



THE EFFECT OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS ON THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUCCESS OF STUDENTS AT THE TURKISH MILITARY ACADEMY

Yaşar E. KURUM*

Abstract: This paper aims to find out the effect of motivational factors on the foreign language success of students at the Turkish Military Academy (TMA). The study was applied to 50 3rd grade male cadets in the first semester of the 2008 – 2009 academic year. The participants of the study are military high school graduates and have been studying English for nearly seven years. As the data collection instrument, a motivational factors questionnaire adapted from Wen's (1997) Motivational Scale was used. The questionnaire consists of three main parts. In Part I, there are questions aiming to collect some background information about the participants. In Part 2 and 3, the questions aim to collect data on the relationship between different types of motivation and the foreign language success. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS 11.5 statistical package. Frequency, mean, independent t-test, ANOVA and Pearson Correlation analysis were used to analyze the data obtained. Based on the research findings, there is a statistically significant relationship between overall motivation and the foreign language success of the TMA cadets. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the language success and integrative motivation and valence. Also, the results of the study revealed a significant difference between low and high proficient students in terms of their overall motivation and their estimation of ability. Finally, the study showed no significant correlation between the participants' monthly income and their overall motivation and the foreign language success. Similarly, no significant correlation was found out between the participants' parents' possession of English competence and the cadets' overall motivation and language success.

Keywords: Motivation, types of motivation, foreign language success, EFL.

Özet: Bu çalışma motivasyonun Kara Harp Okulu öğrencilerinin yabancı dil başarısına etkisinin ne yönde olduğunu tespit etmek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Söz konusu çalışma 2008 –2009 akademik yılının birinci döneminde 50 erkek öğrenciye uygulanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan katılımcılar askeri lise mezunları olup, yaklaşık 7 yıldır İngilizce eğitimi almaktadırlar. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Wen (1997) tarafından uygulanmış olan Motivasyon ölçeğinden yararlanılmıştır. Ölçek üç ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde katılımcılar ile ilgili çeşitli demografik verilerin toplanması amaçlanmakta, ikinci ve üçüncü bölümlerde ise motivasyon ile yabancı dil başarısı arasındaki çeşitli ilişkileri irdeleyen sorular bulunmaktadır. Toplanan veriler araştırma sonrasında SPSS 11.5 istatistik programı yardımıyla çözümlenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde frekans, ortalama, bağımsız t-testi, ANOVA ve Pearson Korelasyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Çalışma sonuçlarına göre toplam motivasyon ile Kara Harp Okulu öğrencilerinin yabancı dil başarısı arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki vardır. Fakat dil başarısı ile entegrasyon motivasyonu ve algı değeri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki tespit edilememiştir. Buna karşın düşük ve yüksek yabancı dil başarısına sahip öğrenciler arasında toplam motivasyon ve yetenek algılamaları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Son olarak, katılımcıların aylık gelirleri ile toplam motivasyonları ve yabancı dil başarıları arasında anlamlı bir fark görülmemiştir. Benzer şekilde katılımcıların ebeveynlerinin İngilizce yetkinlikleri ile öğrencilerin toplam motivasyonu ve yabancı dil başarısı arasında anlamlı bir korelasyon tespit edilememiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Motivasyon, motivasyon türleri, yabancı dil başarısı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce.

Introduction

Motivation has been identified as an important factor as a determinant of proficiency in a second or foreign language. According to Gardner (1985), for an individual to truly learn a language, s/he must find the learning situation to be rewarding, and must be motivated. Gardner even identifies motivation as the single most influential factor in learning a new language. Similarly, Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, and Sumrall (1993) reported that motivation is the single best predictor of language learning achievement, all things being equal. Moreover,

* PhD Candidate, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, yasarkurum@gmail.com

Yamashiro and McLaughlin (2001) maintained that students' motivation and their language proficiency are positively internally related. In addition, a number of studies reported that there is a significant relationship between gender and language learning. Specifically, the findings of these studies suggested that females tend to "be more willing to exert effort in learning English" (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2000, cited in Salem 2006).

Motivation is generally accepted to be of two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation occurs when you are passionate about a task and perform it for the sheer pleasure of it. The motivator resides within you. Only some internal motivators are truly intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation occurs when you perform a task because some intrinsic force, either external to you (money, rewards, punishment) or internal to you (a value or a belief that impacts your sense of self-worth) drives you perform.

Educational psychologists believe the motivation to learn a foreign language is predisposed by the task itself, performance goals, the environment, classroom management, and by learning approaches. Apart from the terms instrumental and integrative motivation, educational psychologists research about the concepts of extrinsic, intrinsic and achievement motivation.

Intrinsically motivated people experience enjoyment in the pursuit of their interests and in the absence of external rewards or controls (Deci and Ryan, 2001; Pintrich, 2000). Learning to socialize is a natural step towards development and it is also an important factor for assimilation into society (Deci and Ryan, 2001). External values and beliefs become internalized and thus intrinsic. An accommodation to external values and the environment allows the individual to pursue self-determined interests (Deci and Ryan, 2001).

In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting such as the Turkish Military Academy, it is important to consider the actual meaning of the term "integrative." As Benson (1991 cited in Salem, 2006) suggests, a more appropriate approach to the concept of integrative motivation in the EFL context would be the idea that it represents the desire of the individual to become bilingual, while at the same time becoming bicultural. This occurs through the addition of another language and culture to the learner's own cultural identity. As Turkey and, particularly the cadets studying English at the Military Academy, predominantly do not have many opportunities to use the target (L2) language in daily verbal exchanges. Also we cannot talk about any potential for integrating into the target language community. In the Military Academy EFL setting then, the term integrative motivation mostly refers to the desire of the learners to become bilingual and to be able to contact foreign military personnel in an effective manner.

In contrast to integrative motivation is the form of motivation referred to as instrumental motivation. This is generally characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language. With instrumental motivation, the purpose of language acquisition and learning is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work or achieving higher social status. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired as in the Military Academy setting.

At the Turkish Military Academy, contrary to our expectations, the majority of the students lack the necessary motivation that is required for foreign language studies. Many students believe they don't have enough time to pursue their studies to improve their language skills. The academic and military activities and duties expected from a cadet to perform leave little time for extra studies. This situation leads the students to limit their foreign language studies to a minimum amount that can guarantee a passing grade from the course. Also there is not enough English input in the environment, there are not enough opportunities to interact with the native English speakers, and there is not enough acceptance among the cadets for the idea of becoming proficient in English in the short run, because the cadets are aware of the fact that their proficiency in English will be required as a skill only after their 6th or 7th year in their professions, which might understandably seem to be quite a long time, especially for the TMA cadets being at the ages of 18 to 22.

In the field, not so many specific studies analyzing the motivational factors that affect the foreign language studies of the TMA students have been done (Kürüm, 2007). Since the motivational factors play a great role in understanding and improving the conditions for an effective foreign language and learning, this study will provide necessary information to fill the gap in the field.

In this study, the following research questions were addressed specifically:

1. What associations exist between motivation and language success among the cadets at the TMA?
2. Do high proficient cadets differ from low proficient ones in their motivation to learn English as a foreign language?
3. Are there any statistically significant correlations between the monthly income of the TMA cadets and their motivation?
4. Are there any statistically significant correlations between the monthly income of the TMA cadets and their foreign language success?
5. Are there any statistically significant correlations between the TMA cadets' parents' possession of English competence and their motivation?
6. Are there any statistically significant correlations between the TMA cadets' parents' possession of English competence and their foreign language success?

Data Analysis

The required data for the present study was mainly collected by means of the responses given to the questions and statements of the questionnaire namely motivational factors questionnaire for the Turkish Military Academy cadets (see APPENDIX 1) adapted and prepared for this study. The internal consistency of the questionnaire is .8870. There are 40 items in the questionnaire.

In order to address the research question 1, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between motivation and the participants' EFL success as measured by the mean score of the four semesters that they have studied so far at the Military Academy. In order to address the question 2 regarding the differences between low and high proficient EFL learners in their motivation to learn English as a foreign language, composite scores for low and high proficient learners on the subscales of motivation and descriptive statistics (range, means, median and standard deviations) were computed. Then a t-test analysis was conducted. The participants having a median score of 65 or more are accepted as high proficient learners whereas, the participants having an average score of 64 or less are accepted as low proficient learners.

In order to address the questions 3 and 4 regarding the relationship between the monthly income of cadets and their motivation and language success, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted. For the questions 5 and 6, to investigate the likely correlation between the cadets' parents' possession of English and their motivation and foreign language success a t-test analysis was conducted.

Participants

The participants of the study are 50 students studying at the 3rd grade of the Turkish Military Academy in the first semester of the 2008-2009 academic year. A great majority of the students at the Turkish Military Academy are military high school graduates. In consistent with the school population, the participants of this study are graduates of the three high schools namely Kuleli, Maltepe and Işıklar. The majority of the students participating in the study are in English classes having a number of 25-30 students. The participants are attending their English classes 4 hours a week.

2.3. Definitions of the Variables

Integrative Motivation

It lies more in the affective domain (Dornyei, 1990). It deals with “the way expertise in a foreign language can enable the user to participate in the culture of another region or country and interact with other people” (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998, cited in Salem, 2006). This will be measured by items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9 of the Motivation Scale survey. These items have an internal consistency of .5745.

Instrumental Motivation

It is the connection of success and reward; learning the language for a material, pragmatic benefit such as improved career prospects and access to higher education (Vroom, 1964; Gardner & Lambert 1972; Dornyei, 1990; Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). This will be measured by items 5, 6, 7, and 10 of the Motivation Scale survey. These items have an internal consistency of .3665.

Effort

It is the amount of effort that learners are willing to exert in order to become proficient in the target language. According to Vroom's expectancy value theories (1969), the learner's motivation to acquire a second language is determined by effort, among other factors. This will be measured by items 11 to 16 of the Motivation Scale survey. These items have an internal consistency of .6301.

Valence

Value of obtaining a goal (Vroom, 1964). This will be measured by items 1 to 6, part 3, section 1. Valence subscale has an internal consistency of .7472.

Expectancy

Perceived probability of success (Vroom, 1964). This will be measured by items 1 to 6, part 3, section 2. Expectancy subscale has an internal consistency of .7322.

Sense of Ability

Appraisal of one's ability to achieve the goals (Vroom, 1964). It is closely related to Bandura's self-efficacy (1986, 1997 cited in Salem, 2006) which highlights the belief that a particular action is possible and that the individual can accomplish it, judging one's own

ability and competence. This will be measured by items 1 to 6, part 3, section 3. This subscale has an internal consistency of .8191.

Results

In order to address the research question 1, regarding the likely associations that exist between motivation and the language proficiency among EFL learners at the Turkish Military Academy, a Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis that examined the relationship between the different types of motivation and the participants' EFL achievement level measured by the mean score of the four semesters that have been completed so far are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Bivariate correlations among participants' motivation and language success

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Mean	SD
SUCCESS	1	.	50	4.7250	1.07054
INTEGRATIVE	.080	.581	50	4.6133	.69940
INSTRUMENTAL	.280(*)	.049	50	4.5450	.80763
EFFORT	.376(**)	.007	50	2.6067	.50481
VALENCE	.246	.085	50	4.4833	.84196
EXPECTANCY	.375(**)	.007	50	6.4467	1.39176
ABILITY	.410(**)	.003	50	6.7467	1.48050
TOTAL MOTIVATION	.442(**)	.001	50	4.9069	.68157

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation analysis summarized in Table 1 reveal that there is a positive correlation between instrumental motivation and learners' EFL achievement ($r = .280$ $p < .05$) and also positive correlations between effort, expectancy, ability and overall motivation ($r = .376$, $r = .375$, $r = .410$ and $r = .442$ respectively; $p < .01$). These results are contrary to the findings of a similar study conducted in the same setting in which no correlation was obtained between motivation and the EFL success (Kürüm, 2007).

To find out whether there are statistically significant differences in the motivation of low and high proficient EFL learners (research question 2), composite scores on six different types of motivation and also the total motivation were computed for low and high proficient students. The participants were divided into high and low categories based on the median score of their self-reported English grades. Students having an average grade of 64 (CC) or below ($N = 26$) would be the low proficient learners, and students having an average grade of 65 (CB) or above ($N = 24$) would be the high proficient learners. Then descriptive statistics (range, means, and standard deviations) were computed. Finally, a t-test analysis was conducted to compare the means for low and high proficient learners. The results are represented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Results of t-test for differences in total motivation by success level

Total Motivation	N	M	SD	df	t	p
High Success	24	5.14	.54044	48	-2.465	.017
Low Success	26	4.69	.73449			

The results of the independent sample t-test show that there is a statistically significant difference between low and high proficient EFL learners in their total motivation. Based on the students' average English grades, the cadets having higher grades are more motivated than (M=5.14) the cadets having an English average grade of 64 or less (M=4.69) with a p value of .017 ($p < .05$).

In order to address the research questions 3 and 4 regarding a likely association between the cadets' monthly income and their overall motivation and language success, a one way ANOVA analysis was conducted. The independent variable taken into consideration is the participants' monthly income. The results of the analysis about the participants' monthly income and their motivation and language success are revealed in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary of determinants of motivation by income

INCOME		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
INTEGRATIVE	Between Groups	4,854	3	1,618	3,894	,015
	Within Groups	19,114	46	,416		
	Total	23,969	49			
INSTRUMENTAL	Between Groups	,205	3	,068	,099	,960
	Within Groups	31,756	46	,690		
	Total	31,961	49			
EFFORT	Between Groups	,769	3	,256	1,007	,398
	Within Groups	11,717	46	,255		
	Total	12,487	49			
VALENCE	Between Groups	1,607	3	,536	,744	,531
	Within Groups	33,129	46	,720		
	Total	34,736	49			
EXPECTANCY	Between Groups	5,059	3	1,686	,863	,467
	Within Groups	89,854	46	1,953		
	Total	94,913	49			
ABILITY	Between Groups	4,349	3	1,450	,647	,589
	Within Groups	103,053	46	2,240		
	Total	107,402	49			
TOTAL MOTIVATION	Between Groups	1,372	3	,457	,983	,409
	Within Groups	21,391	46	,465		
	Total	22,762	49			

The results of the one way ANOVA showed that the between group differences for the income is statistically not significant with a p value of .409 ($p < .05$). So it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between the participants' overall motivation and their monthly income. However, the research data revealed a statistically significant relationship between integrative motivation and monthly income ($p = .015$). When the descriptive mean values for the monthly income of the cadets are examined, it is seen that the cadets having a monthly income of 200 YTL or more have a higher integrative motivation ($M = 4.94$) compared to the ones having less incomes. The average mean of the cadets' integrative motivation is 4.61.

Table 4. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary of determinants of language success by income

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1,235	3	,412	,345	,793
Within Groups	54,921	46	1,194		
Total	56,156	49			

The above results revealed a non-existent correlation between the monthly income of cadets and their foreign language success ($p = .793$; $p < .05$).

In order to address the research questions 5 and 6 regarding the likely correlations between the cadets' parents' possession of English language competence and their motivation and language success, t-test analyses were conducted. The results of the analyses are revealed in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Results of t-test for differences in total motivation by parents' possession of English

Total Motivation	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Yes	7	4.86	.34652	48	-.198	.844
No	43	4.91	.72413			

The above data revealed a non-existent relationship between the cadets' parents' possession of English language competence and their overall motivation ($p = .844$; $p < .05$).

Table 6. Results of t-test for differences in language success by parents' possession of English

Language Success	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Yes	7	4.71	1.02499	48	-.028	.978
No	43	4.73	1.08947			

When the above findings are considered, it can be said that there is no significant correlation between the cadets' parents' possession of English language competence and their language success ($p = .978$; $p < .05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Understanding the role of motivation in foreign language learning in military settings is important. Therefore, many researches have been conducted in the field to unveil the complex aspects of the psychological factors in foreign language learning. Research on motivation at first only concentrated on two main motivational orientations of language learners: instrumental and integrative. More recently, studies have shown a wider range of factors at work. The military life and discipline could be quite challenging to the cadets to emerge and grow their leadership qualities. Serving our country as an officer in the Turkish Army is deeply rewarding in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Also a wide range of instrumental and integrative factors can contribute and affect the achievement level of cadets particularly in foreign language learning.

Hence, the present study could shed new light on the numerous complex components of motivation in regard to Dörnyei's (1998 cited in Kürüm, 2007) complaint about very little empirical research in the L2 field. This study attempted to examine the role of motivation in students' foreign language achievement at the Turkish Military Academy. The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. There is a high correlation between the overall motivation and the foreign language success of the TMA cadets. This finding is contrary to a similar study which showed a non-existent relation between motivation and language success of cadets at the TMA (Kürüm, 2007). However, the present study revealed no correlation between the participants' integrative motivation and valence and their foreign language success.
2. There is a difference ($p = .017$) between low and high proficient participants in terms of their overall motivation and appraisal of the participants' ability in favor of high proficient learners. The mean score of overall motivation for low and high proficient learners are 4.69 and 5.14 respectively. Similarly, the mean scores for low and high proficient learners in terms of their ability is 6.24 and 7.29 respectively. On the other hand, no significant difference between low and high proficient participants was found in terms of their integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, effort, valence and expectancy.
3. No significant correlation between the monthly income and the overall motivation of the participants was found. However, there is a significant correlation between the participants' integrative motivation and their monthly income. The cadets having a monthly income of 200 TL or more revealed a higher integrative motivation with a mean score of 4.94. These cadets can be thought of having a higher appreciation of the English culture and a stronger desire to talk and communicate with English speaking people.
4. The findings of the present study showed no significant correlation between the monthly income of the participants and their foreign language success.
5. Similarly, there is no significant correlation between the participants' parents' possession of English language competence and their overall motivation and language success.

In conclusion, although the findings of the present study regarding the role of motivation in foreign language learning is inconsistent with some of the other studies reviewed, the findings of the research did highlight the need to conduct further research related to motivation in order to shed light on the possible reasons behind the inconsistency between the findings of

the present study and those of the other studies. Furthermore, one should always bear in mind that motivational factors play a big role in foreign language learning, and researchers need to devise appropriate strategies that would help teachers to motivate their students and to train them to use strategies that would facilitate their language learning.

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