

INTEREST-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND OUTPUT IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

The study reports the results of an action research conducted in an English as a Foreign Language classroom to examine the effects of Interest-Based Language Teaching (IBLT) on intrinsic motivation and language production. IBLT can be considered a part of treasured communicative language practice, for it includes language use for a specific purpose, interaction between text and learner as well as among learners, negotiation of meaning and reporting for an audience. The study argues for the position that IBLT has the potential to generate intrinsic motivation, and thus increase participation in classroom activities considerably, activate learners' cognitive involvement, and as a consequence produce quality learner output. The study was conducted on pre-intermediate learners of English in a classroom at a high school in Turkey. The collected data through pre- and post-tests were examined to see whether IBTL had any positive impact on learners' writing. The results reveal that IBTL considerably improved the amount and quality of writing. Based on the results, IBTL is recommended to language practitioners around the world who experience low levels of motivation and participation, and poor output in the target language.

Key Words: Interest-based language teaching, motivation

Türkiye’de Dil Öğretiminde Motivasyon ve Verimliliği Arttırmaya Yönelik İlgi Tabanlı Dil Öğretimi

ÖZET

Bu çalışma İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği bir sınıfta yapılan ve ilgi tabanlı dil öğretiminin (IBLT) içsel güdüleme ve dil çıktıları üzerine etkilerini inceleyen bir aksiyon çalışmasının sonuçlarını ortaya koyar. IBLT, günümüzde değer verilen iletişimsel dil öğretiminin bir parçası olarak kabul edilebilir çünkü belli bir amaç için dil öğrenme, metin ve öğrenci, aynı zamanda öğrenciler arasında etkileşim ve anlam pazarlığı ve bir muhatap için bildirim unsurlarını içinde barındırır. Çalışma, IBLT’ nin içsel güdülemeyi ortaya çıkarma noktasında potansiyele sahip olduğunu, bu yolla sınıf içi faaliyetleri kayda değer miktarda artıracığını, öğrencinin bilişsel katılımını harekete geçireceğini ve nihayet kaliteli bir dil çıktısı üreteceğini iddia eder. Çalışma Türkiye’de bir lisede okuyan ve dil seviyesi alt-orta olan İngilizce öğrencileri üzerinde yapılmıştır. Ön ve son testlerle toplanan veri, IBLT’ nin öğrencilerin yazma çıktıları üzerinde herhangi bir olumlu etki yapıp yapmadığını anlamak üzere analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar göstermiştir ki yazma çıktılarının miktarını ve kalitesini kayda değer bir biçimde artırmıştır. Sonuçlar ışığında, IBTL sınıflarında düşük güdülemeden, az derse katılımdan ve hedef dilde az çıktıdan şikâyet eden dünyanın her yerindeki dil öğretmenlerine önerilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlgi tabanlı dil öğretimi, motivasyon

Introduction

There are times when teachers drag their feet to the classroom for they can predict that their students will not participate enthusiastically in the lesson and so the time allocated for foreign language learning will not only be wasted

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altogether but also become a period for the teacher to be irritated. This study seeks to find a viable, acceptable and educational solution to problems primarily produced by the nature of foreign language learning in relation to lack of motivation. Therefore, the present study was not solely conceptualized to offer prescription to improve the learning of a language, English, in a foreign language setting, but provide an alternative solution to teachers so that they can have some quality time with their students. This motivational solution, however, will serve the purpose of the foreign language class only partially. This is to be obtained by combining the interest areas (i.e. topic, themes) of students and English. Though humble in its conceptualization, the solution found to rectify an educational problem may offer appealing insights to how participation may bring about increased production and output in the language being studied, which is an important sign of learning taking place.

Foreign language teachers at primary and secondary schools in Turkey frequently complain of the lack of motivation and participation on the part of learners no matter what they do. They are given a syllabus, be it structural or functional, to follow at whatever cost imaginable and are not given the flexibility to change things around a little. As such, when teaching does not produce a friendly, energetic atmosphere conducive to learning, teachers tend to blame themselves for not being able to get most things right. As a result, they become unhappy simply because they feel they are not teaching as efficiently as they are supposed to. One of the main causes of disinterest in classroom is claimed to be the routine pedagogical tasks that have often little personal meaning for students. When learning is situated within authentic problem-solving tasks that students would find meaningful and relevant to their lives and aspirations, they are more likely to be motivated (Lave and Wenger 1991). If learners find the task interesting as well as challenging, they may deem such an engagement an opportunity to express themselves and self-actualize. In other words, students can do in class what they would and could outside using the second language.

The dynamism can be created by both the teacher and the learner more than any other combination of factors, and it affects both in return. Both are responsible for what happens in the classroom to varying degrees. Metcalfe and Game (2006, p.91) rightly notes in order to point out the necessity of the joint effort: 'The vitality of the classroom comes from an energy that is created between teachers and students; it is an energy in which both teachers and students share...' It appears, however, that it is the teacher that has the upper hand in creating positive or negative atmosphere, for he or she is the authority. Then, it is up to the teacher to be more energetic and thus inspire enthusiasm

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within learners. The teacher, in some manner or form, should make clear that learning is a collaborative effort in which students too should bear responsibility in the form of bringing text materials, being aware of the fact that students are no longer entities to be controlled by teachers. The consequences of low teacher morale could be detrimental. Mackenzie (2007, p.92) cites a few: decreased productivity, detachment from teacher role, developing cynical approach to students, stress, decreased satisfaction, to which burnout can be added. Among the causes of low teacher morale is the student behaviour problems.

The study reports positive results of the use of Interest-Based Language Teaching (IBLT) in the quest to overcome problems of staggering levels of motivation in a pre-intermediate class at a high school. The use of interest-based teaching has a two fold function as far as this study is concerned: increasing motivation and teaching English. Therefore, firstly literature on motivation is sketched, followed by a discussion of how IBLT is situated within the framework of intrinsic motivation. Secondly, the place of IBLT is examined within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The third major section delineates the method used in the study in reference to learners, procedures and duration. The paper concludes that IBLT worked well in overcoming the problems of motivation by working on increasing the intrinsic component of motivation, and that IBI increased the written production of learners, which is a sign of learning.

Intrinsic Motivation and Teaching Methods

Doubtless, motivation as in other spheres is one of the key factors that determine success in language learning. Literature on motivation tends to equate motivation with the common rubric of desire to learn. The most influential motivation analysis, as far as language learning is concerned, was made by Gardner and his associates at various times (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). Gardner (1985) examines motivation from the perspective of social psychology and situates motivation within the context of social and cultural milieu. The learner's desire to integrate into, to become members of target language community is a significant determiner of success: integrative motivation. At the other end of the continuum is instrumental motivation in which the learner wishes to get some practical benefits out of language learning like getting promoted or being successful in business. Gardner introduced another distinction in motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is that which motivates a learner through the prospect of some external reward in the form of getting a degree, a job and so forth. Intrinsic motivation on the other hand is one in which the learner engages in an activity for its own sake without the promise of an external reward. Psychologists Deci

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and Ryan (1985, p. 11) argues that “the rewards are inherent in the activity”. The learner joins activities to enjoy himself/herself, to bring out his/her best, to spend some quality time, and to discover his/her abilities. Further, Deci and Ryan hold that “intrinsic motivation is in evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energise their learning. When the educational environment provides optimal challenges, rich sources of stimulation, and a context of autonomy, this motivational wellspring in learning is likely to flourish (p.245). It is intrinsic motivation that we are interested in this study as the objective is to increase procedural or situational motivation.

In second/foreign language teaching area, the necessity and usefulness of employing activities that tap intrinsic motivation have been noted (Brown, 2000; Spolsky, 2000; Ellis, 1997). Developing a relationship with learner, building learners’ self confidence and autonomy via using well-organized warm-up stages, personalizing the learning and increasing learners’ goal orientation are all important factors to increase the students’ intrinsic motivation. To this end, Ellis (1997) states that encouraging students to become more active participants in a lesson can sometimes assist them to see a purpose for improving their communication skills in the target language. Thus, learner motivation will reach its peak in a safe classroom climate in which learners can express their opinions on issues that are important for them (see section Interest Based Language Teaching below).

There are many factors that may de-motivate students in the learning process. Ersöz (2004, p.67-8) cites two factors (among others) that appear to have direct implications for this study: 1) a national English teaching curriculum which has inappropriate or unrealistic goals, and 2) teaching materials which are inadequate and insufficient. These two factors indeed depict the Turkish context too well. Then, given the restrictions imposed by the curriculum, textbooks, and limited teaching materials, how can we overcome the problem of motivation?

In efforts to increase intrinsic motivation, one can think of two basic language teaching methods within the paradigm of popular Communicative Language Teaching: task based instruction and content based instruction. Practitioners of task based instruction hold that intrinsic motivation is achieved in the learner when s/he is dealing with the steps of the task s/he is trying to solve. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001, p.222), “Task based instruction refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching”. A task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language, such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, making a telephone call, writing a letter and so on. Clearly, the

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motivation is expected to emerge while the learner is engaged in the successful completion of a communicative task.

Content based instruction, also known topic based instruction, is regarded by many an alternative to task based instruction, not that they are rivals but that they are complementary. Brinton & Snow (1997, p.5) report that “It has been used in a variety of language learning contexts for twenty years, though its popularity and wider applicability have increased dramatically in the past ten years”. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.204) content based instruction “refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus”. The distinctive feature of content based instruction lies in its emphasis on the knowledge to be acquired from a content area as opposed to direct reference to language points in the text studied in the classroom. Some immigrant receiving countries found it useful to include in their language text-books information needed for the acculturation of the new arrivals. Thus, language teaching in such an approach is of secondary significance, as pointed by (Krahnke, 1987, p.65): “It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught”.

Although content is used with a variety of different meanings in language teaching like the ones mentioned above, it most frequently refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it. Content based second language instruction is also based on the assumption that “language can be effectively taught through the medium of subject-matter content” (Vile, 1996, p.114). Selecting content to work with can often be a difficult task for instructors. The integration of language and content involves the incorporation of content material into language classes where meaningful learning takes place. Concerns such as student interest and availability of appropriate material need to be taken into consideration. So certain areas of content are thought to be more effective as a basis for content based instruction than others does not applicable for our study as “the integration of language and content teaching does not happen without a great deal of effort” (Brinton & Snow, 1997, p.231). A significant part of learning about a concept in a subject matter involves collecting information, organizing it a certain way, interacting with the concept, communicating and understanding of the concept.

If, as it was argued, classrooms should focus on real communication and the exchange of information, an ideal situation for second language learning

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would be one where the subject matter of language teaching was not grammar or functions or some other language-based unit of organization, but content, that is, subject matter from outside the domain of language. The language that is being taught could be used to present subject matter, and the students would learn the language as a by-product of learning about real world content as some content areas are more useful as a basis for language learning than others. Brinton and Snow (1997) state that in content based language instruction, the course is organized on a theme or topic rather than another organizing feature. The fundamentals of content based teaching can be counted as 1) topics are chosen to be of high interest to students, 2) the units incorporate all skills and areas (listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar), 3) the teacher present topics as a vehicle for language development, and 4) courses may cover a variety of topics or treat one topic more in depth.

Interest Based Language Teaching

Interest Based Language Teaching can be regarded as a component of content based instruction in that what is being learnt in the classroom forms a content area on its own. Generally speaking, although IBLT does include the principles of content based instruction, not necessarily all at every instance of its application, it is freer in many respects. Besides such tasks as selecting, reasoning, classifying, sequencing information, and transforming information from one form of representation to another (Ellis, 2003, p.7), which are shared by both task and content based teaching, IBLT offers a primarily learner centred syllabus and procedures. The principles that underlie IBLT can be listed as follows, in addition to the principles upheld by content based teaching:

- Teaching and learning are embedded in the idea of having fun through the target language.
- Syllabus is determined in collaboration with learners.
- Next week's topic can be identified at a moment's notice.
- Learners take responsibility for their own learning, which paves the way for autonomous learning.
- Learners are active in preparing materials.
- Learner needs and wants are identified to make learning an occasion for fun.
- As content is formed by interest areas of learners, language learning becomes a joyful activity.
- Appropriate cultural contextualization for the language materials is provided.

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- Areas of interest identified allow learners to express their personal convictions.
- Topics relevant and appealing to a learner group motivate interest in learners.
- Teacher contribution to IBLT is seen on decisions relating to simplicity, frequency, and relevance to other language skills and areas being studied as part of the established syllabus.
- Minimal teacher intervention occurs for the ways learners receive and share meaning.
- Teacher is responsible for the smooth handling of the procedures.
- No formal assessment is done so that learners are not under the pressure to perform.
- Spoken and written output can be sources of diagnostic teaching.

Method

Overview

The present study adopted action research, one in which the teacher is the researcher, and more importantly, one that is aimed to improve current state of affairs (Nunan, 1992, p. 17). Action research involves planned changes that are likely to improve an ailing aspect of teaching in a specific context, which in this case is the participation, speaking and writing, which were the dependent variables. The problem was that the specific group of learners were not interested in learning English through existing materials. The prediction was that learners could be motivated to take part in interest based activities and thus produce more English. Evaluation of the hypothesis is to be done by the teacher for participation, speaking and writing. Interest-based teaching takes its basis primarily from communicative approach and is thus designed in line with learner interests in a way to initiate interaction between text and learner.

Participants

This study is conducted at Nallıhan High School, a state school where English classes are held eight class hours per week. Two forms of 42 students, with 25 females and 18 males, with an age range of 16-18 years participated in the study. Students are expected to be capable of using English at intermediate level at the end of the education year. The school, located in a small town near Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, is characterized by low levels of motivation, high levels of anxiety, and limited exposure to English - only during class hours. One over-arching problem self-evident is that students have the strong conviction that they do not see any place for English in the life they envisage

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for themselves. Thus, the most apparent manifestation of this is their clear refusal to participate in class activities contained in the textbook.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in pre- and post tests in the writing task. As part of the ongoing teaching, learners were first asked to write on a topic they felt strongly about. These writings were then compared with those writings obtained through interest based teaching. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test will determine whether IBLT succeeds in increasing the amount and quality in learners' writing tasks. As for the procedure, once the interest areas were agreed upon through negotiation between the teacher and the learners, learners were asked to bring along materials such as texts, newspaper extracts, posters, photos, and so forth. In the weeks that followed, learners came to class with materials on certain themes. The class was conducted on these materials in the form of presentation making. There was not any significant alteration in the teaching procedures and sequences followed: the teacher did the initial introduction through brain storming, followed by introductions of theme materials by learners individually as well as in groups. The final activity was having learners write a paragraph or two, a production activity that was to test whether the amount and variety of information, lexical variety as well sentence length would increase or not.

Nunan (1992, p.98) notes that reliable data in classroom research can be obtained in reference to activity type, participants, content, skills involved, and materials used. This study utilised activities like presentation, speech making, criticising and writing. Learners worked individually in preparing materials to be orally presented in class on a range of topics that are of interest to them. Following each presentation brief comments are encouraged by the teacher. The highest amount of class time was spared for writing whereas the minimum was for speaking. No reading was involved. The sequence basically involved verbal presentation (i.e. speech), speaking (i.e. comments), and writing. The range of topics was relatively broad although in each lesson one topic was covered. Source texts, that is the texts learners brought into class and made use of for their research included websites, newspapers and magazines. The texts were not controlled nor checked by the teacher and so they were authentic in the sense that the authors of these texts were incomparably more proficient users of English.

Most of the time it was the target language, English, that was used in the aforementioned activities. Turkish was resorted to when procedural emergency emerged. As the each week's topic was determined in advance, the topic of presentation was predictable, say pop stars. Discourse in the form of

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supplying comments between the presenter and other learners as well as the teacher occurred at various levels: word, phrase and sentence. The presenter was given the chance of reacting to comments, however briefly. It was anticipated that the discourse would contribute the writing task while the main source was expected to come from the materials the presenter accumulated. Writing activity was done in the classroom following the completion of all presentations. The teacher did not impose any guidelines or restrictions for writing.

Findings

This paper has had two foci: generating intrinsic motivation and increasing output. Therefore, two subheadings will address these issues.

Intrinsic Motivation Emerged

Using IBLT to increase learners' interaction with English yielded encouraging results for the profession. Learners appeared to experience unprecedented joy of participation and learning not only individually but also in group. Below, the reader will find some representative samples from the interactions in the classroom. Almost all learners regardless of gender were fully attentive in the session spared for celebrities. Introduction through brainstorming went on much smoother than before. The first presentation was on actor *Polat Alemdar*, who starred in the popular weekly series *Kurtlar Vadisi* (The Valley of Wolves). The actor always fights off underground warlords successfully, so the girls loved him while the boys admired. As the presentation went on, everybody wanted to make a comment while the presenter talked about his personal life and achievements. After the completion, some learners confessed they did not know certain things about him and that they were well informed. The presenter reiterated, in victory mood, some of the things s/he said after the brief discussion that involved some contributions from other learners. Learners who also chose the same celebrity were asked to present. Discussion followed likewise. Finally, the teacher instructed the learners to write down what they have known about him. There was no grudge whatsoever as was the case in the past when they exclaimed they didn't like the topic, or they have nothing in their heads to write.

The topic in another session was dreams. To begin with, the teacher told the learners that she was to tell them about a dream she had the night before. Judging from the silence and anticipatory waiting, it seemed they had forgotten the topic set a week ago. Clearly, the purpose was to provide some language input in the form of vocabulary, structure and pronunciation. She further pointed out that the phrase is 'having a dream' rather than 'seeing a dream' before they would translate from Turkish on a word by word basis. In her

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dream, the teacher argued fervently with friends and parents, coupled with a series of blurry events. As part of the plan came the question: do you have such dreams that affected you? Hands of the prepared students went up in the air quickly: there were many of them, all raising their fingers high demanding to be given the chance to share their dreams. This time it was the girls that took the lead in volunteering to present first. Likewise, as one learner told her dream, others listened. A few students asked small questions during the speech and got responses. As many as ten students volunteered to share their dreams.

In view of the observations depicted above (and of course more), the first hypothesis of the research that IBLT has potential to arouse intrinsic motivation was accepted. Also among the observed behaviours was that all learners arrived in the classroom with lots of materials in hand, which made them look like they were on a mission. Desks were covered with photos of various celebrities from actors to footballers, texts in English taken from internet as well as newspapers. They were all smiling with the prospect of what they had to offer in class to contribute to learning. This was also an opportunity for them to shoulder the responsibility of independent learning, as opposed to passive recipients of knowledge and information in whose preparation they had no role. Therefore, the type of motivation observed can be described as an intrinsic motivation, one in which learners are motivated by the sheer expectation that they are doing it for pleasure and intellectual stimulation, personal challenge, showing off to friends. These are, as Oxford and Shearin (1994, p.12) correctly observe, some of the fundamental reasons to study foreign languages for some learners.

Written Output Increased

Of the two output types from the classroom interactions, written output was examined for convenience as the spoken output would be extremely difficult to record and transcribe given the amount of time, number of learners who participated, and the difficulty to identify who was who. One word, however, is due here: amount and quality of interaction in the target language, the number of turn-takings, questions, responses, active and reflective listening could never be equalled with the very poor past performances. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that speaking aspect of learning improved considerably. As a matter of fact, it was this aspect of the teaching that most pleased the teacher as she had now 'people' to talk to and to listen to in her classroom.

As for writing, the literature on L2 writing documents four basic considerations that appear relevant to the act of writing: linguistic form of the text, cognitive processes of the writer, content for writing, demands made by the

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reader (Raimes, 1991:408) In writer-dominated writing practices, it is up to the learners to choose a content for writing, as they are expected to choose topics so that they could be more productive, as was the case in this study. As for the form of the text, no restriction was placed on learners: simple expository writing, a type of writing they had been exposed to before. Again, the audience for which their writing was to be directed to was not reminded to them: they could write as they wished. Finally, the issue of cognitive processes: they were not asked to stick to certain organizational procedures, textual features such as cohesion and coherence. It is in the light of this consideration that the samples of writing collected from the learners at the end (i.e. post-test) will be evaluated.

This section basically examines the results and discusses the implications of the findings for similar and same language learning contexts. Cases chosen for analysis and reflection are determined ad hoc. Each case belongs to one student and thus the case will be named after that student. In what could be called pre-test, learners were asked to write about an accident they were involved in. The learner whose name is Ebru produced a very short writing (Appendix 1a). It included a total of eight simple sentences, with cohesive devices such as *after*, *so*, *however*, and *but*. In the post-test writing, she chose dreams as a theme (Appendix 1b). The number of sentences skyrocketed nearly fourfold. Clearly, the amount of writing increased dramatically while the quality got better. The post-test product has a clear sense of beginning, development and conclusion though these were not prioritized in teacher's writing directives. Further, the information contained is much in content richer and livelier in style. It has rich content in that the sequence of events is more complex through the cohesive devices such as *but*. It is livelier in style in that she used quotation marks to introduce what she actually said: "Help me! Help me!"

Most importantly, perhaps, the learner attempted to utilise her advanced linguistic repertoire: verbs such as *abstain*, *scream*, *slap*, *represent*, and *scattering*. In the use of these morphemes, one can easily see the cognitive operations taking place in the head of the learner. In the context in which she used, the phrase *abstained from dog* (sic.) does not seem to be the right phrase. A more appropriate one would be *was frightened or petrified of the dog*. Clearly, she sought help from her bilingual dictionary to find the semantic equivalent of one sense of the verb phrase *abstained from*, which was *stay away*. The second example examine here, *scattering*, presents a rather different picture. Most probably, what she was trying to say in her last sentence was *because it was very incoherent*, rather than *it was very scattering*. Looked from a different angle, one can see traces of *scatteredness* in the scope of the

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meaning of *incoherent*. It is obvious that the learner employed more demanding cognitive skills in expressing herself in the post-test product.

The second piece of evidence to support the position that IBLT brings out more from the competence into the performance can be seen in the post-test belonging to Ayşe. In her pre-test writing (Appendix 2a), there were six sentences, depicting an accident she was involved in with her bicycle. The use of *so* as a clause connector is very appropriate. Other than that, her sentences are simple and most of the information that lies in between the sentences appears missing, to give the impression that she is unable to state the complex thoughts that went through her head. Her use of the past tense reflects that she is still prone making mistakes. In the post-test (Appendix 2b), however, the output was considerably longer. As part of her task to write on something that is interesting for her, she chose to write on a film that had lasting influence on her. The film, *Deep Blue Sea*, is about how people struggled to stop a shark from killing more people. The flow of text reflects the actual events that take place in the movie, which shows that she could reproduce the sequences of events in the same order. Some of the interesting observations are as follows. In the fifth sentence “While the child was swimming in the sea, the shark ate him.” can be regarded as an occasion for the learner to utilise less often used complex clause structure. The sentence in the second paragraph “*The people don’t know the shark life in the sea (sic.)*” (The people didn’t know that the shark lived in that part of the sea.) shows her attempt to produce a noun clause as a predicate. This is an important sign of leap forward given that the learner was of pre-intermediate proficiency, and that she was not expected to produce such a structure. In sum, regardless of the errors committed, this particular learner appropriated various morphemes, phrases and sentence structure, increasing her capacity to use language in an enjoyable activity.

The last case examined belongs to Hatice, who wrote in her pre-test (Appendix 3a) about an experience she had with her friends outdoors. Pre-test writing was marred with extensive errors, a sign that she may not even be pre-intermediate learner. Broken sentences as well as verb phrases devoid of any tense or aspect imply that she was far below the proficiency level of her classmates. Further, by the words she used, one can conclude that she was allowed to use a bilingual dictionary. The words used do not seem to generate a coherent piece of writing. Whatever the case may be, her first language, Turkish, played an important role in her write-up. When her post-test was examined (Appendix 3b), it is seen that the number of words is nearly three times more than that in pre-test, an obvious sign of effort to perform. Her chosen topic was a favourite Turkish film, *Buddies*. The amount of first

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language transfer in post-test is quite noticeable. While the evidence of widespread transfer can be documented, it is not the major focus of the study. Therefore, description of her work is to be limited to basic linguistic features. One basic sign first language influence can be observed in the expression "... my for important" (... important for me). On the positive side, though, much seems to have been rectified in the post-test. For instance, the presence of the copula (*BE= am, is, are*) can be clearly seen, more frequently than that in pre-test. In one occasion, she used present perfect tense successfully. Overall, even in the case of the one of the poorest learners, substantial progress appears to have been gained, not only in the amount of production but also in the more correct utilization of verb phrases.

Discussion

Findings of the study reveal that IBTL transformed learners from the state of passive recipients of knowledge, or worse, mere watchers of teaching procedures into active users of language and reflective writers. Learners were intrigued by the idea of being included in the decision making process as to what to be handled in the class and so willingly joined in. As suggested by Oxford and Shearin (1994, p.24), language teachers can make the classroom a welcoming place where psychological needs are met, variety is provided with clear and important activities, and where learners' specific needs are addressed to give chance for self-direction . The prediction at the outset that IBLT would engage learners personally as well as cognitively was born out. The motivation obtained was due to the principles of IBLT. Among them are the welcoming atmosphere that allowed learners to become part of the learning through their interest areas, that they are important beings whose needs and wants are tapped, that they could have their voices heard, that learning could be fun, free from any formal procedure. Thus, their entrenched negative views about English classes changed for the positive, making both themselves and the teacher happy. Classroom management became easier for the teacher and the teacher could experience a sense of achievement at the end of the day.

A humble evaluation of IBLT as regards the learning outcomes reveals that it provided learners with a period of time to brush up their linguistic skills. A less humble evaluation offers the interpretation that engaging learners in meaningful activities, listening actively, interacting with and in the target language, questioning, and writing in a reflective manner are all pieces of evidence that they ARE learning the language, and that they are learning THROUGH the language. Despite the fact that direct teaching language domains and skills are absent as such, learning does not exclusively mean internalizing new input. Learning also means appropriating new meanings,

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relationships, constructing and de-constructing concepts already internalized. These are some of the features that can be found in analysis of the findings pertaining to learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the effect of interest based language teaching both on motivation and written output. The prediction was that it would lift noticeably the staggering levels of motivation due to factors stemming from foreign language learning milieu. A supplementary syllabus worked out in collaboration with the active involvements of learners was used after the main teaching points were covered. To the great enjoyment of both the teacher and the learners, IBLT turned out to be a great success in creating a harmonious atmosphere among learners, giving them the responsibility for their own learning, sharing their information and interacting with the texts as well as other learners. Secondly, but no less importantly, learners had the opportunity to use their communication skills as well as language knowledge, such as words, structures, and tenses. The IBLT described and applied is in no way intended to replace the main syllabus prepared by syllabus designers. It is meant to be used when motivation and learner participation decreases to levels that are no longer manageable by the teacher. Further, findings suggest that IBLT is an attractive option when learners get de-motivated and thus fall out from the pace of the learning process and when they fail to see any personal relevance to what they instantaneously do in the foreign language classroom.

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