

An Investigation into English-Majored Students' Motivation in Speaking English

Thuy Thi Vu¹, Thuong Thi Kim Nguyen^{1*}

¹Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of International Training, Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam

*Corresponding Author

Thuong Thi Kim Nguyen

Department of Foreign Languages,
Faculty of International Training,
Thai Nguyen University of
Technology, Thai Nguyen City,
Vietnam

Article History

Received: 04.03.2024

Accepted: 12.04.2024

Published: 17.04.2024

Abstract: Educational psychologists are particularly interested in motivation because of its critical role in student learning. How students can be active in their learning would affect their outcomes during their educational journey. Thus, this study aims to explain types of motivation in language learning and then sheds light on how such motivation pushes and stimulates students in English speaking, concurrently digging deeper into influencing factors on students' motivation. Findings from the survey questionnaire reveal that the students mainly have extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. This could be explained by the students' focus on the requirements of jobs and the desire to experience new things. Besides, some factors that influence the students' motivation in English language learning include the learning environment, limited knowledge, and teachers' pedagogical strategies. The semi-structured interview offers a deeper understanding of the students' experience about how motivation affects their speaking skills as well as how some factors are suggested for higher motivation. Hence, enhancing English-majored students' proficiency, especially in speaking English fluently, is the final goal of the study. From such a vantage point, some motivational strategies are recommended for English-speaking classes for both majored students and non-majored ones.

Keywords: Motivation, speaking, English, factors, influences, strategies.

Copyright © 2024 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since English has become the primary language of communication around the world, teaching the language has become increasingly important on a worldwide level. Several studies have demonstrated that English language proficiency has been rapidly increasing in Vietnam in the past few years. As Kumar (2020a) insists, "The importance of the English language cannot be ignored in any field, whether it is science and technology, entertainment or business".

For English acquisition, speaking is one of the most important skills. Constructing meanings

through the production, reception, and processing of information is a step in the communication process (Brown, 1994). It is a method whereby learners can express their thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge so that there can be interactions in the classroom between the teacher and one or more students as well as between students themselves.

Since motivation is one of the factors that influence students' speaking skill development, it is also difficult for them to become more successful in speaking English without motivation. There are many types of motivation such as family motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and so on.

Citation: Thuy Thi Vu & Thuong Thi Kim Nguyen (2024). An Investigation into English-Majored Students' Motivation in Speaking English. *Glob Acad J Linguist Lit*; Vol-6, Iss-2 pp-78-92.

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, instead of communicating face-to-face with teachers, learners have to contact and speak English with their educators either through emails, messages, or video calls. Thus, the motivation to speak English is becoming more and more essential even in the post-pandemic era.

This study aims to provide a basic definition of motivation and then sheds light on how such motivation pushes and accelerates students' speaking English, concurrently digging deeper into influencing factors on students' motivation. Therefore, the specific goal of this study is to find out the students' awareness of the importance of motivation in developing speaking skills.

The following research questions addressed in this study include:

- 1) What are the types of motivation possessed by English-majored students in learning English speaking skills?
- 2) What are some factors motivating the students to speak in English?
- 3) What are some factors de-motivating the students to speak in English?
- 4) What are some motivational strategies that can be applied to develop students' speaking skills?

This study was conducted on all English-majored students at Thai Nguyen University of Technology (TNUT) in order to know to what extent they understand the role of motivation and how such motivations affect their speaking ability. Currently, at Thai Nguyen University of Technology, there are not many studies on English-majored students' motivation in speaking English. Thus, this study will be a significant endeavor in creating an effective learning environment as it gives some recommendations on how to enhance English-majored students' motivations towards speaking practice. Then, it will be beneficial to students and instructors at TNUT as well as those in similar situations.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section II provides the background information of motivation in general and particularly in language learning. Section III addresses research methods. Some findings and discussion are provided in Section IV. Finally, conclusions and future direction are in Section V.

II. BACKGROUND

2.1. Motivation

2.1.1. Definition of Motivation

Many investigations into motivation in general and students' motivation in learning in

particular have been carried out. Thus, there are plenty of definitions of motivations from different perspectives as follows.

According to Johnstone (1999), motivation is a stimulus for reaching a certain goal (p. 146). Likewise, Deci & Ryan (2008) define motivation as the state of moving forward or being actively engaged in a task. Crump (1995) asserts that the primary components of motivation are zeal, eagerness, excitement, and interest in learning. Every person has distinct motivational levels and types from one another. Put another way, people differ not just in their levels and degrees of motives but also in the types of motivation they possess.

"A general way of referring to the antecedents (i.e. the causes and the origins)" is how Dornyei (2001) defined motivation (p. 613). Additionally, he said that "motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it, and how long they are willing to sustain the activities" (p. 7). Two dimensions of human behavior that are related to motivation were stated by the author: direction and magnitude (intensity). Meanwhile, Gardner (1985) suggests that the definition of motivation can be represented by the following equation:

$$\text{Effort} + \text{Desire to Reach a Goal} + \text{Attitudes} = \text{Motivation}$$

As a result, the process that starts, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors can be identified as motivation. It is what prompts you to take action, whether it is drinking a glass of water to satisfy your thirst or reading a book to learn something new. The biological, emotional, social, and cognitive variables that drive behavior are all included in motivation. The word "motivation" is widely used in daily speech to refer to the reasons behind someone's actions. It serves as a drive for human behavior.

2.1.2. Types of Motivation

Students have a lot of motivation levels and different types of motivations that can change over time relying on the environment and process of learning. Motivations based on student targets are primarily separated into four basic categories: integrative and instrumental, extrinsic and intrinsic.

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

Krashen (1988) asserts that a learner's ability to acquire a second language is one of the motivation-related elements. These are instrumental and integrative factors (p.22).

The goal of the integrative motivation is to acquire the language with the goal of engaging with

the local culture. The idea behind instrumental motivation is that a learner picks up the language to help with professional goals or other worthwhile objectives. The process and results of learning can be influenced and managed by these two motivational styles. Cook (2000) goes on to say that Gardner and Lambert's (1972) integrative and instrumental motivation theory is a helpful and successful component of second language acquisition.

The previously described motivational types are also introduced by Gardner (1985) and Ellis (1994): The former happens when a student prefers to associate with or belong to a specific group and culture; the latter arises when a learner believes that studying a particular language would provide many advantages. Ellis (1994) asserts that integrative motivation is the optimal kind of motivation after comparing these two motivational approaches. Integrative motivation, in his opinion, is more effective and structured.

It will be challenging for students to study and acquire knowledge of a second language in the classroom if they lack instrumental or integrative motivation. In general, learning the language will be challenging for them (Cook, 2000).

Intrinsic & Extrinsic Motivation

Another idea in the realm of motivation was presented by Ryan and Deci (2000), who asserted that Self-Determination Theory distinguishes and classifies several motivational styles based on the many goals, causes, or justifications that support an action or accomplishment. According to this idea, the primary distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is proportional. The desire and interest to perform specific tasks, because one finds them appealing and enjoyable, is known as intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to stick with challenging assignments and learn from their errors and failures (Walker, Greene, & Mansell, 2006). Moreover, the process of integrating new knowledge with one's available internal awareness and knowledge is facilitated by intrinsic motivation, which is crucial and essential for this process.

In contrast, the tendency to engage in activities for reasons unrelated to the activity is known as extrinsic motivation. These motivations may include the expectation of a reward or penalty, such as passing the test or receiving a high grade (Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006). However, intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to act for its own sake. Those who are innately motivated practice and engage in the activities because they find

fulfillment in doing. On the other side, extrinsic motivation is a motivation to perform a task or activity as a method of achieving a goal. Extrinsically motivated people act and behave in ways that they believe will lead to desirable outcomes, such as a reward, recognition from an instructor, or the avoidance (prevention) of punishment (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

2.2. Motivation in Language Learning

"To motivate" in the context of traditional language teaching refers to the teacher's assistance in helping learners apply what they have learned; in other words, motivation is what encourages a student to attempt practicing. We can only observe behavior; motivation is a concept that lacks physical existence. Like other psychological creations like attitudes, interests, values, or desires, motivation can only be measured indirectly.

According to Crookes and Schimts (in Norris, 2002), "Motivation has been identified as the learners' orientation with regards to the goal of learning a second language." Regarding motivation, Falk (1978) stated that motivated students are those who make an effort to become proficient in the language and who value and respect language speakers as well as those who wish to learn more about the language and possibly even become part of the community in which it is spoken. It implies that students who succeed the most in learning a target language would, at the very least, emulate both the culture and the desire to fit in the society in which the language is being used (Leaver *et al.*, 2005).

Gardner (1985) defined motivation as having four components: *a goal, effort, a desire to achieve the goal, and positive attitudes* toward the activity. Motivation is a vague idea that frequently pertains to other elements like interest, need, value, attitude, aspiration, and incentives that affect the energy and direction of behavior (pp. 50–51). As a result, motivation in the classroom can influence students' learning and attitudes toward the subject matter in several ways. According to Nemeth (1997) and Tohidi (2012), it can boost performance by directing behavior toward specific goals, causing an increase in effort and energy, increasing the commencement and persistence of activities, enhancing cognitive processing, and identifying what outcomes are encouraging.

Furthermore, no single theory has yet fully captured the complexity of motivation, which is a multifaceted term that has been the focus of scientific research in a variety of academic fields (Dörnyei, 2001). "Motivation is a very complex phenomenon with many facets...thus it is not possible to give a simple definition," Gardner (2006) further

emphasized. This is due to the fact that many viewpoints have examined motivation in different ways. As stated by Brown (2000), motivation can be defined as "quite simply the anticipation of reward" in terms of behaviors.

Thus, motivation for studying foreign languages has been defined in a variety of ways. Motivation, in the words of Dornyei (2001), is the effort that students put up in order to acquire a foreign language. One factor that affects the success and pace of language learning is motivation. Motivation is defined as "...the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language" by Norris-Holt (2002), cited from Crookes and Schmidt (1991).

When it comes to language learning, motivation is defined as the result of combining both positive attitudes toward language acquisition and the desire to accomplish the aim of learning the language (Gardner, 1985). According to this concept, motivation is defined as goal-directed behaviors; children can also learn by setting goals before they speak.

Additionally, motivation in language acquisition is a state of cognitive and emotional arousal that results in a sustained level of intellectual and/or mental effort to achieve a goal or goals that have previously been defined. This awareness of the decision to carry out is facilitated by motivation (William & Burden, 1997).

Therefore, motivation is the degree to which students choose to pursue goals and the amount of work they will put into doing so (Brown, 2000). As a result, motivation is regarded as playing a crucial role in language learning success and can have a significant impact on how learning strategies are used (Dao, 2010). A student who is fully motivated is one who is prepared to put in the effort and is eager to acquire knowledge beforehand (Ur, 1996).

2.3. Demotivation

"Specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" is how Dornyei (2001) defined de-motivation (p. 143). A related term, "amotivation," was created by Deci and Ryan (2008) and refers to "the relative absence of motivation that is caused by the individual's experiencing feelings of incompetence and helplessness when faced with the activity rather than by a lack of initial interest." As noted by Dornyei (2001), de-motivation does not imply the elimination of all the motivating factors that constitute the behavior's initial foundation. It simply indicates that some additional good reasons are still intact and

ready to be activated while a significant negative element restrains the current incentive.

Some Demotivating Factors affect Students' Motivation in Speaking Language Learning

According to Muhonen (2004), she found five demotivating factors that affect students' motivation in speaking language learning:

- The teacher (teaching method, lack of competence)
- The learning material (unpleasant and boring)
- Learner characteristics
- School environment
- Learner's attitudes towards the English language.

In brief, Muhonen's research indicates that the categories of elements influence students' motivation: learner factors, teacher factors, environment factors, teaching and learning settings, and material factors.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

Students majoring in English at Thai Nguyen University of Technology are required to take most classes and tests in English, therefore having a solid foundation in the language will help them pass the exams. Additionally, motivation has a big impact on whether or not someone is successful at speaking a language and learning a language in general. As Spolsky (1990) claimed, motivated students are likely to pick things up faster than less motivated pupils. This study aims to figure out how English majors understand and value motivation in improving speaking abilities.

The following research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) What are the types of motivation possessed by English-majored students in learning English speaking skills?
- 2) What are some factors motivating the students to speak in English?
- 3) What are some factors de-motivating the students to speak in English?
- 4) What are some motivational strategies that can be applied to develop students' speaking skills?

This study was conducted at Thai Nguyen University of Technology. Twenty-four English-majored students at the Faculty of International Training have been chosen as the participants of this study. They age from 19 to 21. These students had at least 3 years of learning English in high school and 4 years of learning English at secondary schools where extensive vocabulary and grammatical structures are the main focus. They are supposed to have an

intermediate level of competence in English, they have sound knowledge of grammar, and to some extent, they are able to speak in English.

The study was conducted using mixed methods. The study included a survey questionnaire and an interview questionnaire for English-majored students at Thai Nguyen University of Technology.

Observations, questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, journals, interviews, and other data-gathering tools are utilized in student motivation research to find out about the motivation of the students as well as certain de-motivations in speaking English. In this study, survey and interview questionnaires were used to discover what their motivations are and some de-motivating factors that affect students' motivation in speaking English. After that, some suggestions are given to motivate their motivation to speak in English.

The questionnaires and survey questions used in the study were prepared by the researcher after reviewing the literature on motivation and de-motivation of students in speaking English, particularly some contents of the survey were adapted from Hoang (2011). The questionnaires were delivered directly to twenty-four English-majored students. The students had 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, the purpose and importance of the study were explained. This questionnaire consists of 12 questions, of which the first 4 questions are shown to know the student's level along with the student's English learning time. The rest of the questions help the researcher gain insight into their motivations (What are types of motivation possessed by English-majored students in learning English speaking skills?) and some of the difficulties and negative factors.

Apart from that, seven of the twenty-six students in each class were randomly selected to take part in the interview. The researcher gave the interviewees an explanation of the interview's goal and the duration of the discussion before the interview started. Three open-ended questions were included in the interview in a preset order. The data was gathered, transcribed, and then revised in English.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings from the Survey Questionnaire

4.1.1. Kinds of Motivation Possessed by English-Majored Students in Learning Speaking Skills at Thai Nguyen University of Technology *Students' Awareness of Motivation in Speaking English*

The questionnaire responses illustrate the data evaluated in this section of the study. Based on the thoughts of the students, the first question in the questionnaire gives a result. Sixty-two percent of the students who answered the survey have been studying English for five to ten years. Thirty-three percent of other students have studied English for ten years or longer. Only 4.17% of the participants have devoted one to five years to studying English. This indicates that they have been exposed to English for a very long period since they began learning the language while they were in primary school. Thus, they have understood its relevance in every aspect of life, including school and the workplace.

In addition, the results show that English-majored students have different levels of English language from A1-C1. The number of participants (41.7%) considered their English level as poor are A1 and A2. On the other hand, a ratio of 12.5% of learners reported that their levels in English are B1. At the same time, only 4.2% of participants believed that they possess an excellent level that is C1. There are no students at the B2 level. In general, students have a good foundation of English, most students are at a low level and very few students are at an advanced level.

Moreover, the survey indicated that English-majored students have flexible time for learning the English language, especially speaking skills. The number of respondents speaking for 10 to 30 minutes per day accounts for 54.2%. The proportions (41.7%) of the learners spend 30 minutes to 1 hour per day on learning English. On the other hand, a ratio of 4.2% of the learners takes 1 to 2 hours per day for English practice. There are no percentages of the students that spend more than 2 hours learning English. According to the data above, English-majored students spend quite a little time practicing and developing English skills. If they do not change and arrange their time for English, it will be difficult for their English ability to improve quickly.

Kinds of Motivation Possessed by English-Majored Students in Learning Speaking Skills at Thai Nguyen University of Technology

Table 1: Types of motivation in speaking English

| Types of motivation | Purpose | Number of choice |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Instrumental Motivation 11.8% | I mainly focus on using English for class assignments and exams | 12 |
| | Learning English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job | 17 |
| | I am more interested in furthering my higher education than learning English language itself | 8 |
| | Learning English is very important for travelling abroad. | 11 |
| | Being proficient in English makes other people respect me. | 11 |
| Integrative Motivation 11.5% | Studying English enables me to understand English books, stories, movies...etc. | 16 |
| | Studying English enables me to be able to keep in touch with foreign acquaintances. | 8 |
| | Studying English enables me to discuss interesting issues in English with the people from other national backgrounds. | 12 |
| | Studying English enables me to better understand and appreciate the ways of life of native speakers. | 9 |
| | Studying English enables me to speak like native speakers: e.g. accent, tone and using English expressions. | 16 |
| | Studying English enables me to be an open-minded and sociable person. | 8 |
| Intrinsic Motivation 10.8% | Learning a new language because I like experiencing new things, not because your job requires it | 18 |
| | Speaking English because it's fun and I actually enjoy it. | 9 |
| | Speaking English fluently because I want to improve my speaking skills | 15 |
| | Speaking because you are curious about the topics | 1 |
| Extrinsic Motivation 8.2% | Learning a new language because your job requires it. | 19 |
| | Improving speaking skills in order to win a reward or get high score. | 11 |
| | Speaking English well for praise from friends or family | 6 |
| | Learning English speaking to avoid being judged by parents | 5 |
| | Competing in a contest to win a scholarship | 10 |
| | Enhancing speaking skills so as not to lose face with friends | 5 |
| | Learn to speak English for trend | 1 |

As shown in Table 1, the biggest choices are in Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation. Specifically, the two selections gained the highest are " *Learning a new language because your job requires it.*" (19 options) belonging to Extrinsic Motivation, and " *Learning a new language because I like experiencing new things, not because your job requires it* " (18 options) being a part of Intrinsic Motivation. Besides, students also choose Integrative Motivation and Instrumental Motivation, but the number is not as much as the other two, the number fluctuates from 8 to 17 students.

In brief, it can be said that the biggest choices about types of motivation that the learners had in English-speaking learning are: Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation. All of them want to learn English firstly for the requirement of jobs, and secondly for the experience of new things. However, all English-majored students' motivations appear in the process of learning to speak English at TNUT.

4.1.2. Some Factors Motivating the Students to Speak in English

Table 2: The students’ reasons for learning English speaking

| Reason | Numbers of students | Percentage (%) |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| To get a job in the future | 20 | 83.3 |
| To communicate with foreigners | 16 | 66.7 |
| To study the people, culture of English-speaking countries | 7 | 29.2 |
| To read newspapers, watch TV programs, listen to music and so on in English | 13 | 54.2 |
| To live and study abroad | 8 | 33.3 |
| To get good marks in the exam | 11 | 45.8 |

To find out the reason why students learn English, a questionnaire was conducted among 24 students. According to the results from Table 2, 83.3% of them - the highest percentage identified the major reason for learning English speaking was to get a job in the future. The reason for this was that most of the students want to become an interpreter or translator in the future. In addition, more than 66% of the students wanted to learn English for the purpose of communicating with foreigners. Next, their target to be good at speaking English is due to reading newspapers, watching TV programs, listening to music, and so on in English, accounting for 54.2%. Besides, 45.8% of the students who completed the questionnaire were reported to get good marks in the examination. Finally, the last two purposes of speaking English well are to learn about the people, and culture of English-speaking countries and to live and study abroad accounting for 33% and

more than 29%, respectively. The students further explained that they wish to learn English to become more familiar with the people and cultures of English-speaking nations. They believe that since their jobs require them to interact with a lot of foreign visitors, it would be beneficial for them to be aware of their culture in order to do their duties more effectively and prevent both culture shock and communication problems.

4.1.3. Factors de-motivating Students in English Speaking *The Difficulties Students Face when Developing English Speaking*

To understand more clearly the students’ opinions of speaking skills, the fourth question in the questionnaire is designed to find out their assessment of English speaking development. The result is shown in Figure 1 as follows.

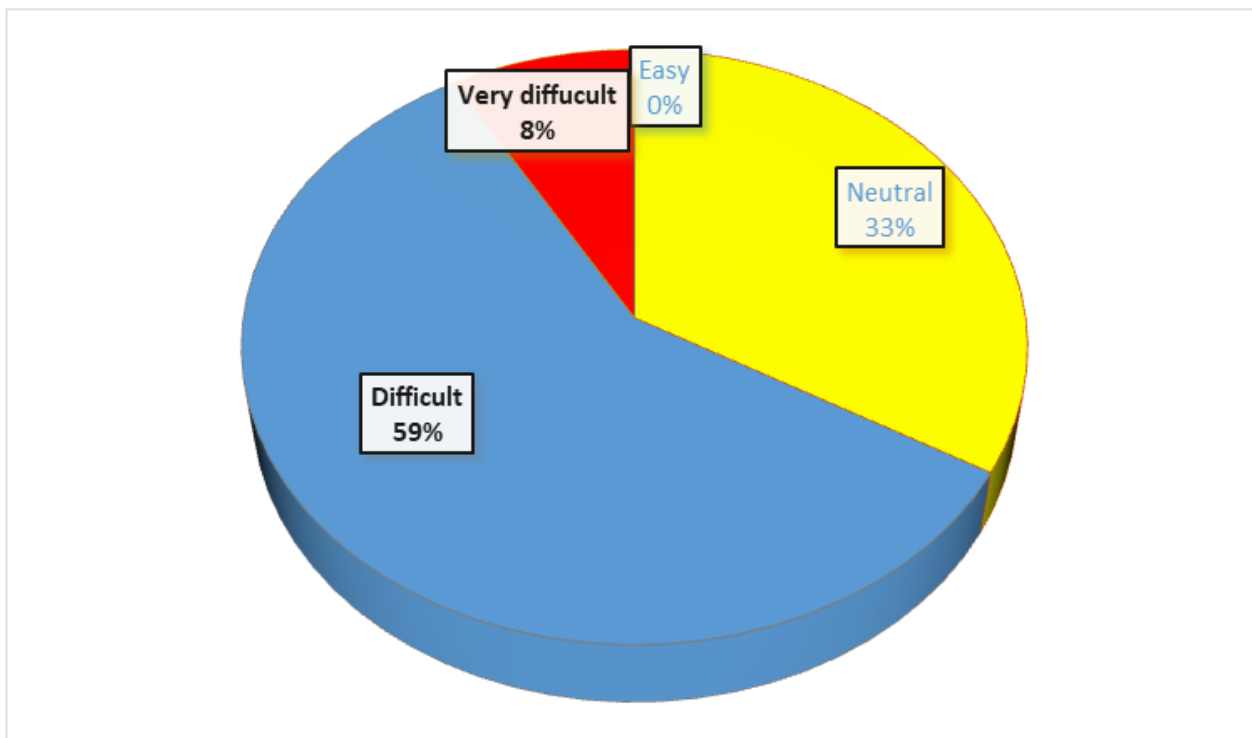


Figure 1: Students’ evaluation of speaking skill

It can be seen from the pie chart that speaking skills are a difficult part to learn for students. The biggest number of participants suppose that English speaking is difficult. Besides, more than 30% of learners think that speaking improvement is neutral (both easy and difficult). Moreover, the rate of students who agree that learning English speaking is very difficult accounted for 8.3%. Through the survey, most of the students learning English deal with many problems such as vocabulary, pronunciation, communication skills, ineffective

learning approaches, even lack of confidence, and so on. Suffice it to say, as speaking skills are not an easy part of the process of learning a foreign language, only hard work is not enough; besides students need to have a passion and big motivation to quickly enhance their speaking skills.

In addition, during speaking classes, the learners also face several problems. Figure 2 below demonstrates this issue clearly.

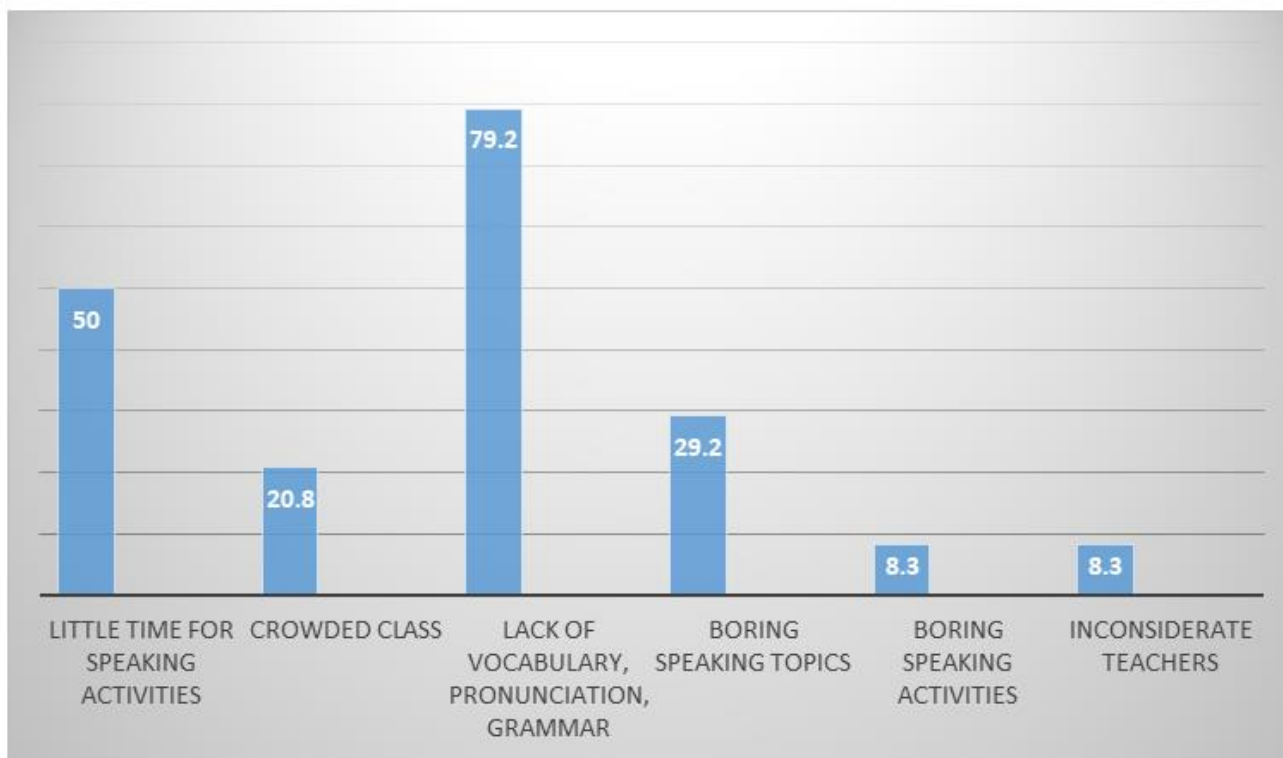


Figure 2: Students’ difficulties in learning English speaking

The above chart shows the problems that the learners face when they are learning English speaking. Particularly, most of the students (79.2%) consider a lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar as the main challenge in learning speaking skills. Additionally, half of the learners selected the issue of little time for speaking activities as the problem when they speak English. Moreover, more than 20% of participants think that crowded classes and boring speaking topics are obstacles in speaking classes, which accounts for 20.8% and 29.2%, respectively. Lastly, boring speaking activities and

inconsiderate teachers strikingly, shared equal numbers of choices, which is equivalent to 8.3%. In short, there are a lot of challenges that students struggle with, not only with classroom environment, and teachers’ instructions but also with speaking topics, activities, and their knowledge backgrounds.

Factors de-motivating Students’ Speaking

To investigate what factors affect students’ English speaking, a question of seven criteria was given to students. Figure 3 illustrates the percentages of choices of these factors.

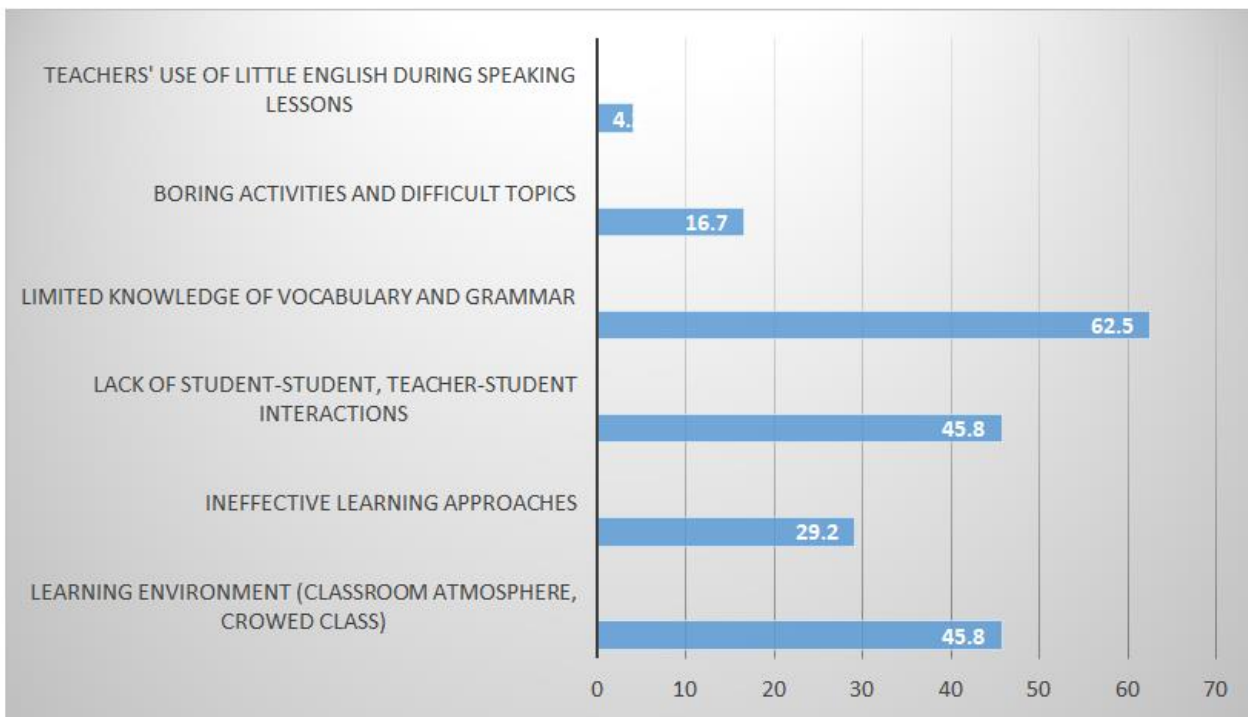


Figure 3: Factors de-motivating students' speaking

The chart revealed that limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar had the greatest effect on students' motivation. About 62.5% of students perceived that learning English speaking was very difficult, and nearly all of them lacked vocabulary and grammar, which led to de-motivation in speaking lessons. The second factor, accounting for 45.8% was that there was a lack of student-student, teacher-student interactions in learning English speaking. The same proportion (45.8%) of learners perceived that the learning environment (classroom atmosphere, crowded class) was also a disadvantageous factor. About 7 out of 24 participants shared that due to applying ineffective learning approaches, they seem not to want to speak English. For them, it is really difficult to find the most suitable way to improve their speaking skills. Besides, boring activities and difficult topics also

affect their English-speaking motivation (16.7%). Only 1 out of 24 students (4.2%) think that teachers' use of little English during speaking lessons led to decreased motivation in speaking English.

In conclusion, demotivating students' speaking involves many factors among which the main factors are limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, lack of student-student, teacher-student interactions, and learning environment (classroom atmosphere, crowded class). Besides, ineffective learning approaches, boring activities, difficult topics and teachers' use of little English during speaking lessons are also affecting students' speaking ability.

4.1.4. Motivational Strategies and Techniques to Motivate Students
Students' Comments on the Topics

Table 3: Students' comments on popular topics

| Topic | Strongly like | Like | Dislike | Total |
|----------|---------------|------|---------|-------|
| Family | 6 | 17 | 1 | 24 |
| Choice | 25 | 70.8 | 4.2 | 100 |
| % | 95.8 | | | |
| Holidays | 6 | 15 | 1 | 24 |
| Choice | 25 | 62.5 | 4.1 | 100 |
| % | 87.5 | | | |
| Food | 7 | 13 | 1 | 24 |
| Choice | 29.2 | 54.2 | 4.2 | 100 |
| % | 83.4 | | | |
| Music | 7 | 12 | 1 | 24 |
| Choice | 29.2 | 50 | 4.2 | 100 |
| % | 79.2 | | | |

| Topic | Strongly like | Like | Dislike | Total |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Books and Films Choice % | 7 29.2 79.2 | 12 50 | 4 16.7 | 24 100 |
| Shopping Choice % | 7 29.2 70.9 | 10 41.7 | 4 16.7 | 24 100 |
| Clothes and Fashion Choice % | 6 25 66.7 | 10 41.7 | 4 16.7 | 24 100 |
| Sports Choice % | 3 12.5 70.8 | 14 58.3 | 6 25 | 24 100 |
| Towns and Cities Choice % | 2 13.3 86.7 | 11 73.3 | 2 13.3 | 24 100 |

As can be seen from Table 3, Family prevails most in all topics, accounting for 95.8%. Probably, this is a familiar topic so the learners have a lot of vocabulary as well as grammar and they feel confident to talk about it. Next, Holidays, Food, and Towns and Cities held the second position with

87.5%, 83.4%, and 86.7%, respectively. Besides, Books and Films and Music are less favorite and share the same percentage, 79.2%. While, the rest choices of Shopping (70.9%), Sports (70.8%), and Clothes and Fashion (66.7%) were assessed to be less favorable than others.

Table 4: Students' comments on the topics of the textbooks

| Topic | Strongly like | Like | Dislike | Total |
|--|--------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Vietnam's geography Choice % | 3 12.5 62.5 | 12 50 | 8 33.3 | 24 100 |
| Vietnamese history Choice % | 4 16.7 50 | 8 33.3 | 10 41.7 | 24 100 |
| Vietnam's animals and plants Choice % | 6 25 66.4 | 10 41.4 | 4 16.7 | 24 100 |
| Vietnamese festivals Choice % | 5 20.8 75 | 13 54.2 | 1 4.2 | 24 100 |
| Customs and habits of Vietnam Choice % | 5 20.8 54.1 | 8 33.3 | 5 20.8 | 24 100 |
| Museums Choice % | 2 8.3 54.1 | 11 45.8 | 10 41.7 | 24 100 |
| Vietnamese food Choice % | 11 50 95.5 | 10 45.5 | 1 4.5 | 22 100 |
| Cultures of foreign countries Choice % | 3 12.5 70.8 | 14 58.3 | 4 16.7 | 24 100 |

According to the data shown Table 4, Vietnamese food is an interesting topic for learners with 95.5% of all the choices. Perhaps, this is a topic that inspires students to speak in English. Moreover, Vietnamese festivals, Cultures of foreign countries, Vietnam's animals and plants, and Vietnam's geography are less favorite with 75.0%, 70.8%,

66.4%, and 62.5%, respectively. Lastly, more than 50% of participants chose Vietnamese history (50%), Customs, habits of Vietnam (54.1%), and Museums (54.1%). It can be said that these are less common topics in the textbooks, the students spend a little time practicing and speaking in English. Furthermore, sometimes, the speakers need a lot of

specialized terms to discuss these topics, which leads to students' demotivation in speaking English.

Teachers' Activities

Besides changing students' habits or students' favorite topics, the teachers' strategies also

play an important role in motivating students to speak English. Some results of students' comments on teachers' activities are presented in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5: Students' comments on teachers' activities

| Topic | Strongly like | Like | Dislike | Total |
|---|---------------|------|---------|-------|
| Explain some new words and structures | 5 | 15 | 3 | 24 |
| Choice | 20.8 | 62.5 | 12.5 | 100 |
| % | 83.3 | | | |
| Discuss different topics | 5 | 17 | 2 | 24 |
| Choice | 20.8 | 70.8 | 8.3 | 100 |
| % | 91.6 | | | |
| Practice conversations in pairs | 4 | 16 | 1 | 24 |
| Choice | 16.7 | 66.7 | 4.2 | 100 |
| % | 83.4 | | | |
| Interrupt and correct when we say something wrong | 9 | 7 | 5 | 24 |
| Choice | 37.5 | 29.2 | 20.8 | 100 |
| % | 66.7 | | | |
| Play games | 7 | 14 | 2 | 24 |
| Choice | 29.2 | 58.3 | 8.3 | 100 |
| % | 87.5 | | | |
| Use English during class hours | 4 | 13 | 3 | 24 |
| Choice | 16.7 | 54.2 | 12.5 | 100 |
| % | 70.9 | | | |
| Compliment | 5 | 16 | 2 | 24 |
| Choice | 20.8 | 66.7 | 8.3 | 100 |
| % | 87.5 | | | |
| Use modern teaching aids | 7 | 11 | 3 | 22 |
| Choice | 20.8 | 66.7 | 8.3 | 100 |
| % | 87.5 | | | |
| Role play | 5 | 11 | 6 | 24 |
| Choice | 20.8 | 45.8 | 25 | 100 |
| % | 66.6 | | | |

Specifically, two-thirds of the students present that *discussing different topics, explaining some new words and structures, practicing conversations in pairs* and *compliments* will help them to be more motivated in speaking English. Besides, other activities such as playing games (14 out of 24 students) and using English during class hours (13 out of 24 students) were the activities motivating students. Moreover, 11 participants chose *role play* and *used modern teaching aids* as stimulating classroom activities. Especially, to reduce students' de-motivation, it is necessary to pay attention to educational materials for teaching. The materials should be checked and improved yearly and more interesting activities should be added to textbooks. Only 7 students believe that *interrupting* and *correcting* when we say something wrong can be applied to motivate and push students to speak English.

To conclude, many motivational strategies and techniques can be applied to motivate students,

of which the most important strategies are *discussing different topics*, and *practicing conversation in pairs* and *compliments*. Students' motivation depends on both classroom activities and the teacher's pedagogical approaches.

Overall, this part has presented quantitative data analyses to find out the answers to the research questions. All these quantitative data were collected from the survey questionnaire. The researchers have explored deeply the primary motivational types, denominative elements, and motivational approaches.

4.2. Findings from the Semi-Structured Interview

With a view to getting specific perceptions of motivation in speaking English, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with seven students from three classes. The interview consists of three questions:

- *What are some factors motivating you to speak in English?*

- *What are some factors de-motivating you to speak in English?*
- *In your opinion, what are some strategies that can be applied to develop students' speaking skills?*

Most of the interviewees enjoyed talking about their motivation and de-motivation in speaking English as well as some suggestions for speaking classroom. Their responses referred to specific aspects such as time, learning environment, pronunciation, and so on. All the responses were coded into several issues of *difficulties, learners' attitudes, and learning methods*. These codes were then categorized into three main themes: Demotivation for speaking English, Effects of learning environment, and Factors for speaking motivation.

4.2.1. Demotivation for Speaking English

The interviewees mentioned their experiences when they were not motivated to speak English. Some students shared that:

- *The time when I was not motivated to speak English, I think that time was when I studied in high school. The reason was that at that stage the method of teaching English was not very interesting, and there was very little time in class for me to practice speaking English. My high school English teachers often focus on teaching reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and doing exercises, so I rarely have the space and time to speak English and gradually I no longer have the motivation to speak English. That's why, when I started university, my speaking skills were very bad.*
- *For me, the time when I am probably not motivated to speak English is around the evening from 5p.m to 8 p.m. Because it's time to rest after a tiring day of studying and I think my mind needs to rest too after a long period of studying. Moreover, If I study continuously without sports activities, my body will be tired and less energetic to continue.*
- *It was the last summer break when I had 2->3 months at home. I really learned English by myself so that was the time I did not feel motivated to speak English. Maybe it is because I hardly have the opportunity to use English at home and I don't feel confident when communicating in English when I have a chance.*

Honestly, there are a lot of reasons as well as factors that make students unwilling to speak English such as limited time for practice, poor communication skills, and even the time of the day. In order to improve their speaking skills, students should focus on improving their background

knowledge such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar to become more confident and set up a schedule to practice speaking English regularly and properly.

4.2.2. Effects of Learning Environment

In fact, the learning environment plays an important role in speaking skill development. With an advantageous learning environment, students will be more motivated to learn a foreign language, especially to improve their speaking skills. Below are some learners' opinions about this issue.

- *I think the learning environment that makes me speak English most effectively is talking with my friends.*
- *In my opinion, the most effective learning environment for improving speaking is to study or interact with foreigners. Because if you have a foreign friend, they will remind you and correct your mistakes when communicating with each other.*
- *In my opinion, it's about being in contact with native speakers.*
- *In my opinion, everyone should create their own learning space by watching movies, listening to music, or talking with their friends. And I applied these ways too.*

As can be seen from the responses, most of the students think that communicating with foreigners is a good learning approach for motivation in speaking English. It is not difficult to find a foreign friend at TNUT. There are many overseas students currently living and studying here, the participants can actively make friends with them. Besides, the learners can join the TEC - English club, where they can not only interact with foreigners but also make friends with other people who also love English like them.

4.2.3. Factors for Speaking Motivation

Students have many motivation levels and different types of motivation that can change over time and rely on the environment and learning process. There are some factors affecting students' motivation to speak English. With the final interview question, the students shared some outside and inside factors in improving their English speaking ability.

- *Outside factors: they are related to my job and life. I realize that English is very important for my future job because I want to work in a foreign company, so English will be very important. In addition, I am a person who loves to travel, so learning English will help me to be able to travel anywhere in the world.*
- *Inside factors: the simple and most important reason is that I really enjoy learning English, I want to say, I want to express my feelings and*

thoughts in English. So that's what motivates me to speak English.

- *Outside factors: our living environment, it is better when you live in an environment where you have daily contact with foreigners and use English every day.*
- *Inside factors: lack of self-confidence.*
- *Outside factors: My parents want me to get a good job.*
- *Inside factors: I'm a big fan of English so I really love speaking English.*

To learn a new language, we are influenced by many factors both internally and externally. Among the opinions of the students, a good job is one of the main factors for them to be motivated to speak English. Besides, because of their learning environment, they need to communicate with teachers and friends in English. In terms of internal factors, students truly love English and want to speak English because of their passion.

In summary, these findings help the researcher to discover some de-motivating factors that affect students' motivation in speaking English. Besides, the factors affecting motivation to speak English include both positive and negative factors in different aspects. These results also help the researcher as well as some English teachers to reflect on their own motivation and figure out some useful teaching and learning approaches for speaking development.

4.3. DISCUSSION

In general, from the study, the students have different types of motivation in speaking English. Initially, the quantitative method answered the research question about the types of students' motivation. Within the scope, the study focused on four types of motivation: integrative and instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic. Based on the comparison and assessment, we found that the students in the study mainly have extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. The students' tendency towards extrinsic motivation could be explained by the focus of the students on the requirement of jobs and the intrinsic motivation could be due to experiencing new things.

Some factors, according to the participants' responses, that influence the students' motivation in English language learning include the learning environment, limited knowledge, and teachers' pedagogical strategies. Specifically, limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar makes students unwilling to speak English. This is the reason for the highest percentage (62.5%). Besides, the learning environment and lack of interaction between students and students, teachers and

students also account for a relatively high rate (45.8%). Based on the findings from the semi-structured interview, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the students' experience about how motivation affects their speaking skills as well as how some factors are suggested for higher motivation. Hence, it is possible to propose some solutions to motivate English-majored students to speak English during class hours and in their daily lives.

The students who took part in the study considered speaking skills the most important linguistic abilities. Since communicating with others depends heavily on this skill, greater focus should be placed on developing curricula, study materials, teaching strategies, and training programs to enhance this language ability. While extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are much higher than the other two, the students showed strong levels of motivation in instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, and extrinsic elements.

Based on the research results, some suggestions are given to assist English-majored students to have high motivation in speaking English. To make speaking classes interesting to students, teachers need to enhance some practical activities. For example, give students games or field trips to give them the opportunity to practice and develop their communication skills. Such activities will help students bond together and break away from boring and traditional ways of learning to speak.

To reduce the de-motivating factors in speaking, it is necessary to provide a variety of topics to engage students. As mentioned earlier, some common speaking topics can be included in speaking lessons such as family, food, vacation, etc. These topics are quite familiar so students have a lot of vocabulary and expressions to speak more confidently.

Some apps can be applied during the learning and teaching process. It is recommended that more applications should be used to fill in the gaps in vocabulary, grammar, or even pronunciation that students may have trouble with. In general, technological applications in language education also make students study hard and explore more new things.

Teachers should play an active role as facilitators to encourage students during the learning process to maintain long-term motivation. Therefore, the interaction between students and teachers plays an important role in improving speaking skills. This will make English-speaking lessons more like a discussion than stressful and compulsory tasks and

assignments. In order to create more motivating speaking activities, apart from the classroom activities, the teachers need to make great efforts to develop a flexible curriculum or build a learning environment that attracts students' participation. For example, faculty officials can cooperate with the tour operators to give students opportunities to act as tour guides to stimulate their speaking in English, or teachers may send students to a company or a hotel to learn and practice speaking English. One of the most effective activities that can be applied is the teachers themselves may take their students to some famous places near the university to study and practice tour guiding in English.

V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to provide some insights into motivation in English language speaking with the participants of English-majored students at Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam. The study also provides useful knowledge and information about motivation and factors that influence the students' motivation to speak English. This valuable knowledge and information would help to improve the students' speaking motivation initially, and ultimately improve their proficiency in English. Furthermore, it would also be a good reference for teachers of English to develop their pedagogical strategies effectively in English-speaking classes for the sake of students.

Acknowledgment: This work is supported by Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Cook, V. (2000). *Linguistics and second language acquisition*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 4, 469.
- Crump, C. A. (1995). Motivating students: A teacher's challenge. *Sooner Communication Conference*, Norman, Oklahoma.
- Dao, T. M. H. (2010). The relationship between first-year Nghe An College students' motivation to read and their use of reading strategies [Master's thesis, Vietnam National University, Hanoi]. VNU Repository. http://repository.vnu.edu.vn/handle/VNU_123/40767
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Facilitating Optimal Motivation and Psychological Well-Being across Life's Domains. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 14-23. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/0708-5591.49.1.14>
- Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Falk, J. (1978). *Linguistics and language: A survey of basic concepts and implications*. John Wiley and Sons, New Jersey.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning, The Roles of Attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold. London.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Hoang, D. D. (2011). Motivation in the development of English speaking skills by second-year tourism major students at Sao Do University. *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Language*, 27, 205-215.
- Johnstone, K. (1999). *Research on language learning and teaching: 1997-1998*. Language Learning. London: Routledge.
- Krashen, S. D. (1988). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Prentice Hall, New York.
- Kumar, T. (2020a). Assessing language need and proficiency of English graduates of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University for designing pre-placement training and workshops. *Asian ESP Journal*. 16(4), 153-168.
- Kumar, T. (2021). 'Desire to learn, learn to shine': Idolizing motivation in enhancing speaking skill among L2 learners. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*, 16(1), 411-422. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i1.5542>
- Leaver, B. L., Ehrman, M., & Shekhtman, B. (2005). *Achieving success in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Madrid, D., & Pérez Cañado, M. L. (2001). Exploring the student's motivation in the EFL class, en E. García Sánchez (ed.): *Present and Future Trends in TEFL*, pp. 321-364. Universidad de Almería: Secretariado de publicaciones.
- Muhonen, J. (2004). Second language demotivation: Factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language. (Unpublished pro Graduate Thesis). University of Jyvaskyla.
- Nemeth, L. (1997). Measuring Organizational Learning, Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, University of Western Ontario.

- Norris-Holt, J. (2002). *Motivation as a contributing factor in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Norris, J. (2001). Motivation as A Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition. (On Line. Retrieved on July 2011). [www.http://itesjl.org/Article/Noris-Motivation.ht](http://itesjl.org/Article/Noris-Motivation.ht)
- Norris, J. (2001). Motivation as A Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition. (On Line. Retrieved on July 2011). [www.http://itesjl.org/Article/Noris-Motivation.ht](http://itesjl.org/Article/Noris-Motivation.ht)
- Pintrich, P. L., & Schunk, D. H. (1996). *Motivation in education: Theory, research and applications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*, 54-67.
- Seven, M.A (2020). Motivation in language learning and teaching. *African Educational Research Journal, 8*(2), pp. S62-S71. DOI: 10.30918/AERJ.8S2.20.033
- Tohidi, H., & Jabbari, M.M. (2012). The effects of motivation in education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 31*, 820-824.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in selfdetermination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(1), 19-31.
- Walker, C., Greene, B., & Mansell, R. (2006). Identification with academics, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy as predictors of cognitive engagement. In *Learning and Individual Differences, 16*(1), 1-12.
- Williams, M., R., & Burden. (1997). *Psychology of language teachers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.