A18, A19, A20, A39, A45, A49 and A3 categorised under strategies for teacher commitment and integrative and instrumental motivation strategies. The teachers seemed to believe that emphasising the usefulness of English in finding a job, stated in A3, is motivating for their students as 19 out of 35 teachers reported believing that the strategy is very important perhaps because English is a path to many jobs in Turkey. Demonstrating their positive attitudes towards A18, A19, A20; the teachers, by approximate rate of two out of three, most probably wanted to convey the message that in language teaching it's essentials for teacher to show their students that the experience of being an English teacher is both spiritually and materially a satisfactory pursuit. Therefore it is obvious that the teachers attach particular importance to these strategies as a means to trigger students' volition and motivation to start to learn a language. What sounds interesting about strategies for teacher commitment and strategies for integrative/instrumental motivation is the lack participants reporting positive attitudes under the scale of very important for A7, A38, A40 and A41.

The significance of task-related strategies as milestones for motivating learners to learn a language efficiently is incontrovertible. Under this category the strategies available in the study for the positive attitude of the teachers are A5, A9, A10, A13, A14, A30, A31, A32, A34, A35, A36 and A37. In A5 teachers prefer considering student needs rather than tests while presenting task. This positive attitude is the most appreciated attitude for the start of presenting motivating tasks that the teachers think their students would need because rather than tests students become the starting point of departure for language teaching. Thirty teachers out thirty-six in A9 give attachment providing students with clear instructions for the tasks. This high rate of favourable attitude to the strategy is a manifestation of how important the teachers value the strategy. This percentage is the justification of how important it is to give clear instructions to students in order for them to appropriately understand what the purpose of a teaching process is and respond accordingly for the learning to take place. Another way to protect and maintain student motivation throughout the strenuous process of language learning is providing students with guidance about how to complete task. Finding A10 very important, twenty-five participants out of thirty-six express their priority in

sustaining student motivation provided by clear instruction though proving students with guidance about how to complete tasks. Majority of the participants reported that stating the purpose of every task in A13 is influential in ensuring students' task-related motivation. Varying instruction style in A14 as well as offering variety in tasks in A30 gained a favourable attitude maybe because the teachers want to disclose that this strategy is another turning point to task-related student motivation. Most of the teachers participating in the survey developed considerable positive attitudes to A31, A32, and A34 stresses the significance of teachers' use of tasks that allow students to have fun, to interact with each other and those that are interesting for students. By assigning great attachment to strategies A36 and A37, the teachers confirm the requisites for the language learning of highly motivated learners such as using authentic tasks and group activities where students can mix and learn through the use of real life applications and interaction with different people. What sounds interesting about task-related strategies is the lack participants reporting positive attitudes under the scale of very important for strategies A6, A8 and A29.

Under the category of anxiety-related strategies and strategies for improving students' self-confidence, the attitudes of the teachers responding to the questionnaire were analysed and attachment was assigned to A15, A23, A35 and A43. A remarkable majority of teachers with a rate of twenty-four participants out of thirty-six reported A15 very important most probably because the teachers presuppose that communicating a belief to their students that everyone can learn a language under the condition of demonstrating required effort is the first principle for providing and maintaining student motivation in language learning. So the teachers try to convince their students to take the first step of putting effort into language learning, which is a vehicle that is needed throughout the long, strenuous process of language learning. The positive attitude the participants developed towards A23 by twenty-five out of twenty-six is a solid proof for the attention the teachers pay to encouraging their students to take risks without feeling stupid as learners are very sensitive to their prestige and they are afraid of losing prestige by asking questions or making mistakes that might humiliate them in the face of their peers and teacher. By giving showing a positive attitude towards A 35 with a rate of twenty-two teachers out of thirty-six, the participants of the survey avoid not only student comparison but also the potential threat that might be caused by comparing students to one another. In so doing the teachers show how sensitive they are in decreasing student anxiety that is naturally caused by the heavy burden of learning a new language which is likely to inhibit learning with ease. The positive attitude the teachers develop towards A43 with an approval rate of twenty-three out of thirty-six participants is also worthy of taking into consideration as the teachers agree to the assertion that communication to the students the belief

that mistakes in language learning are a natural part of learning. It seems that the teachers are aware of their students' anxiety that might arise from the fear of making mistakes during the process of language learning and mastery. However, the lack participants' reporting positive attitudes towards motivational strategies under the category of anxiety-related strategies and strategies for improving students' self-confidence in A28 and A42 is surprising.

Lastly, the attitudes of the participants, to be taken into consideration for scientific concerns in the study, is towards the motivational strategies related to feedback strategies. The teachers under discussion developed comparatively favourable attitudes just towards A47. Twenty-three questionnaire respondents out of thirty-six accepted the importance of giving feedback to their students in such a way as to enable them to improve their performance. The majority of positive attitude to this strategy puts emphasis on feedback that guarantees students' continuous motivation to try and learn. Strikingly enough, the participants reported no highly positive attitudes towards A44 and A46 under the category of feedback-related strategies.

DISCUSSION

The first result drawn from the questionnaire was on strategies for building good relations with students.

The majority of the teachers reported favorable attitudes to these strategies. Through praising the teachers come to the realization that they should convince their students to realise that they can succeed in language learning and that their products are cared and valued (Jones & Jones, 2001). The teachers' attitudes towards the use of praising as a means of motivating their students are in line with traditional understanding of classroom motivation which was based on reinforcement theory (Spaulding, 1992). Teachers believe in making students feel that they are cared for as people and avoiding comparing students to one another. These good relation developing strategies are considered to be important by the teachers perhaps because the teachers think that everybody likes being valued by other people as a person and most people dislike being compared with others as they want to be accepted as they are (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Another set of strategies towards which teachers reported positive attitudes goal-related strategies. Teachers find it important to set up learning goals that are both clear and achievable for their students. So it seems that the teachers are aware of the fact that students can achieve and be motivated to do a task only when they know clearly what they are expected to. Besides, it is ensured that the teachers are also aware that students can do a task only if they think it some think they can (Dörnyei and Csizer, 1998).

The teachers reported positive attitudes towards strategies aiming to increase students' instrumental motivation. The teachers reported that they both emphasise the usefulness of the language in finding a job as a motivational strategy very often and they believe this is very important. This may indicate that the teachers believe main factor leading their students to learn English is their concerns about finding a good job in the future. The English language is a gatekeeper to many jobs in Turkey and students need to learn it to improve better prospects.

Strategies related to presentation of tasks properly are highly valued by the teachers in terms of motivating their students which is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Dörnyei and Csizer (1998). Perhaps the teachers believe that the way a task is presented can determine how much the task is perceived as motivational by students (Dörnyei, 2001a), or they find exploiting presentation-related motivational strategies easier than using other task-related motivational strategies. Presentation related strategies require the teachers to do no or little extra work; however, other task-related strategies, such as using authentic tasks or using game-like competitions, may require the teachers to do extra work to find such tasks in resources beyond their course book.

Another set of strategies to which high attachment was given is anxiety-related strategies. The teachers highly value these strategies perhaps because they believe language learning classes make students anxious because students in language classes are required to use a language in which they are not very competent. As they have to explain their thoughts and opinions through a language in which they are not very competent, students usually fear that they might make a mistake and as a result they can be mocked by their peers (Dörnyei, 2001a). The teachers, therefore, may highly value encouraging students to take risks without fear of feeling stupid and communicating a belief to students that mistakes are a natural part of learning. In this way, they may want to help their students to feel self-confident to use the language without the fear of embarrassment and making mistakes (Dörnyei, 2001a).

However, not majority of teachers reported positive attitudes towards strategies about involving students in decision making and their learning perhaps the decisions about the learning of students have already been made by the curriculum and because the curriculum is too rigid to manipulate for taking students' decisions into consideration and the teachers do not want to run the risk of falling behind the curriculum by taking students' decisions into consideration. Contrary to the negative opinions expressed by the teachers about involving students in decision about their learning, in the literature it is stressed out that in the case of teachers as absolute power in deciding rules and processes of language learning, teachers may run the risk of breaking the rules. For that reason, teachers and students should commonly

agree on a consensus on the issue (Scheidecker and Freeman, 1999; Brophy, 1998). Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) draw attention to the importance of setting up group norms with students as a means to drive students to motivated to a language. In a Hungarian investigation about promoting group cohesiveness and setting up group norms they reported that group related dynamics as agreed upon consensus for the execution of overall task of language learning has not been given due importance.

To find out the reason why they do not think it is essential to involve students in these processes, four teachers were asked to express their views on the issue. One of the teachers communicated her concern for judicious use of involving students in decision making about their learning because she thinks students do not know anything about what to learn and how to learn. For that reason she suggests that students should be guided by their teachers in making decisions about their learning: The rules about their learning are not something they can only decide on their own. You have to guide them because when a teacher when a student, I am sorry, comes to a prep class in the beginning of the year, they do not know, most of them don't know anything about what they are going to learn how they are going to learn and what does learning a language involve.

Another teacher also expresses uncertainty about involving students in decision making about their learning because she thinks that language learning process is something that students are not aware of and that if students are involved in this process, they will not take it seriously. She also maintains the idea that students will not be happy to set their learning goals perhaps because she thinks it is difficult for students to make sound judgements about their learning because they are not aware of the process of language learning. For that reason, although she is not against involving students in decision making about their learning, she thinks there should be limits to students' making decisions about their learning:

I am not very certain about this as much as the rules to be obeyed in the classroom because language learning is a difficult process, they are not aware of the language learning process and they are not taking this process seriously and if you let them involve in decision making about their learning, they might not be happy to set their goals. I don't say we shouldn't involve them in decision making about their learning but they should have some limits.

In regard to helping students outside the classroom for things they do not understand during teaching time in the classroom one teacher in the interview group communicated her strong belief in the importance of helping students outside the classroom but she also reported that she does not help students outside the classroom as much as she used to do in her first years of teaching. In her personal point of view the reason for not

being able to helping students is being tired and losing the enthusiasm:

Well of course to speak honestly; I really believe that a teacher should help students not only in the classroom but outside the classroom. In the first years of my teaching, I really did this for a long for a long time but when years go by feel that you are tired. You lose the enthusiasm, you lose the tolerance, you lose everything

What can be inferred from what it says is that throughout the everlasting tiring and strenuous experience of teaching teachers lose the enjoyment and enthusiasm they have at the very beginning of their teaching experience. However, it was highlighted in the literature by Dörnyei (in press) that autonomy supporting environment in language learning helps students increase their intrinsic motivation. So a correlation between autonomy and motivation has been recognised in second language learning. Relevant research explored the importance motivational impact of teachers' communicative and helping style on learner motivation as a macro strategy in language motivation and teaching. In a research with English teachers in Taiwan Warden and Lin (2000) argue that in authoritarian cultures teachers are not facilitators but presenters of knowledge.

Another interviewee although she implies that she openly expresses the idea that helping students outside the classroom is an effective way of language teaching, she was drawing attention to the lack of time in helping students with the points they do not understand. So it would not be faulty to disclose that teachers at the current institution are so busy with fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum that they do not have the time to do something towards which they have positive attitudes:

Yes, I can honestly tell you what I feel about this. I think teachers should. It would be very nice if I could do this. If had enough time, I would love to do such a thing. I don't have enough time as much as I would like to have but I still, sometimes, not very frequently but sometimes, meet my students outside the classroom and help them in their problems of the language but I wish I could do it more because I think it is a very effective way to teach language individually.

The last interviewee reported that she agreed to the effectiveness of helping students outside the classroom but she also communicated a concern that if this help turns into a habit, students will not listen to the teachers during in-class teaching time. So the last interviewee insists that students first learn in the classroom then they may ask for help just in case probably because she is afraid that students might not benefit fully from in-class teaching:

Yes, but of course this is not it must not be a habit, okay? Because, this is not a private course or something. If they say that if I don't understand any questions in the classroom, I can go to my teacher, they won't listen to me in the classroom. First in the class and then if they are in really need, it is okay.

Regarding the motivational strategy to invite native speakers to classes three of the interviewees regarded the strategy from a positive point of view. One of them thinks that it is motivating for the students to be exposed to native speakers. She maintains the idea that the students will be proud of themselves when they see that they can speak to native speakers and can understand what they say:

This is important to motivate them because when they can find out that they can speak to a native speaker and they can understand what a native speaker tells and they can respond to a question asked by a native speaker, they feel motivated and they feel that 'okay, I can do it' so this is important.

The second interviewee favours the strategy as he thinks that inviting a native speaker will be a criterion for students to see how much English they have learnt. He claims a very interesting dimension of language teaching in Turkey with Turkish teachers by saying that students can speak Turkish to us instead of English as we know Turkish. For that reason, he says, students will have a genuine opportunity to practise English:

Of course, if they can find a native speaker, it is really a good idea because students can understand how much English they have learnt, they can have the chance to practise because we are, we learnt English in Turkey and sometimes students can speak Turkish to us because they know the teachers can speak Turkish so when they meet a native speaker, they may have the chance to practise.

The third interviewee is for the students' being exposed to genuine native speak talk, as well. She puts forward the idea that although students may not anyway hear the language from the native speaker helps them improve their sound system and pronunciation.

They are learning a foreign language and they will be exposed to a native speaker of a foreign language. Even if they don't understand anything, it would be a benefit to hear the language from the native speaker, I guess and more, I think that they would learn something from a native speaker: they would learn about the accent, pronunciation, at least.

However, the last interviewee is sceptical of the strategy as she says it might not work very well to have native speakers. She postulates that the native speaker should be someone who is trained in the field of English Language Teaching. She is drawing attention to some native speakers who are employed by universities. The people are ordinary native speakers who are not qualified enough to teach English professionally because they do not have pedagogical background of language teaching:

.if we can, yes but sometimes when we invite them, students don't take it very seriously, they begin to ask some serious questions although it is just trying to get them speak English it doesn't work very well. I am not in very favour of, maybe not all native speakers but someone professional in our field, in language teaching it can be because those professional will take it more seriously.

For the strategy related to taking students' interests rather than test the first interviewee seems to have grasped the importance of taking student interests rather than tests in motivating students to become active participants in language learning process. She sets forward the idea that if we do not take student interests into consideration, they will not be interested in the topics; they will not have the volition to do the tasks:

Well of course he should first of all consider the students' interests because if our students are not interested in the topics, they don't want to do anything, they don't want to struggle about the topics so not the test but the interest is important. So priority must be given to student interest rather than tests.

According to Hedge (2000), teachers can improve their commitment by exploring students' beliefs and approaches that may determine their preferences and approaches to classroom activities. For promoting the quality of learning experience Dörnyei (2000) states that in order to increase the intrinsic enjoyment of participating in learning tasks and improve the quality of learning teachers can take into consideration the interests of students. The second interviewee, on the other hand, believes in the utility of taking student interests into consideration but at the same time, he holds the view that this process is time consuming because teachers have to obey the requirements of the curriculum and they have to complete a set of three books within a period of one-year teaching time: may be a good idea but it might be a bit time consuming to organize a lesson according to students' interests. Yes, we can say it might be time consuming as I, as we thought before, we have a curriculum, we have to obey it and we have to complete three books so we are short of time.

The last interviewee believes in the importance of students' interests rather than tests while teachers prepare tasks, too. She bases students' curiosity on bringing in tasks that are attractive. So it is her point of view that students will do their best to do the tasks on the condition that those tasks are interesting for them. Concentrating on tests all the time in her point of view, on the other hand, is not the aim of the institution and she believes that if teachers give priority to tests, students will be bored: first of all, interests because if we could bring some interesting tasks that could attract their attention, they are really very much interested in them, then they do their best to do the tasks but if we just concentrate on tests, tests, tests all the time, they will be bored. I mean this is not our aim. Tests are important but first of all they should learn and then the tests

As of the strategy to bring humour into classroom to decrease student anxiety, Krashen (cited in Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S., 2001) points out that anxiety inhibits learning. In the view point of Horwitz, & Cope (1986) the depression of anxious students may be so high in the classroom that it may result in avoidance from taking part in activities or skipping classes to feel relaxed.

To find a solution to the existing problem springing from the perceived difficulty by the students, Sheidecker and Freeman, (1999) maintain the notion that teachers should bring humour into classes.

However, the first interviewee states that bringing humour into classroom is motivating or that when there is fun something is worth learning. She puts the emphasis on the general fact that as human beings, we are motivated to learn or we learn more when there is fun in learning. She comes to terms with the notion that humour is a vehicle to decrease student anxiety. Nonetheless, she claims that not all of the teachers can have the ability to be humorous and that being humorous is a personality problem: Yes, certainly because if there is fun when they are learning something, when a person is learning something if there is fun, it is clear that it will really be worth so if you are doing while you are learning something if you are having fun, it will be something really motivating for you. But bringing humour is about a personality problem. A teacher can have a sense of humour all the time. You know it is a talent so a teacher cannot have a sense of humour all the time but if he has it will be a good point to decrease student anxiety because all the students shouldn't feel that school or a class or learning something is something always serious.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study investigated the attitudes of English teachers at Muğla University towards motivational strategies. However, another study could be conducted to see how often teachers use these strategies when they teach English. Further research can be carried out through classroom observations to find out significant differences between teachers' attitudes to motivational strategies and their real use of those strategies. Another study can be carried out to see the effect of materials prepared in accordance with motivational strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study intends to analyse the attitudes of English teachers at Muğla University, Preparatory School to motivational strategies. The purpose in investigating the attitudes of subjects is to prepare a platform for the teachers to realize the importance of these strategies in language teaching and enable them to develop positive attitudes towards these strategies. Once the teachers of Muğla University, i.e. the subjects of this study develop positive attitudes to the strategies, they will be convinced to use them in their language teaching. The use of motivational strategies by the teachers in language teaching will pave the way for the students learning English at the institution to be motivated to learn the language and sustain this motivation throughout the whole one- year period of language learning. This

prolonged process of motivation achieved by the application of motivational strategies will provide a means for the students to increase their rate of success in English learning and there for the success of Muğla University, Preparatory School since being motivated to learn a language is directly in proportion to being successful in learning and mastering the language.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleagues,

I am currently enrolled in MA TEFL program at Muğla University. I am conducting a research on teachers' attitudes to motivational strategies at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages.

Your answers to this questionnaire will make an invaluable contribution to my research. Your completion of the questionnaire will be regarded as consent in order to use the data supplied for purposes of this research. **The personal background information you provide will be used only for this research and under no circumstances will be shared.**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or my thesis advisor. I thank you very much in advance for your help and cooperation.

Yener KELEŞ
MA TEFL Program
Muğla University, Muğla
Tel: (0252) 2127162
yenerkeles@gmail.com

Assistant Prof. Şevki KÖMÜR
MA TEFL Program
Muğla University, Muğla
Tel: (0252) 21110 00

Part A- Background Information

Please put a cross (X) in appropriate boxes and provide necessary information below.

- Age
 below 25 25-30 31-35 36 -40 41-45 above 45
- Total years teaching experience
 less than 1 year 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 above 20
- Qualifications

| | Field | Date of Graduation |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B.A/B.S | ----- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | M.A | ----- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ph.D. | ----- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certificate / Diploma Programs (please specify): | |
- Other settings where you have taught. You may choose more than one option.
 Public/State school Private college University Public/state school and college
 Public/State school and Univ Private coll and Uni Pub/St sch, Prvt coll and Univ
- How long have you been teaching at Muğla University's prep-school?
 Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 10-15 year

Part B- Teachers' Attitudes towards Motivational Strategies

While reading the statements below, consider the way you teach. Respond by indicating (**with an X**) what you think you **should** do. Please mark **only one (X)** for each item.

Not important at all: 1 Not very important: 2 Neutral: 3 Important: 4 Very important: 5

| No | Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I involve students in creating the rules to be obeyed in the classroom at the beginning of the term. | | | | | |
| 2. | I try to learn what students think about learning process. | | | | | |
| 3. | I emphasise the usefulness of the language in finding a job. | | | | | |
| 4. | I involve students in decision making about their learning. | | | | | |
| 5. | I consider students' needs rather than tests while presenting tasks. | | | | | |
| 6. | I consider students' interests rather than tests while presenting tasks. | | | | | |
| 7. | I prepare for lessons in such a way as to promote learning. | | | | | |
| 8. | I raise students' curiosity by introducing unexpected tasks. | | | | | |
| 9. | I give clear instructions for tasks to students. | | | | | |
| 10. | I provide guidance about how to complete tasks for students. | | | | | |
| 11. | I set up learning goals that are both clear and achievable for students. | | | | | |
| 12. | I encourage students to select specific, short-term goals for themselves. | | | | | |
| 13. | I state the purpose of every task. | | | | | |
| 14. | I vary instruction style. | | | | | |
| 15. | I communicate a belief to my students that everyone can learn when required effort is demonstrated. | | | | | |
| 16. | I teach my students learning strategies. | | | | | |
| 17. | I bring humour to the classroom to help decrease student anxiety | | | | | |
| 18. | I demonstrate that I enjoy what I do in the classroom. | | | | | |
| 19. | I show my students that I value L2 learning as a meaningful experience. | | | | | |
| 20. | I show my students that L2 learning produces satisfaction in my life. | | | | | |
| 21. | I develop a good relationship with my students. | | | | | |
| 22. | I make my students feel that I really care about them as people. | | | | | |
| 23. | I encourage my students to take risks without fear of feeling stupid. | | | | | |
| 24. | I share my personal interests in the L2 with my students. | | | | | |
| 25. | I share my interests with my students. | | | | | |
| 26. | I am willing to talk to my students about their personal problems. | | | | | |
| 27. | I help my students to get to know one another. | | | | | |
| 28. | I use tasks that do not exceed my students' competence. | | | | | |
| 29. | I make tasks challenging enough for my students. | | | | | |
| 30. | I offer a variety of tasks. | | | | | |
| 31. | I use tasks that allow my students to have fun in the classroom. | | | | | |
| 32. | I use tasks that are interesting for my students. | | | | | |
| 33. | I use game-like competitions in the classroom. | | | | | |
| 34. | I use tasks that allow students to interact with each other. | | | | | |
| 35. | I avoid comparing my students to one another. | | | | | |
| 36. | I use authentic tasks (tasks that are believed to prepare learners for real life applications). | | | | | |
| 37. | I regularly use group activities where students can mix. | | | | | |
| 38. | I invite native speakers to classes whenever it is possible. | | | | | |
| 39. | I prepare additional materials for my students who need more exercises. | | | | | |
| 40. | I meet my students who need help individually outside of class time to explain subjects that are not understood clearly. | | | | | |
| 41. | I organise out-of-class activities with my students. | | | | | |
| 42. | I make sure that my students experience success regularly. | | | | | |
| 43. | I communicate a belief to my students that mistakes are a natural part of learning. | | | | | |
| 44. | I show my students how much they have learned. | | | | | |
| 45. | I am consistent in my reactions to my students. | | | | | |
| 46. | I give immediate feedback that does not embarrass my students. | | | | | |
| 47. | I give feedback to my students in such a way as to enable them to improve their performance. | | | | | |
| 48. | I praise my students when they succeed. | | | | | |
| 49. | I show my disapproval to my students when they demonstrate undesirable behaviours. | | | | | |