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Motivation, Tasks, Attitudes: The Influence of Motivational Pre-Task Strategies on Tasks Performance and Tasks Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as an important variable that may affect students' rate and success when it comes to second/foreign language learning. However, a relatively small number of empirical studies exist on how listening tasks, where learners do something with the information they have extracted from the text, can be influenced by manipulating as well as generating the initial tasks motivation in educational contexts. To this end, this study compared the performance of 72 participants on post-treatment listening tasks and tasks engagement questionnaire over five treatment sessions: one group with motivational pre-task strategies instruction and the other with no pre-task strategies instruction whatsoever. The results from the independent samples t-test showed that motivational strategies instruction proved to be beneficial for improving the experimental group students' tasks performance and facilitated their tasks engagement as well. The information collected supplied a more informed image and additional evidence of the probable link between the initial task motivation and task success.

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A widely agreed-upon fact among English as a foreign language (EFL) researchers is that motivation plays a key role in the process of second/foreign language learning. Generally speaking, a review of studies in the language learning literature demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between learners' motivation to learn a second (L2) or foreign (F) language and the degree of their success within this challenging acquisitional path. Some broad theories of motivation made use of in past research are expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995), attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), the need for achievement (Elliot & Church, 1997), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In addition, researchers also considered the pattern of the motivation in a more limited context, namely "more situated and classroom related constructs of L2 motivation"

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(Dembovskaia, 2009, p. 17). In fact, Dörnyei and Otto (1998) and Dörnyei (2002) consider these generalized ideas as insufficient for motivational classroom studies, claiming that they are mostly concerned with a general form of motivation relevant for any second language learning. In the pursuit of the solution to this critical view, the focus of motivation shifted towards the micro rather than the macro level of motivation. As Dörnyei (2002) states:

While the former macro perspective is more relevant from a social psychological perspective as it allows researchers to characterize and compare the motivational pattern of whole learning communities and then to draw inferences about communication and affiliation, the latter micro perspective is more in line with an educational approach whereby the significance of motivation is seen in its explanatory power of why learners behave as they do in specific learning situations. (p.138)

He adds that the rising view of motivation from this angle is represented by the situated approach and the study of task motivation can be considered as the “culmination of this approach: motivation can hardly be examined in a more situated manner than within a task-based framework” (Dörnyei, 2002, p.138). Based on what is inferred from Dörnyei’s views, tasks are an inevitable part of the micro or classroom-based motivation approach. Yanguas (2007) also states that “in this context, it could be said that tasks are the minimal units around which motivation evolves” (p. 343). Given the importance of language instruction pedagogy towards communicative and task based language teaching methods (Mozgalina, 2015) along with the dynamic dimension of motivation for the classroom settings (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998), additional studies are required to highlight the important role of manipulating and generating learners’ motivation within a task framework and examine its subsequent effect on students’ motivational disposition towards the tasks and their effortful engagement in language learning. Because motivation can affect students’ behaviour concerning its direction, degree of persistence and magnitude needed to accomplish tasks, it should be of central interest for teachers to examine different ways of preparing students motivationally in ESL/EFL learning contexts. Generally speaking, motivation as a global concern and task motivation in particular, should be of interest to most researchers and instructors in different educational contexts, and thus could be considered as a means to enhance students’ performance. It might be further seen as a determinant variable to satisfy the desires of educators wishing to better equip students with a large reservoir of motivation which makes them able to move towards the desired goals effectively. Moreover, this interest in task motivation can lead to a better understanding of individual differences and prediction of their success in educational psychology. Thus, it seems that ignoring the individuals’ task motivation prior to the task performance might have the potential to negatively affect the quantity and quality of the performance on pedagogical tasks. Previous studies put forward within this research paradigm have been limited in reporting teacher’ perceptions about some of the motivational strategies (Guilloteaux, 2013), investigating the positive or negative relationship between the use of motivational strategies and learners’ motivation (Guilloteaux& Dörnyei, 2008), examining learners’ level of task motivation (Ma, 2009; Li, 2007), and exploring the impact of task characteristics or task choice on task motivation (Poupore, 2014; Mozgalina, 2015). Moreover, relatively little studies exist which focus on the impact of operationalizing task motivational strategies involvement on the individuals’ performance. Furthermore, although some of the researchers (Mozgalina, 2015; Wang, Huang, & Hsu, 2015) have provided students with an opportunity to choose tasks for themselves; it does not seem to be truly sufficient for generating initial task motivation as it can be influenced by a number of other variables such as learners’ interest, competence, choice, effort, etc.

Generally speaking, listening is one of the key and problematic skills within the language educational system. It is quite clear that poor listening comprehension can result in the poor quality of the learning process and thus researchers should offer some potential directions for teachers and solutions for addressing listening comprehension problems in their specific domains of the study. In fact, listening comprehension is a type of challenging and sustained skill which requires the investment of time and

effort over a long period of time. Within this challenging path, even the motivated individuals may undergo periods of time when the initial motivation for its practice is relatively low. No matter how carefully an SL/FL teacher designs tasks and materials, the tasks may lose all of their efficiency and potential when the individuals have low or no level of motivation (Dembovsckaya, 2009). Therefore, it is quite possible to stimulate and manipulate task motivation during the pre-task phase and thus “the teacher may compensate for the fact that learners did not have a say in choosing an activity” (Dembovsckaya, 2009, p. 9).

Research Questions

Considering the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the impact of motivational pre-task strategies on EFL learners’ post-treatment listening tasks performance?
2. What is the impact of motivational pre-task strategies on EFL learners’ post-treatment listening tasks engagement?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

In line with the quasi-experimental design of this study, an initial sample of 96 intermediate EFL female learners, in three English classes were selected from a public language institute in Tehran. This institute was selected from among many English institutes in Tehran since (a) the EFL teachers in this institute were qualified, (b) they were also experienced in EFL teaching methods, (c) the researcher had the experience of teaching in it, and (d) sufficient participants were available. Based on their performance on the TOEFL test of language proficiency, a pool of 72, aged between 16 and 19, out of the initial 96 participants were eligible to serve as the final participants of the study. Thereafter, the participants were randomly assigned to the one experimental group and one control group, with 37 students in the motivation group (MG) and the remaining 35 in the control group (CG).

2.2. Proficiency Test

A validated paper-based TOEFL test was employed to guarantee the participants homogeneity in terms of their English proficiency level prior to the main phase of the study. The TOEFL test included three sections of a PBT TOEFL test: listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension and vocabulary adopted from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test by Phillips (2001).

2.3. Listening Task

The listening tasks had three different forms including short monologues (given by an English speaker), short conversations (given by two or more English speakers), or short daily dialogues. The listening tasks were carefully designed to gauge the participants’ ability to listen for main ideas, details and inferences. The tasks were used in two formats, including multiple-choice questions and fill in the blanks. Each type of task contained 10 to 12 questions. The listening tasks addressed three different aspects of listening comprehension which were main idea, details and inference. In order to evaluate the participants’ performance on main idea aspects of listening tasks, the researcher followed Brown’s (2006) guidelines. To measure the main idea, the researcher set some kinds of tasks which needed the listener to understand

the most important idea(s) of what was being said. To measure the participants' understanding of details, students were required to answer detail questions with respect to the speakers involved in the listening and topic of the conversation (Brown, 2006; Shang, 2005). And, finally, to measure their capability to make inference, the researcher asked them to draw conclusions based on the information provided by the speakers (Brown, 2006; Shang, 2005). To score the tasks, one point was assigned for the participants' each correct answer and the allocated time for each listening task was about 8 minutes. The participants heard each passage only once and then answered several questions about the same listening passage. They were allowed to take notes while listening and needed to answer each listening task question based on what was stated or implied by the speakers.

2.4. Task Engagement Questionnaire

It is believed that students' increased degree of task engagement can significantly influence their performance (Lee, 2012). The task engagement questionnaire was used to measure the participants' listening tasks engagement in the current study. The employment of this questionnaire addressed the extent to which the motivational pre-task strategies might positively or negatively affect the participants' degree of task engagement, which could, in turn, facilitate or hinder their tasks performance. Participants responded to each item in the task engagement questionnaire on a Likert scale based on a five-point scale. Before the employment of the questionnaire, an introduction was provided to ensure the participants understand its true purpose and to decrease confusion. It should be mentioned that the perception questionnaire was administered immediately after the task completion in order to gather more reliable data.

This questionnaire consisted of 17 closed-ended adapted from Egbert (2003). Rating scales were numerically coded as (1) *Not at all* to (10) *Completely/Always*. It reflected the four dimensions of interest, control, focus, and challenge. Item 11 and 12 were reverse scored. The reliability of task engagement questionnaire was computed using Cronbach Alpha which yielding an index of 0.90 for the task engagement questionnaire. Therefore, it was acceptable for being used in the present study. It is worth mentioning that the task engagement questionnaire has been used in different studies (Egbert, 2003; Alperer, 2005) as a valid instrument. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire was also assessed by three experienced EFL researchers who appreciated that the items accurately and adequately reflect the domain of the study.

2.5. Treatment and Procedure

This study was quasi-experimental in nature and it consisted of one pre-treatment task, five post-treatment tasks and the use of five post-tasks engagement questionnaires. The pre-treatment task was given to the participants one week prior to the instructional treatment; however, the data for the treatment phase of the study was collected over five weeks. In general, on each treatment session, all of the participants in the motivation group were provided with a supportive set of the some pre-task strategies while there was no opportunity for the control group to receive any kind of intervention except a general task instruction. Thereafter, the experimental and control group students were asked to perform a post-treatment listening task. At the end of each task, the students were also asked to fill out a task engagement questionnaire. It should be mentioned that the same procedure was carried out identically in all of the treatment sessions and the researcher delivered the instruction himself in order to guarantee the quality of the instruction and avoid the novelty impact of bringing a new person to the class.

The motivational variables such as task interest, competence, attitude, choice, pressure/tension, value and effort have been targeted in this study. Concrete ideas included in the operational design of MPT strategies were inspired mostly by Dörnyei (2005; 2001) and were in part adapted from (Lumsden, 1994), Dembovskaaya (2009), Brewster and Fager (2000) and Oliva (1972). Thus, attempts were done to arouse learners' motivation and awareness through their involvement and empowerment with the following points prior to tasks performance. The motivational pre-task strategies were operationalized as a speech addressing them and were pursued through teacher talk, examples, and questioning-answering. In other words, the researcher tried to increase the students' perception of a given task as the product of the following motivational pre-task involvement.

Perceived enjoyment & pleasure: the teacher enhanced the students' enjoyment of a given task provided by moderately challenging but achievable tasks assignment.

Perceived competence& expectancy of success: learners became aware of their own abilities, conceived of themselves as capable learners and realized that tasks are within their own ability.

Perceived effort: learners attributed their previous failures to lack of effort rather than ability and a need for more increased effort in the given task was emphasized.

Perceived value: learners' became aware of the purpose of the activity and the goals offers as a result of successful task completion.

Perceived choice: learners became actively involved in the decisions concerning the choice of a given task and felt a sense responsibility for them.

Perceived support: learners felt the kind of teacher support provided by interactions with the teacher when they face demotivators.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Listening Task Performance

The first research question aimed at investigating the effects of motivational pre-task (MPT) instruction on the participants' post-treatment listening tasks performance. To this end, an independent samples t-test was carried out on the pre-treatment listening task scores of the experimental and control groups to ensure that there were no pre-existing differences between the groups. The descriptive statistics and the corresponding inferential statistical analyses for the pre-treatment task are reported below.

Table 1
Pre-treatment task mean performance score

	Groups			
	MG		CG	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D.
Pre-treatment task	4.09	1.53	4.11	1.42

In table 1, the means scores for the MG and control group are 4.09, and 4.11, respectively. This-testifies that the two groups were quite similar to each other and their means scores did not vary at the outset of the study. However, the significance of these differences could only be determined by using inferential statistics. Notably, the independent samples t-test was run to compare the MG and CG participants on

their pre-treatment task performance of listening comprehension. The result did not indicate a significant difference between the two groups ($t(72) = -.121, p=.805$). This yielded that the MG and CG participants were equivalent in terms of their ability to do the listening task prior to the instructional treatment (see Table 2).

Table 2

Independent-Samples t- test of (MG) and (CG) participants' scores of pre-treatment task

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pre-treatment task	Equal variances assumed	.113	.738	-.121	70	.805
	Equal variances not assumed			-.121	70.000	.805

This section presents the results of investigating the extent to which MPT improves students' performance on the five post-treatment tasks. The means and standard deviations for each group are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Post-treatment tasks mean performance score

	Groups			
	MG		CG	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Post-treatment task1	5.43	1.66	4.01	1.36
Post-treatment task2	5.48	1.27	4.22	1.41
Post-treatment task3	6.63	1.67	3.57	1.33
Post-treatment task4	6.18	1.87	3.47	1.30

Post-treatment task5	6.72	1.82	3.82	1.41
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Table 3 overview of descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group's mean scores have increased from the pre-treatment task discussed above to the post-treatment tasks. As Table 3 shows, the MG, and CG mean scores are (M= 5.43, 4.01) for task 1, (M= 5.48, 4.22) for task 2, (M= 6.63, 3.57) for task 3, (M= 6.18, 3.47) for task 4 and (M= 6.72, 3.82) for task 5, respectively. This yielded that the MG participants had a noticeable improvement in their scores; however, the CG participants did not turn out to have significant increase in their mean scores.

Table 4
Independent Samples t-test of (MG)and (CG) participants' scores of listening post-
ment tasks

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Task1	Equal variances assumed	.042	.625	2.211	70	.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.210	69.321	.005
Task2	Equal variances assumed	1.286	.122	2.876	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			2.863	68.714	.000
Task3	Equal variances assumed	2.321	.223	4.321	70	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			4.309	68.010	.001
Task4	Equal variances assumed	2.254	.112	5.003	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			5.053	65.327	.000
Task5	Equal variances assumed	1.428	.236	6.121	70	.000

Equal			
variances not	6.236	69.423	.000
assumed			

Furthermore, five independent-samples t-test were conducted on the two groups' scores in the post-treatment listening tasks. The result showed that there was a significant difference in the two group's performances, ($t(70) = 2.211, p=.005^*$) for task 1, ($t(70) = 2.876, p=.000^*$) for task 2, ($t(70) = 4.321, p=.001^*$) for task 3, ($t(70) = 5.003, p=.000^*$) for task 4 and ($t(70) = 6.121, p=.000^*$) for task 5, respectively (see Table 4).

From this finding, one can conclude that the provision of the MPT strategies on the listening tasks was effective. Importantly, it can be assumed that the MPT strategies might help the motivation group participants recognize the listening tasks as similarly interesting, enjoyable and valuable; perceive themselves as competent in the tasks performance; experience some degrees of choice in tasks performance; put forth effort in them, and finally do not undergo any significant types of psychological or physical pressure and tension. Marzano (1991) states that the learners' degree of motivation and success for a task is based on their perceived attitudes and beliefs of factors such as task control, task value, and task competence. In other words, learners' feeling towards the tasks is seen as a significant factor which may be connected to the quality and quantity of task performance. In the same vein, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) also write that individuals' task engagement and persistence is thought to be a function of how they feel towards the tasks which, in turn, may lead to better performance. Thus, it can be concluded that learners' lower or higher levels of task motivation can largely contribute to success or failures of learners. Accordingly, Nakata (2006) mentions that task motivation plays a key role in the classroom context and it depends on a set of motivational strategies initiated by teacher to organize the tasks and motivate the goal attainment in individuals.

All in all, learners' satisfaction influenced by the MPT strategies can be responsible for the results of this study. In the current study, satisfaction refers to the students' listening task-specific motivation in a situated context. Learners' satisfaction with the tasks, teacher, classroom and themselves could be related to the advantageous of motivational intervention group. Regarding learners' satisfaction with tasks, significant variables such as task interest, enjoyment, challenge, value, and effectiveness can be discussed. The researcher drew the learners' attention to the inherent interest and enjoyment of the selected tasks. The appropriate degree of task challenge was another important factor which, according to Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of second language motivation, plays a significant internal factor in intrinsic task interest. It is quite clear that many intermediate individuals like to do moderately challenging tasks in order not to make fool of themselves as a result of too easy or difficult tasks. Furthermore, task value as another important factor was also covered in this research, which could also have contributed to the result of this study. The tasks were designed in order to improve learners' comprehension/ understanding of oral speech and the learners knew it well. Probably, their appreciation of listening tasks goals in the classroom influenced their judgment of task values criteria such as usefulness and importance which, in turn, might have increased their level of task motivation. In fact, teachers should not only lay emphasis on the long range goals of language learning, but also the goals of classroom tasks. Talking about task values could help learners to remember and meet their learning needs. These views converge with Neville, Frenay and Bourgeois' (2007) research finding that task value is linked with deep-processing of strategies and students with high task value perform better than low task value students. Likewise, Wigfield and Cambria (2010) state that students shape their intentions and decisions for various activities through tasks values awareness, and decide to whether continue or get off them. Moreover, Li (2007) adds that teachers' style of instruction, personality and classroom management ability along with learners' attitudes, beliefs, proficiency, goals, interests, preference and confidence can affect task effectiveness. In fact, task

effectiveness was more concerned with learners' psychological and physical comfort which were considered as the underlying source of task motivation in MG. In this study, a critical factor for increasing task effectiveness appears to be the opportunity to receive MPT strategies which include those variables. This opportunity is in accordance with Dörnyei's (2001) idea, stating that for the successful implementation of advocated tasks in a classroom context, more importance should be attached to the physical and psychological context of task performance. Thus, it seems that participants' psychological status (motivation, enjoyment, comfort, etc.) can be conducive to the tasks' success. This explanation is in line with Li's (2007) argument that "...learners' psychological (such as having enjoyment or relaxation) and physical comfort are fairly important as they could help create a favorable classroom atmosphere to facilitate language acquisition and cognitive development" (p.194). In addition to the learners' satisfaction with tasks, teacher, and classroom, the final point which might have led to the result of this study, is the learners' level of motivation with themselves. In fact, MPT strategies might help learners feel competent, see themselves as able task doers, attribute the experience of failure to lack of effort, and expect more success than failure prior to the tasks performance. Variables such as competence, expectancy of success and capability are closely related to each other and they are based on the self-determination theory, self-efficacy theory, expectancy of value theory and attribution theory. In order to manipulate learners' satisfaction variables with themselves, positive verbal feedback about their capabilities, success and reasons for their probable past failures were given to them. In fact, the learners' beliefs about their capabilities to do the given tasks were enhanced through the motivational strategies and their previous failures were attributed to their lack of effort rather than lack of capability. If students fail to believe that they possess enough ability, they won't achieve success and motivation even if they redouble their effort (Schunk, 2012). However, the author adds that if students attach their previous failures to the lack of enough effort and judge their ability as getting better through more effort, they naturally tend to feel efficient and increase their efforts. Thus, it is thought that inspiring a feeling of competence and efficacy with the tasks, produced conditions in which learners were highly motivated to do the tasks successfully.

3.2. Listening Tasks Engagement Survey

In response to the second research question concerning the effect of MPT strategies on tasks engagement, the groups' means were compared. As Table 5 shows, the motivation and control groups task engagement mean scores were (M= 3.57, 1.85) for task 1, (M= 3.93, 1.93) for task 2, (M= 3.97, 1.73) for task 3, (M= 4.26, 2.09) for task 4 and (M= 4.31, 2.06) for task 5, respectively. In other words, the motivation groups mean scores were higher than those of the control group. Thus, it seems that the motivation group participants perceived the deepest engagement with the tasks and the control group found the tasks the least engaging.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for the task engagement questionnaire scores (Task 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Task1	Motivation	37	4.4411	.46212	.07062	2.45	4.53
	Control	35	1.6253	.38754	.05326	1.28	2.36

Task2	Motivation	37	4.7349	.49854	.06485	2.56	5.12
	Control	35	1.7369	.36585	.05632	1.09	2.56
Task3	Motivation	37	4.9740	.72545	.08795	3.87	5.89
	Control	35	1.6289	.31822	.04565	1.54	2.12
Task4	Motivation	37	5.3965	.65251	.07584	3.69	4.69
	Control	35	1.7221	.40102	.06321	1.01	2.11
Task5	Motivation	37	5.3023	.41256	.06856	3.89	5.69
	Control	35	1.0897	.37215	.05896	1.62	2.86

Furthermore, in order to see whether the differences among the means were statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was run. The result indicated a significant difference between the two groups ($t(70) = 15.65, p = .000^*$) for task 1, ($t(70) = 18.23, p = .000^*$) for task 2, ($t(70) = 19.69, p = .000^*$) for task 3, ($t(70) = 28.92, p = .000^*$) for task 4, and ($t(70) = 27.65, p = .000^*$) for task 5 (see Table 6). Data from tasks engagement questionnaires revealed that the MG outperformed the control group.

Table 6
Independent-Samples t- test of (MG)and (CG) participants' scores of listening task Engagement

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Task1	Equal variances assumed	2.30	.251	15.65	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			15.61	69.82	.000
Task2	Equal variances assumed	3.01	.536	18.23	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			18.31	69.64	.000
Task3	Equal variances assumed	10.32	.023	19.69	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			19.63	52.13	.000
Task4	Equal variances assumed	.496	.323	28.92	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			28.88	69.85	.000
Task5	Equal variances assumed	2.23	.211	27.65	70	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			27.62	69.83	.000

Presenting the results in terms of the impact of MPT on tasks engagement seems to give support to the findings of previous studies (Egbert, 2003; Egbert, Akasha, Lee, & Huff, 2011; Lee, 2012; Martin, 2003; Schmakel, 2008; Smyth & McInerney, 2007; Steele & Fullagar, 2009) in which some tasks characteristics (such as appropriate level of tasks difficulty, interest, familiarity as well as participants' control over tasks conditions, teacher's positive relationship with students, choice opportunity, clarity of instruction, and highlighting the importance and value of learning) positively influenced participants' levels of motivation and promoted their tasks engagement. Similarly, the result of this study is in agreement with MA (2009) research finding, reporting a cloze degree of relationship among learners' degree of tasks motivation, task

engagement, task performance quality and the persistence in doing the tasks. Generally speaking, although Blumenfeld, Kempner and Krajcik (2006) contend that motivation alone is essential but not adequate for academic achievement, Hufton, Elliott and Illushin (2002) argue that higher degree of engagement indicates a higher level of motivation. In addition, Saeed and Zyngier (2012, p. 252) believe that "motivation is seen as a pre-requisite of and a necessary element for student engagement in learning" and further adds that motivation and engagement are two important elements that direct learners' behavior and teachers should realize the importance of this concept and then employ it in their teaching. The result of this study indicate that generating initial task motivation positively affected the tasks characteristics/motivation in the eyes of the experimental group participants, produced higher levels of tasks engagement during the tasks performance and, finally, facilitated rather than hinder their listening task engagement. Thus, enhancing learners' tasks/activities motivation can positively drive their tasks performance and tasks engagement, respectively. Importantly, Mozgalina (2015) states that "small decision in task design" can play an important role in learners' motivation and call for additional studies in terms of task motivation and task engagement. An important point worth mentioning is that in this study the main focus was on the learners' listening tasks motivation rather than their general motivation for listening comprehension. For example, Russell, Mackey and Jane (2003) based on a large Australian study with primary and secondary learners found that although the students' general motivation was high to learn, they indicated low levels of task engagement in their classroom tasks as they found them boring. This example highlights the important role of operationalizing MPT strategies in order to engage the learners in tasks effectively. In other words, in this study attempts were made to provide students with the necessary MPT strategies prior to tasks completion and in this way the nature of the tasks themselves might sustain learners' tasks engagement. This idea is in line with Marciano (2009), stating that tasks engagement can be preserved provided that the task itself orients and maintains individual' task engagement. Thus, it seems that task motivation awareness is a crucial factor for listening task engagement as it can appropriately shape learners' psychological investment to do the tasks in general, and they can in turn influence learners' degree of tasks enjoyment and concentration which are necessary for tasks involvement/engagement in particular. As Schlechty (2002) states "the engaged student not only does the task assigned but also does the task with enthusiasm and diligence" (p.64).

4. Conclusion

The results of the current study indicated that Iranian EFL learners improved their listening tasks performance and tasks engagement as a result of MPT strategies. Therefore, this understanding may help teachers and educators to make better decision about classroom tasks. In fact, it seems essential for teachers to design tasks after first collecting information about classroom students, their interest, attitudes, choice, abilities, etc. Just being aware of the motivation is not sufficient. Educators have to deal with the students who may show low task motivation and they need to employ a variety of motivational strategies (i.e. performance feedback, frequent reinforcement techniques, group work, etc.) to overcome this problem and appropriately engage them.

This study may provide EFL/ESL teachers with a specific language task procedure which can be used in the classroom in order to enhance students' achievement. This research result can be beneficial to both EFL/ESL teachers in order to have learners who are motivated and effective in their tasks performance. The findings of this study may raise awareness among teachers and can introduce the importance of preparing learners motivationally prior to task performance. The result of this study can also add contributions to the pedagogical implication for the use of motivational strategies to promote task engagement. It is worth mentioning that the identification of learners' attitudes towards the instruction can also have the ultimate goal of expressing touchable experience and offering suggestions to

design programs that can improve learners' motivation towards English skills education, especially listening. All in all, providing these types of the tasks support in advance rather than going straight to a listening task performance may soften the way towards listening task performance and engagement, especially at *lower levels of proficiency*. Therefore, based on our findings, it is useful for teachers to include this type of support in pre-task phase of task implementation as its absence or presence has the potential to hamper or empower effective task participation, respectively. Working in this way, teachers can provide favorable task satisfaction space for learners to practice the listening tasks needed for the fulfillment of target listening skill development. In other words, a better understanding of ways for enhancing students' motivation towards language achievement followed by training in using language learning strategies and an awareness of the reciprocal relationship between them, can provide a better image of how to more successfully move and act when travelling the language acquisition/learning path. In other words, the utilization of these strategies can help learners approach the tasks more purposefully, engage in them enthusiastically and respond to them confidently.

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