



INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON LEARNER MOTIVATION IN THE UZBEK EFL CONTEXT

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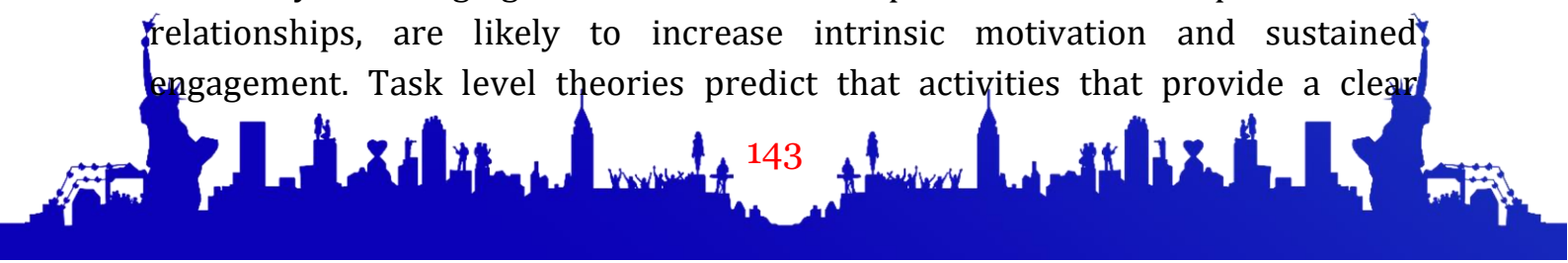
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Annotation: this study explores the impact of innovative pedagogical practices upon learner motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) language learning contexts in the perspective of Uzbekistan. Drawing on recent empirical and practitioner studies of the Uzbek contexts and similar EFL contexts the paper synthesizes evidence related to motivational mechanisms, classroom affordances, and implementation barriers. It contends that learner-centred, interactional approaches increase intrinsic motivation and engagement as they restore learner autonomy, meaning communicative purpose and meet basic psychological needs. At the same time, systemic constraints – teacher preparation, assessment policy, curriculum design, and low digital infrastructure – moderate the impact of innovations.

Keywords: EFL, motivation, CLT, TBLT, flipped classroom, technology, learner autonomy.

English language competence has become one of the strategic priorities for the developed education policy of Uzbekistan and inclusion in the world economic and academic networks. In recent years, the rhetoric of reform and pilot programmes have been used to promote the abandonment of traditional and form-focused teaching in favour of more communicative and learner-centred pedagogy. The promise of these innovations, then, is not just increased proficiency, but increased learner motivation – a key predictor of sustained engagement and achievement in language learning. However, motivation is complex and contextually sensitive: multiple pedagogical innovations interact with the beliefs of the learner, in the classroom cultures, in assessment regimes and material conditions.

Motivation in language learning is framed classically in dichotomies such as the distinction of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation, integrative vs. instrumental orientation; more modern theories of motivation focus also on the need for self-determination (competence, autonomy, relatedness), as well as the role that situational, task-based engagement can play. From a self-determination perspective, pedagogical approaches that maximize learner's autonomy, give maximally challenging tasks and nurture positive levels of peer-teacher relationships, are likely to increase intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement. Task level theories predict that activities that provide a clear



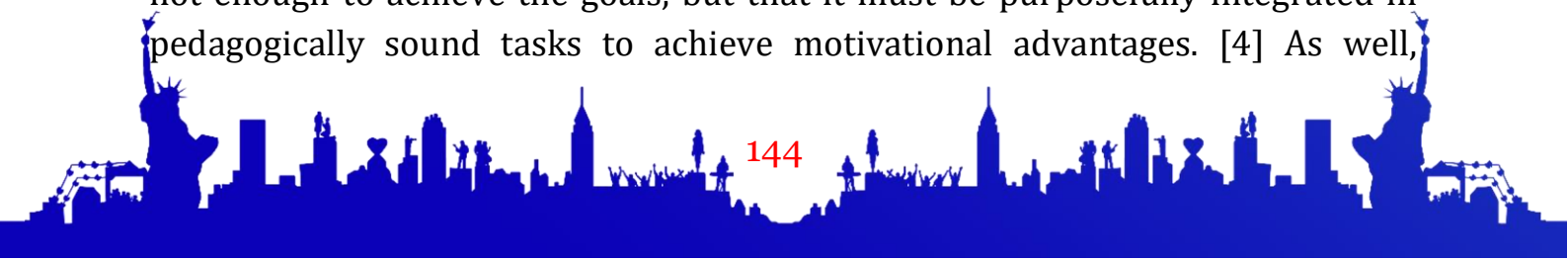


purpose, audience and outcome will increase effort and persistence. These theoretical ideas generate testable hypotheses about the impact pertinent classroom practices can have on motivation.

Historically, the EFL classrooms of Uzbekistan had a grammar-translation and teacher-centred approach systems. Over the last decade, several studies and policy briefs recorded a gradual but uneven shift towards communicative language teaching (CLT), which places the emphasis on interactional competence, pair/group work and role-plays and meaning negotiation. Practitioner research and institutional reports indicate that CLT activities help to increase willingness of learners to communicate and confidence by addressing authentic speaking opportunities and lowering the affective filter. Reports of classroom pilots and teacher reflection show the positive outcomes of the oral participation, perceived relevance of English and enthusiasm of learners when CLT tasks are well planned and scaffolded. [1]

TBLT focuses on tasks or real world as the central unit of instruction. More recent research undertaken demonstrates that TBLT can enhance motivation through the provision of communicative purpose and by facilitating visible outcomes which are valued by the learners. Pilot projects at the tertiary and secondary levels report higher levels of student involvement, cooperative learning and pragmatism. The flipped classroom – content delivery before class and active and collaborative work during contact time – has garnered attention as one solution to freeing up classroom time for communicative practice and individualized feedback. [2] Case studies out of Uzbekistan find that by using platforms such as Google Classroom and telegram to pre-class deliverance of material and in-class workshop management, learners' autonomy, responsibility for learning, and participation in the classroom could be increased. Empirical evaluations report increases in speaking opportunities, and learner enthusiasm especially when pre-class materials are short and accessible to learners, and well-integrated with the in-class tasks. [3]

Beyond the flipped model a wider range of education technologies – mobile messaging apps, online platforms, multimedia input, and Artificial Intelligence mediated practice – have been piloted in Uzbekistan. Studies indicated that multimodal input and interactive platforms have the benefits of varying stimuli, distributed practice, and personalized feedback. Recent practitioner papers have focused on the idea that technology in and of itself is not enough to achieve the goals, but that it must be purposefully integrated in pedagogically sound tasks to achieve motivational advantages. [4] As well,





evidence cautions against excessive reliance on technology in environments where internet connections may be unstable or ownership of technology devices low.

Synthesis of theoretical and empirical research yields a spectrum of mechanism pathways by which innovative practice influences motivation in Uzbek EFL contexts:

- tasks and communicative activities offer authentic communicative purposes and audiences – factors that transform language practice from decontextualized drill into meaningful social acts, thus increasing intrinsic motivation;
- flipped lessons and project work encourage learner ownership of pre-class preparation and task planning, increasing autonomy and self-regulated learning;
- interactive classroom time enables immediate peer and teacher feedback. Scaffolds on expertly designed tasks induce feelings of success that enhance perceived competence;
- pair/group work and collaborative projects induce peer relationships and a supportive community, satisfying relatedness needs that drive participation;
- computer and multimedia materials introduce variety that can rejuvenate attention and reduce boredom, particularly where established, rote, form-based routines otherwise dominated.

These processes are not self-executing, however, but require adequate design, teacher proficiency, and institutional adoption to operate effectively. When CLT and TBLT are implemented with adequate teacher training, supportive testing procedures, and effective materials design, students indicate higher enjoyment, involvement, and subjective utility of English. [5] These reforms are linked to higher motivation, particularly intrinsic forms (pleasure, interest) and persistence at the task. Combined approaches and flipped classrooms maximize the scope for communicative practice, enabling contact time to be more actively utilized; they are most effective motivationally when digital delivery is stable and pre-class work explicitly related to in-class work. Technology can maximize motivation through alternating input and immediate, often game-like feedback, but benefits are disproportionally distributed and require pedagogical context to prevent shallow engagement. Based on the above synthesis, I provide a set of suggestions:



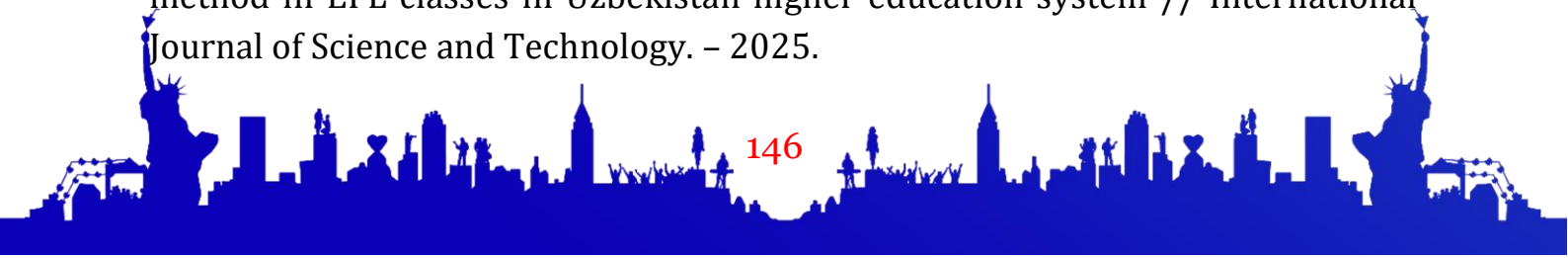


- adopt lesson study, microteaching, and co-planning to transform theory into classroom practice. Focus on task design, error-tolerant classroom management, and formative assessment techniques;
- set up national/regional repositories of scaffolded communicative tasks, rubrics, and pre-class materials (including low-bandwidth versions) to reduce workload for the individual;
- progressively introduce communicative tasks; instruct explicit participation expectations and provide sentence frames, role cards, and micro-feedback;
- integrate tasks with authentic communicative purposes and audiences to promote relevance;
- provide descriptive, competence-based feedback and recognize incremental improvements to foster perceived competence;
- design inclusive digital learning routes. For flipped methods, offer simultaneous low-tech options (printed worksheets, audio recordings on memory sticks, SMS versions) to avoid leaving out learners with no stable internet.

Innovative pedagogical strategies, CLT, TBLT, flipped classrooms, and strategic use of technology, hold certain potential to increase learner motivation in Uzbekistan's EFL classrooms by increasing meaningfulness, autonomy, competence experiences, and relatedness in class. The motivational dividend is conditional: it depends upon continued assessment reform, continuous teacher development, infrastructure facilitation, and student and teacher belief focus. Policy makers, teacher educators, and practitioners must converge in order to build ecosystem conditions that allow innovations in classrooms to flourish. Where such conditions are made available, innovations not only change activities; they change students' relationships with English from school subject to vehicle for communication and potential.

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