The Role of Two-way Information-Gap Tasks in Students' Motivation in Speaking Lessons in an ESP Context

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most important skills in language education. However, it becomes more challenging when it is taught in second or foreign language classrooms. For that reason, the present study aims to investigate the role of two-way information gap tasks in students' motivation in a speaking lesson in an ESP context. The participants are students in a two-year civil aviation program. The program aims to educate students to become qualified employees in the aviation sector. Therefore, students are taught how to communicate with foreign passengers in various situations, from providing a comfortable flight to dealing with flight emergencies using English. To that end, an open-ended motivation questionnaire adapted from Wallace and Leong (2020) was given to the students. The questionnaire inquired about the students' feelings towards English and their perceptions about whether tasks motivated them or prepared them for their professions. Following the initial examination of the answers in the questionnaire, interview questions were formulated to enrich the data, and one-on-one interviews were conducted with the students on a voluntary basis. The data were analyzed, and the emerging themes were discussed in relation to the research questions formulated for the purposes of this study. The results revealed positive feelings and perceptions toward tasks. Most of the students found tasks motivating and fun. The most salient finding was the students' perception of tasks as preparatory work for the future due to their instrumental motivation.

Keywords: Information-gap tasks; motivation; speaking skills; English for specific purposes

Introduction

Speaking is the most fundamental expression tool to communicate and is essential in second language teaching and learning (Namaziandost et al., 2019). However, it is just as challenging for foreign language learners due to reasons such as limited exposure to the language and lack of knowledge in how to use the language in interactions (Marzban & Hashemi, 2013). Traditional approaches to teaching languages are not very effective and are criticized because they fail to achieve educational goals since language is taught in bits (Candlin, 1987, p.16; Ellis, 2009). With communicative language teaching, putting the learner in the center of learning became essential, and tasks were integrated into language curricula (Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, Lambert, 2019) owing to the belief that they make language learning easier (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010).

Information-gap tasks have been used in various studies such as investigating the motivation of EFL learners (Marzban & Hashemi, 2013), investigating teachers' perception of task-based lessons (Calvert & Sheen, 2014), the effect of oral tasks in promoting listening fluency (Córdoba Zúñiga & Rangel-Gutiérre, 2018), whether tasks increased students' speaking motivation in a language

classroom (Ulla, 2020), all of which provided the literature on task-based language teaching with rich data and useful ideas. Tasks are defined by many researchers (Breen, 1989; Nunan, 1989; Long, 1985; Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2009). Ellis (2003) evaluates tasks based on six dimensions: authenticity, outcome, scope, the perspective from which it is viewed, linguistic skills needed to complete it, and the psychological processes involved (p. 2). Prahbu (1987) indicated that a task is an activity where learners work to achieve a specific goal. Breen (1989) defined task as a structured plan that can provide opportunities for learners to improve and repair their linguistic knowledge and skills during communication. According to Nunan (1989), a task is an activity that focuses on the meaning and stresses the outcome-focality of a task. A task needs to be meaning-focused, have a clear communicative outcome, has some gap, and learners need to rely on their linguistic and non-linguistic resources (Ellis et al., 2019, p.10; Ellis, 2009).

Tasks are known to have positive effects on L2 learning (Calvert & Sheen, 2014). Task-based language teaching posits that learning is at its best when it fosters authentic use of the learners' own linguistic resources (Ellis, 2009). It uses language as a means towards another goal; language is a means for completing a task and achieving an outcome (Ellis et al., 2019). Prabhu (1987) states that implementing tasks would create an environment where learners would have to work out a plan to negotiate meaning and achieve a communicative goal (p. 1). Tasks present lots of opportunities for learners to use the language for meaning negotiation to arrive at a solution, and it enables a focus on both the meaning and form (Ellis, 2009). Through tasks, learners become both more active in the class and increase their awareness of their language development (Sarıçoban & Karakurt, 2016). They provide meaningful negotiation and collaboration (Ellis, 2003). Candlin (1987) states that tasks work best in raising learners' awareness of their personalities (p.7) and help them gain self-confidence. For all these advantages of tasks to actualize, and foster interaction, collaboration, and participation, Hampel (2010) stresses that tasks need to be designed effectively.

There is a large body of literature on task-based language teaching and its effects on various aspects of learning. The following part presents the roles that task-based language teaching and, specifically, information gap tasks played and their effects on second and foreign language teaching. Although the literature is rich in studies on information-gap tasks, studies on the role of information-gap tasks on learner motivation seemed to lack in quantity. This study aimed to contribute to the literature by studying the role of two-way information-gap tasks on learner motivation in an ESP context.

Literature review

Task-based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching came to be known when Prabhu introduced it in the 1980s as part of the communicative language teaching movement (Liu, Mishan & Chambers, 2021). Since then, it has been at the center of attention for many researchers (Ellis, 2009). Task-based language teaching challenges traditional views and posits that language learning will be best when it fosters authentic use of the learners' linguistic resources (Ellis, 2009) and uses language as a means towards another goal (Ellis et al., 2019). A task has certain characteristics. These characteristics are its focus on meaning, the existence of some gap, relying on individual resources of language, and having a clear outcome other than using the language (Ellis, 2009). Both the designing of a language program and the planning of a lesson should be a 'task' according to the principles of task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2009, p.223). Through tasks, learners use their linguistic resources to interact, understand one another, and produce meaningful messages (Nunan, 2004, p.4). Task-based language teaching has positive effects on second language learning (Calvert & Sheen, 2014). Studies have shown that using tasks in the classroom encourages learners to participate and collaborate while also improving their language skills (Chooma, 2013; Miao, 2014). With tasks, learners can be exposed to the language and have meaningful communication (Liu et al., 2021). Meaningfulness of communication was also

addressed by researchers like Doughty and Pica (1986) and Córdoba Zúñiga (2016) who state that tasks help learners progress in L2 and encourage them to be creative with the language.

In their action research on teachers' development and implementation of a task-based lesson, their perceptions, and the outcome of the tasks from both teachers' and learners' perspectives, Calvert and Sheen (2014) found that learners were able to use the language work in collaboration and were motivated to complete the task. Marzban and Hashemi (2013) investigated the impact of tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners and found that the tasks improved learners' motivation in the experiment group and created a collaborative atmosphere where learners benefitted from each other's ideas and language use. Ghodrati, Ashraf, and Motallebzadeh (2014) conducted an experimental study to investigate the autonomy improvement of Iranian EFL learners' using task-based speaking activities. The experiment group received additional task-based speaking activities. The researchers found that the learners' autonomy, which was defined as internal motivation, in the experimental group significantly changed, and therefore, it was stated that task-based speaking activities had a positive effect on EFL learners' autonomy. Lee (2016) investigated learners' autonomy in a language course where online task-based instructions were implemented and found that learners responded to task-based instruction positively; they were motivated, and their participation increased. Sarıçoban and Karakurt (2016) investigated the role of task-based activities on EFL learners' listening and speaking skills and found that tasks increased students' motivation and improved their listening and speaking skills. Also, tasks and the teacher's comforting manner provided a stress-free environment where learners could work collaboratively without worry. Córdoba Zúñiga (2016) used tasks to integrate language skills to promote meaningful learning and found that using tasks enabled the integration of four skills, which increased the interaction between learners and improved their communicative competencies. Córdoba Zúñiga and Rangel-Gutiérre (2018) conducted action research where they used oral tasks to promote listening fluency. They found that the use of tasks improved the learners' listening fluency and made the learning experience more engaging and motivating. Ulla (2020) investigated students' speaking motivation in a language classroom and found that students who participated in task-based activities were more motivated and encouraged to improve their communicative skills.

Information gap tasks

Since they were first introduced, information-gap tasks have become reliable instruments to gather data of language learning processes (Pica, Kang & Sauro, 2006, p.302). Information gap refers to the presence of some lack of information between two or more participants trying to solve a common problem (Doughty & Pica, 1986, p. 4). An information gap task is an activity where learners have different pieces of information that they need to communicate to complete a task (Lam Son, 2009). Leaners have information that the other student(s) do not have; therefore talk to each other to find the necessary pieces that will ensure task completion (Neu & Reeser, 1997).

Language teachers frequently use information gap tasks, and researchers have studied their effects (Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi, 2014; Pica, Kang & Sauro, 2006; Ortiz-Neira, 2019; Thom, 2015; Ismaili & Bajrami, 2016; Asrobi, Seken & Suarnajaya, 2013). Information gap tasks necessitate communication in L2 and give students a reason to communicate (Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi, 2014). They enable learners to engage in meaningful and functional L2 interaction (Pica, Kang & Sauro, 2006). It is also argued that using information-gap activities or tasks will lessen the burden on the teacher as the lesson will be more learner-centered, encouraging independence for the learners (Asrobi et al., 2013). Information gap activities increase motivation (Thom, 2015), foster cooperation (Asrobi et al., 2013), develop linguistic skills (Sarıçoban & Karakurt, 2016), and modify the interaction between conversational partners (Pica et al., 2006, p. 301). Doughty and Pica (1986) investigated the effects of required information gap tasks versus optional information gap on learner interaction and how they affected the amount of modified interaction. They found that students interacted more

and modified their interaction more when some gap necessitated an exchange of information between the learners (Dought & Pica, 1986, p. 321). The nature of the information gap is also important in information-gap tasks, whether the gap is one-way or two-way. In two-way information gap tasks, the focus is on the information to be exchanged, which requires the use of communicative interaction between learners (Champakaew & Pencingkarn, 2014). According to Long (1981), two-way information gap tasks encourage modified interaction between learners, promoting participation for all group members. Ngoc et al. (2020) state that two-way information gap tasks encourage students to interact more. The results of their study also present that two-way information gap tasks allowed equal participation for all students.

In their study, Champakaew and Pencingkarn (2014) found that two-way communication tasks allow learners to use meaning negotiation strategies and develop their oral proficiency. An important finding was that two-way information gap tasks were the most effective in encouraging the meaning negotiation strategies.

What are the effects of information gap tasks on students?

With the lack of information that it presents, information gap motivates learners and engages them in communication to complete a task in numerous ways such as exchanging ideas, deciding on some issue or solving a common problem (Doughty & Pica, 1986, p. 4). It is stated that the increase in learners' participation in the language-learning process is parallel with the increase in their motivation to learn (Nikolov, 1999). Gardner (2010) remarks that motivation is a multi-faceted concept involving affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements; therefore, learners' motivation to learn a language can be affected by various factors. Stefanova and Zabunov (2020) state that motivation is essential in learning anything, especially language. They state that learners who are highly motivated will put more effort into their activities and succeed. William and Leong (2020, p.222) define the internal and external factors that affect motivation. They state that learners' interests, the perceived value of the subject, and their attitude towards it are internal factors that affect motivation, and the external factors are the social support received from the stakeholders of the teaching and learning community and learners' perception of the formal teaching context. Stefanova & Zabunov (2020, p. 203) state that "professional realization" such as a better position and salary is another extrinsic factor. Studies show that information gap activities are effective on learner motivation, L2 acquisition, fluency, engagement, and participation (Nikolov, 1999; Thom, 2015; Asrobi et al., 2013; Sarıçoban & Karakurt, 2016). The following studies present examples of how information gap was used in language classes and the extent to which and the ways how they were effective on learners.

In their study on the effectiveness of information-gap activities, Asrobi et al. (2013) found that using information-gap to teach speaking was more effective than using traditional methods. According to them using information gap to teach foster speaking cooperation among students, increase motivation and encourage active participation. In their study on the effects of information gap activities on students' willingness to communicate, Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi (2014) used a jigsaw, missing information, and finding the different activities. They found that missing information and finding the difference was significantly effective on students' willingness to communicate. They remark that if students have a purpose of communicating and the input is comprehensible, their willingness to communicate will increase, which will lead to successful L2 acquisition. Thom (2015) investigated whether information-gap activities promoted motivation and participation among cadets in English-speaking lessons and found that most learners' motivation and participation increased with the use of information-gap activities. The results of Sarıçoban and Karakurt's (2016) study showed that one of the groups (B1+) improved their listening and speaking skills significantly through task-based classroom activities. They also state that students participated in the activities freely and with less fear of making mistakes. The students stated that they enjoyed the task-based

activities because the focus was on meaning and task completion, which encouraged them to communicate freely without feeling stressed out about making grammatical mistakes. Namaziandost, Hashemifardnia & Shafiee (2019, p.2) studied the impact of information gap, opinion gap, and reasoning gap tasks on EFL learners' speaking fluency in the Iranian context in the hope that it would save English teaching from its "*boring and monotonous situation*". The results showed that tasks helped develop students' performance significantly, encourage more interaction, and improve participation. Of all the task types, information gap tasks were found to be the most effective on students' fluency. According to Marashi and Naddim (2019, p.201), information gap tasks effectively increased interest in class work and enhanced participation. Ngoc, Doo Thi Hong Ha, and Le Thi Thanh Tam (2020) discuss the importance of information-gap tasks and state that especially two-way information-gap tasks create a collaborative atmosphere where students can equally participate in the task and use the language. Similarly, Quynh, Nguyet & Phuong (2021) found that students' participation increased gradually using two-way information gap activities. The students felt more confident in pairs or groups and were more eager to participate each week of the implementation. It is also stated that pairs supported and encouraged each other during interaction and proposed scaffolded help while working on information gap and opinion gap tasks as one of the by-products of the study (Tian & Jiang, 2021, p. 9). Research on the effect of tasks on learner motivation, participation, and autonomy suggests that tasks provide an effective teaching and learning environment where learners can collaborate, become more motivated and participate more (Candlin, 1987; Marzban & Hashemi, 2013; Ghodrati et al., 2014; Sarıçoban & Karakurt, 2016; Córdoba Zúñiga, 2016; Lee, 2016; Ellis et al., 2019; Ulla, 2020).

The present study aimed to find out whether two-way information-gap tasks had a role on EFL students' motivation in an ESP speaking lesson in the two-year civil aviation program at the university of Turkish Aeronautical Association in Turkey. The literature shows that there is a large body of research on the impacts of information gap tasks on EFL students' language development and willingness to interact. However, the role of two-way information gap tasks in the motivation of learners of English in an ESP setting remains an area that needs more investigation. To that end, the following research questions were formulated:

- What are the effects of two-way information-gap tasks on EFL learners' motivation?
- Can two-way information-gap tasks encourage participation?
- What are EFL learners' perceptions of information-gap tasks in speaking lessons?

Method

A qualitative research design was adopted to investigate the role of tasks on learners' motivation. The data were collected using two types of tools: an open-ended questionnaire and individual interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was used to understand the relationship between two-way information-gap tasks and learner motivation. Students were then interviewed individually on a voluntary basis to increase the quality criteria of the study (Dörnyei, 2007). The data gathered were examined using content analysis that required the categorization of certain patterns, which were then collected under certain themes.

Participants

Participants were civil aviation cabin services students at the Turkish Aeronautical Association University vocational school in İzmir. The students had a speaking course where they learned to communicate for a specific purpose, which is communicating in civil aviation. They studied cabin terminology and used English for communicative tasks. The tasks that were used were two-way information gap tasks, where learners had to accomplish a non-linguistic goal, such as solving a passenger-related problem, preparing the cabin for a stage of flight, or informing the cockpit crew

about the cabin. The desired goal was that learners complete a task related to their field of study (cabin services), for which they had to use their linguistic resources.

Instrumentation

An open-ended questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 57 students to learn about their attitudes toward English and their motivation for learning it. The questionnaire was adapted from Wallace and Leong (2020) after necessary permissions were received from the researchers and was conducted following the permission of the ethics committee of the university. Thirteen questions were asked in the questionnaire regarding students' feelings toward English, their reasons for learning, their feelings toward the class and the teacher, and their perception of and feelings toward tasks. The data gathered were read to become familiar with it and gain a general understanding. The collected data were analyzed under the four categories expressed above. Students were interviewed to enrich the data. Their answers were recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed. Five interview questions were formulated after a thorough examination of the data gathered through the questionnaire. Twenty-one students volunteered for the individual interviews. The following themes emerged as a result of the analysis which were tasks for motivation boost, tasks for active participation and tasks as preparatory work for the future profession. Students' responses yielded unique data as to students' perception of communicative two-way information gap tasks in a speaking lesson in an ESP context.

Procedure

Prior to the procedure, students were observed during the lesson. The classes contained students with different proficiencies, creating an atmosphere where only proficient students volunteered to share ideas and participate in the lessons. When students were put into pairs, the collaborative atmosphere seemed to positively affect their motivation to interact (Wallace & Leong, 2020). Therefore, two-way information gap activities where pairs work collaboratively were preferred. A task-based lesson plan was developed and implemented in speaking lessons for a month to create a comfortable environment and encourage participation (Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi, 2014, p. 122). Each lesson took four hours. The task implementation was designed based on Willis's (1996, 2012) task-based framework, which involved a pre-task stage, task cycle (task, planning, and report), and language focus. Each week a two-way information-gap task about the students' field was implemented. In one lesson, after exchanging ideas on the lesson topic and studying the target vocabulary, the task was explained to the students. They were paired, handed out pictures, and asked to describe the pictures to their pairs. Following this, the students were supposed to make a list of all the actions they described to one another, discuss flight attendants' postflight duties in relation to the actions listed, and present their ideas to their classmates. The language was analyzed, and the students were given homework. Students were observed during task implementations. They were instructed to use English as much as possible but were not banned from using their native language, Turkish. The goal was to get them to use all their resources to keep the task going and successfully complete it in the end (Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2009). It was observed that due to the content of the tasks and a focus on meaning, students mostly preferred to use English to interact and negotiate meaning of their interaction. At the end of the four-week period, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the students, and individual interviews were conducted to see if they found tasks about their profession motivating.

Data analysis

Data collection was realized through an open-ended questionnaire which was adapted from Wallace and Leong (2020). The questionnaire had thirteen questions that inquired into the students' feelings towards and reasons for learning English, their feelings towards the class and the teacher, and their

perception of and feelings toward tasks. The collected data were examined for familiarization, and codes were generated. Following this initial coding, the data were analyzed to find patterns and generate themes. Tasks for motivation boost, tasks for active participation, and tasks as preparatory work for future professions were the themes that emerged in the analysis. Following the questionnaire, individual interviews were conducted with 21 students. Each interview lasted approximately 5 minutes. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Students' responses yielded unique data as to students' perception of communicative two-way information gap tasks in a speaking lesson in an ESP context. The responses showed that students found tasks motivating because they helped them prepare for the job interviews which was the most salient finding in the data. Most of the students stated that tasks encouraged them to participate more in the lesson. Additionally, the analysis showed that students found tasks entertaining.

Results

The questionnaire had thirteen questions and four categories, which asked about feelings towards studying English (positive, negative, neutral), reasons for studying English (internal motivation, external motivation, both), feelings towards the class and teacher (positive, negative, both), and feelings about the tasks (if they are motivating). Following the questionnaire, students were interviewed on a voluntary basis to enrich the data and increase the quality criteria of the study (Dörnyei, 2007). The data revealed that most of the students (42) had positive feelings towards studying English. Some of the positive comments were "*I enjoy learning English*", "*I love learning new vocabulary*", "*I enjoy speaking English very much*". Some students (7) had negative feelings towards studying English. The negative comments showed little desire to study English due to reasons stated as the following, "*I have a prejudice against English*", "*I don't like studying English*", "*I get bored while studying English*". Of all the students who participated, three of them were neutral towards studying English or indicated certain conditions for when they enjoy studying. The students said, "*I enjoy studying as long as I can learn*", "*I only enjoy it when I practice speaking*". Table 1 shows students' feelings towards studying English.

Table 1 . Feelings toward studying English

Positive (42)	*I enjoy learning English.*	*I love learning new vocabulary.*	*I enjoy speaking English very much.*
Neutral/Conditional (3)	*I enjoy studying as long as I can learn.*	*I only enjoy it when I practice speaking.*	*I don't like reading English text or grammar, only speaking.*
Negative (7)	*I have a prejudice against English.*	*I do not like studying English.*	*I get bored while studying English.*

The second question asked students' reasons for learning English. The corresponding interview question was "How are you planning to use English in the future?" The responses showed that most of the students (28) had external motivation for learning English. Responses such as "*I want to learn for work*" and "*To get a job easily*" were the most frequently received ones. Other comments were "*I think these tasks can help me succeed in the interview,*" "*If I can learn English, I will be successful. This feeling motivates me.*" Additionally, the following reasons such as "*To communicate with passengers in my travels,*" "*The aviation language is English,*" "*It is lingua franca, and we'll need it to communicate with people all around the world*" revealed the external factors that motivate them to learn English. Seventeen (17) students expressed internal motivation, and some (7) expressed that they had both internal and external motivation for learning English. The following statements showed students' internal motivations for learning English; "*Because I love it,*" "*I feel good when I speak English,*" "*I want to achieve success in my social life,*" "*To increase my worth,*" "*I want to form new friendships,*" "*Because I want to learn.*" Some of the responses showed both types of motivation; "*I like it* (English) *and find it important for my career,*" and "*Speaking English is so much*

fun and being able to communicate in English is necessary to get a job in the aviation industry." These revealed that some students are both internally and externally motivated. Table 2 shows students' purposes for learning English and the type of motivation they have.

Table 2. Type of motivation

Internal motivation (17)	*I study because I love it* (English)	*I feel good when I speak English.*	*I want to achieve success in my social life.*	*I study because I want to learn.*	*I want to form new friendships.*
External motivation (28)	*I want to learn for work*	*I'm studying English to get a job easily.*	*I am learning English to communicate with passengers in my travels.*	*The aviation language is English.*	*It is lingua franca, and we will need it to communicate with people all around the world.*
Both types (7)	*I like it and find it important for my career*	*Speaking English is so much fun and being able to communicate in English is necessary to get a job in the aviation industry.*			

The third question inquired into the students' feelings about the class and teacher. The responses showed that most of the students had positive feelings towards both. Only six students had negative feelings towards the lesson. One of them stated that "*Everyone's level is different, so lessons are not enough to improve my English*." Two of those students remarked as follows; "*I am worried,*" "*Sometimes I feel in agony*." Those who had positive feelings stated that they loved the lesson and found the teacher helpful saying, "*I like the lesson very much,*" "*I enjoy the lessons,*" "*She is very positive and helpful*", and "*I can understand everything that I do individually and with my friends*".

Table 3. Feelings towards the class and the teacher

Positive feelings (46)	*I like and enjoy the lesson very much.*	*She is very positive and helpful.*	*I can understand everything that I do both individually and with my friends*
Negative feelings (6)	*Everyone's level is different, so lessons are not enough to improve my English.*	*I am worried.*	*Sometimes I feel in agony.*

The last questions investigated students' feelings towards the two-way information gap tasks. The corresponding interview question was "Do you think these tasks can prepare you for the future?" Students' responses showed that most of the students had positive feelings about tasks. They enjoyed working on tasks with their pairs, found them motivating, and thought that the tasks could prepare them for the job interview and the job itself. Some of the comments were as follows; "*I find tasks motivating,*" "*I have fun with my friends,*" "*It* (task type) *is how it should be,*" "*We have fun and learn,*" "*We'll experience similar situations in our job, so we should be ready,*" and ". Moreover, they also stated that they needed more tasks like that, which "*can absolutely prepare them because the lesson is job-oriented.*" There were no negative feelings expressed towards tasks. However, some students were more ambivalent towards tasks. They stated that tasks were fun; however, they put forward some conditions for when they enjoyed them and when they did not. They made the following comments, "*I enjoy pair work when I choose my pair,*" "*My motivation depends on my partner.*" Some student responses showed that goal of the tasks was found motivating, and they were appreciated by students. Table 4 shows students' feelings towards tasks.

Table 4. Feelings towards tasks

Positive (48)	*I find tasks motivating (16)*	*We have fun and learn (9)*	*We will experience similar situations in our job, so we should study (24)*
Conditional (4)	*It is fun when I choose my own partner*	*I feel like we need to do more about interviews*	

Conclusions and Discussion

For the present study, three research questions were formulated, which inquired into the role of two-way information gap tasks in students' motivation, willingness to participate, and perceptions of the tasks. The results gathered through questionnaires and interviews were discussed in relation to those research questions. The results of the study showed that two-way information gap tasks motivated the students to work together in collaboration. Students enjoyed working on a task with their preferred partners, which created a friendly working environment (Baker & MacIntyre, 2003), prompted cooperation (Chen, 2005), and helped lower their anxiety (Krashen, 1998). The responses revealed that most of the students were externally motivated to learn English. The present study had similarities with Wallace and Leong's (2020) in that many learners had extrinsic motivation, which the researchers attributed to the teaching and learning context where learning to have a good command of English is associated with success in the future. The students shared a similar concern and expressed extrinsic factors affecting their motivation to learn English.

An interesting finding was the number of students who shared only intrinsic factors for learning English. While it is more commonly found that learners in an ESP context demonstrate motivation for extrinsic or instrumental purposes, there was also a considerable number of students (17) who were internally motivated to learn English, too. However, it is understandable that most of the students were instrumentally motivated to learn English and participate in the tasks. A similar idea was proposed by González Ardeo (2016) who stated that learners' demonstration of instrumental motivation was an expected result as ESP courses are inherently instrumental which can support learners' future occupational expectancies.

The second research question asked whether tasks encouraged participation. It is believed by many (Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi, 2014; Thom, 2015) that information gap tasks increase motivation and encourage participation. The results showed that students' responses were consistent with the literature. When students enjoyed working on tasks, thought tasks as a preparatory activity for the future, and had a pair they could collaborate with, they did not hesitate to participate. Comparable results were found in Eddy-U's (2015) study on what motivates or demotivates learners while working on tasks as a group. The results showed that students participated more when they had groupmates that they liked, were interested in the task, and perceived the task as effective (Eddy-U, 2015, p. 48). It is suggested that participation is influenced by an interest in the topic (Dornyei, 2009), comprehensibility of the information (Krashen & Terrell, 1998), and good group/pair dynamics (Eddy-U, 2015). In their study, Iwashita & Li (2012) found that a communicative way of teaching English through tasks in a speaking lesson may encourage participation when students work collaboratively and create opportunities for learning (Moore, 2012). The results of the present study also showed that students were not hesitant to interact in the target language, nor did they shy away from participating because the tasks were comprehensible and they were interested in them. Seven students stated that "*the work was fruitful for them because they could understand what they were*

supposed to do," which is consistent with the findings of the aforementioned researchers. It could be deduced from the study that tasks lead to collaboration, collaboration fosters motivation and prompts active participation (Nikolov, 1999; Vellanki & Bandu, 2021).

Motivation is an essential factor in learning a language, and attitudes towards the class and perception of the overall learning experience can affect motivation (Gardner, 2010). The third research question in relation to students' perception of tasks yielded interesting results. The questions (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12) showed that most of the students perceived tasks positively. As discussed above, the fact that tasks were motivating and encouraging for students manifested itself in the following statements: "*Tasks were job-oriented, which is how they should be*", "*I believe tasks can prepare me for the job interview*", "*English is very important in the aviation sector and we have to learn it well*", "*I learn how to communicate with passengers*". Some students expressed worry and distress towards the class. Kikuchi (2009) remarks that worry and distress might be caused due to learners' negative perceptions towards the class and the teacher. If learners are not happy with the classroom work or have difficulty comprehending the teacher's methods, they might experience a feeling of worry and agitation, which can lower their motivation towards the lesson and negatively affect their participation. It is discussed that students' motivation influences their motivation to interact (Dornyei, 2009; Eddy-U, 2015). If students perceive the task at hand as effective and interesting, they will be more interested in it, thus, their motivation to interact in a pair/ group work will increase. The students in this study expressed interest in the content of the tasks and felt that the work they did helped prepare them for their career. With this statement by the students, it was deduced that two-way information gap tasks had a positive role in ESP speaking lessons and were received positively by the students.

This research set out to investigate the role of two-way information gap tasks in the motivation of learners of English for specific purposes. The results revealed positive perceptions towards two-way information gap tasks. It was also found that there existed a link between the students' instrumental motivation to learn English, positive perception of tasks, and a willingness to interact and participate in the lessons according to the participants' responses in the open-ended questionnaire and the interview.

Limitations

A possible limitation of the present study was the amount of time two-way information gap tasks were implemented. Even though the responses yielded positive results in terms of the role of two-way information tasks in learner motivation and participation, a longer period could have yielded richer results. Another limitation of the study could be the discrepancies in students' English levels due to the lack of a placement test. This could create a classroom atmosphere where better learners are more motivated to learn and participate in tasks because it is easier for them to understand. Nevertheless, the fact that the actual focus was on task completion and not entirely on the linguistic outcome, and the use of pair work for task implementation might have eliminated this limitation to some degree.

Implications for future research

The present study was conducted based on an a-month long study on the role of two-way information gap tasks in students' motivation in an ESP speaking lesson. A limitation for the study was the duration. Future research on task-based language teaching with a focus on two-way information gap tasks can be conducted in a longer period. For the task-based approach to be implemented, principles of a task-based framework need to be thoroughly learned so that task-based lesson plans can be designed (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2009; Shehadeh & Coombe, 2012). Information gap tasks have been studied by many researchers for different purposes (Chen, 2005; Marzban, 2013;

Thom, 2015; Eddy-U, 2015; Sarıçoban & Karakurt, 2016; Ngoc et al., 2020; Quynh et al., 2021). Further studies could also focus on the role of different task types,' e.g., two-way or emergent information gap tasks (Balaman, 2015), on students' language development in an ESP context. Fritschner (2000) suggests that learner participation depends on how they perceive themselves in the classroom, whether they view themselves as contributors or non-contributors. Based on that idea, a case study on students who perceived tasks negatively (a small number for this study) and themselves as non-contributors can be conducted to find out if there exists a relationship between negative perception of information gap tasks and unwillingness to interact or participate. Research on what types of tasks motivate those students and why certain tasks such as two-way information gap tasks do not can also be conducted. Also, in relation to Tian & Jiang's (2021) findings, the relationship between task types and L1/L2 use, or codeswitching for that matter, can be researched to suggest ways to ensure L2 use or production in language classrooms. Findings can be discussed to give ideas as to how task-based lessons can be designed best to fit the students' needs.

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