



## Motivational behaviors of teachers in Turkish EFL classes: Perception of students<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Motivation is regarded as one of the most important factors in language learning process and teachers try a lot to motivate their students in language classes. There have been a number of studies in the field of education to prove that teachers play important roles on student motivation (Christophel, 1990; Williams & Burden, 1997; Dörnyei, 2001a; Trang & Baldauf, 2007). In this respect, this study aimed to identify the most and least motivating teacher behaviors and their effects in language classes according to students. Participants of the study included 314 pre-intermediate students of the English preparatory program of a state university. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire administered to these participants, and 19 students were also interviewed to get in-depth data on teacher motivational behaviors. The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, and content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The results presented some significant insight on the most and least teacher motivation behaviors that would serve teachers as a guide for classroom implications.

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*Keywords:* Motivation; teacher motivational behaviors; Turkish EFL students

### 1. Introduction

Motivation is one of the main determining factors in an individual's success for developing a second or foreign language (Dörnyei, 1990, 2001a, 2001b; Gardner, Lalonde & Moorcraft, 1985; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Warden & Lin, 2000). Dörnyei (1998, p.117) points out that "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process". Gardner (1985) asserts that motivation includes four elements: a goal, a desire to achieve the goal, positive attitudes toward learning the language, and effortful behavior to that effect. As motivation plays a very important role in learning process, there have been numerous research studies, as mentioned below, that look into the nature and role of motivation and demotivation in L2 learning process for the last decades.

In his study, Dörnyei (1998) selected demotivated participants for his research and his findings showed that what makes the category of demotives is directly related to the teacher. In Trang and

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Baldauf's (2007) study, 100 second-year EFL students from a university in central Vietnam were asked questions to find out the reasons of their demotivation. The participants were asked to write an essay giving information about the sources and reasons of their demotivation. The results showed that external factors accounted for 64% of demotivation. Among the external demotives, teacher-related factors were the main source of demotives accounting for 38% of the total number of demotivating encounters.

Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) conducted a study on motivating language learners. Their participants included 200 Hungarian EFL teachers, each of whom was asked to rate 51 motivational strategies. Based on this data, Dörnyei and Csizer proposed ten commandments for language teachers, some of which are promoting learner autonomy, developing good relationship with the learners, and making the language classes interesting.

Madrid (2002) examined 319 students and 18 teachers from Primary, Secondary and Upper-Secondary Education in order to find out how powerful certain motivational classroom strategies were. Students' global motivation perception was observed and compared with the strategies used in class. The results showed that certain strategies were more powerful than others to enhance students' global motivation. The most powerful motivational strategies were as follows: The use of audiovisual resources and new technologies, group work, satisfying the students' needs and interests, praises and rewards, and fulfillment of students' success expectations. The author also concludes that teachers should promote and put into practice those motivational strategies which increase the students' interest, attention and satisfaction.

In the light of these studies, it is obvious that teachers have a great influence on student motivation. Winke (2005) highlights that learner motivation is not just a variable students bring to the classroom. Teachers can also implement and promote student motivation to enhance learning, and to influence the quality and type of motivation that drives foreign language learning. Thus, motivation is the key factor in learning success, and teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness (Dörnyei, 2000). For this reason, this study aims to find out the effect of teacher motivational behaviors in the classroom through the eyes of students. Students' perceptions of certain teacher motivational behaviors in language classrooms were investigated and the following research questions were addressed during the study.

1. What are the most motivating teacher behaviors in Turkish EFL classes according to the university students?
2. What are the least motivating teacher behaviors in Turkish EFL classes according to the university students?

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Participants and setting*

The participants included 314 EFL students, 174 female and 140 male, at the English preparatory program of a state university in Turkey, and their ages ranged from 17 to 22. The English program was a compulsory one in which English was taught integratively, and students had 25 hours of English per week. The participants were all pre-intermediate students when they took the questionnaire.

## 2.2. Instruments

### 2.2.1. Student questionnaire

“Teacher Motivational Behaviors Questionnaire” was developed by the researchers to find out how students perceive certain teacher motivational behaviors. At the beginning of the term, three open-ended questions were given to 40 students who were randomly selected to get a general idea about their opinions on teacher motivational behaviors. These questions included;

- What are the most motivating teacher behaviors for you?
- What are the least motivating teacher behaviors for you?
- What is your ideal teacher like? What kind of features does s/he have?

The questions were in Turkish, and the students were expected to write their answers in their mother tongue. The reasons for this were to obtain more answers from the students and help students feel free and relaxed while answering the questions.

In the light of the answers given by these students, certain teacher motivational behaviors were listed to form the questionnaire. Then, the researcher asked her colleagues about their opinions, and finally after referring to Dörnyei (2001a), Dörnyei and Csizer (1998), Oxford and Shearin (1994) and Williams and Burden (1997), 88 items were identified. These items were classified under five different sub-headings to make the questionnaire more organized and understandable. As part of the content validity, three experts in the field of ELT were asked for their opinions on the items in the survey, and necessary modifications were made on the questionnaire items based on their comments.

In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 35 students who were later excluded from the actual study. After the reliability scores had been calculated, 26 items which had very low reliability co-efficients were removed from the questionnaire. The last version of the scale consisted of 62 items. Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient for each sub-scale and for the overall questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Reliability analysis for “Teacher Motivational Behaviors Questionnaire”

	Cronbach Alpha's
Teacher's Lecturing Style (1-36)	.89
Teacher's Personal Features (37-45)	.83
Teacher's Rapport with Students (46-52)	.82
Teacher's Error Correction and Evaluation Techniques (53-57)	.72
Teacher's Giving and Evaluating Homework (58-62)	.85
<b>Cronbach Alpha for 62 items</b>	<b>.94</b>

The questionnaire mainly has two parts. The first part aims to gather some demographic information about the participants. The second part consists of 62 five-point Likert-type items. This part aims to gather information about the perceptions of the students regarding 62 teacher motivational items in the questionnaire. These 62 items were classified under five constructs shown in the table above, and the appropriate items were placed under related constructs.

### 2.2.2. Student interviews

To collect deeper information from the students in terms of teacher behaviors that motivate them most or least, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 students. All the students were asked for their consent to take part in the interview. Before the interview, they were informed about the

questions so as to lessen their anxiety. Interviews were carried out in Turkish to make students feel less nervous and express themselves more comfortably. During the interviews, they were asked two questions:

- What are the most motivating teacher behaviors in the classroom for you? Why are these behaviors motivating for you?
- What are the least motivating teacher behaviors for you? In other words, can you tell me the behaviors your teacher does very willingly but they do not motivate you a lot? Why are these behaviors not very motivating for you?

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcribed data were crosschecked by the researchers to ensure inter-rater reliability. The reported answers were analyzed to find the common and significant themes in the statements. These statements were classified and presented in order to support the findings of the study.

### 2.3. Data collection and analysis

After examining the questionnaire items carefully, the researcher administered the questionnaire to 314 students with the help of her colleagues. The quantitative data were compiled and then analyzed by using SPSS 17. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. For the qualitative data, the common and coherent themes derived from the answers of the students during the interviews were tallied and their frequencies were used in order to identify those opinions coming up in line with the survey results and to support them.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. The most motivating teacher behaviors in English classes

The first research question of the study investigated the most motivating teacher behaviors. The mean scores, standard deviations and the percentages were calculated. Table 2 presents the mean scores, standard deviations and percentages regarding the most motivating teacher behaviors according to the students.

**Table 2.** The most motivating teacher behaviors according to the students (items having mean score 4.5 and over)

Teacher Behavior	M	SD	%
37. putting a smile on her / his face in the classroom	4.82	.42	98.7
23. taking some breaks when students are mentally exhausted	4.72	.52	97.8
43. having a sense of humor	4.71	.56	96.5
41. being energetic	4.71	.54	96.5
46. creating a relaxing atmosphere in which students can easily exchange ideas	4.71	.53	96.1
54. correcting mistakes with a smiling face and by motivating students	4.68	.52	97.2
48. displaying friendly behaviors where appropriate	4.66	.57	95.3
42. being open to new ideas	4.65	.60	95.2
22. making use of certain topics (music, TV, etc.) that draw students' attention	4.63	.56	96.8
38. using her / his mimes while teaching	4.61	.58	94.6
47. knowing her / his students well	4.58	.61	93.3
40. being affectionate towards her / his profession and having students feel it	4.56	.67	92.1
39. making use of her / his body language while teaching	4.54	.65	90.8
44. giving importance to teacher-student and student-student interaction based on course objectives	4.51	.71	92.7
04. encouraging students to use the language by saying "you can do this"	4.51	.64	92.4

M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, %: Percentage of the students perceiving the item as more motivating

As the table shows, the items listed above according to their mean scores were found to be the most motivating teacher behaviors through the eyes of the students.

**Table 3.** The most motivating teacher behaviors according to student interviews

- 
1. putting a smile on her / his face in the classroom
  2. taking some breaks when students are mentally exhausted
  3. being affectionate towards her / his profession
  4. using her / his mimes and body language while teaching
  5. giving positive feedback
  6. having a sense of humor
  7. being energetic
  8. creating a relaxing atmosphere in which students can easily exchange ideas
  9. displaying friendly behaviors where appropriate
  10. making use of interesting topics (music, TV)
- 

The results of the interviews presented in Table 3 above support the findings of the questionnaire. When Tables 2 and 3 are examined, it can be seen that the teacher motivational behaviors derived from the interviews are consistent with the ones that were found to be the most motivating teacher motivational behaviors based on the questionnaire.

The first research question attempted to find out the most motivating teacher behaviors whose mean scores are 4.5 and over in language classes according to the students. According to the results of the questionnaire, the most motivating teacher behavior was found to be teacher's putting a smile on her / his face in the classroom. The majority of the students considered teacher's having a smiling face as the most motivating teacher behavior. It can be concluded that students get more motivated when they have a teacher who has a smiling face. It can be due to the fact that students feel more relaxed and less nervous when they have a teacher with a smiling face, so their motivation level gets higher. The finding of this study shows parallelism with several studies (Kwellely & Gorham 1988, Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey 1982; cited in Christophel, 1990; Gorham 1988). They also found out that teacher's smiling face contributed to student motivation a lot. On this issue, the results of the interviews with students support the findings. One of the interviewees uttered that:

“When our teacher is positive and smiles, I want to take part in the lesson. However, when our teacher is aggressive, unhappy or sulky, I hesitate to ask any questions or express my ideas.”

Another interviewee pointed out that:

“When my teacher is smiling, I feel relaxed. In addition to that, I can ask everything I don't understand about the lesson easily, and I express myself better.”

The second most motivating teacher behavior was found to be teacher's taking some breaks when students are mentally exhausted. In language classes, it may sometimes be observed that students get really exhausted during lessons. This result shows that a short break given by the teacher is very motivating during these lessons in order to refresh students. According to Gorham and Christophel (1992)'s study, teacher's confusing students and making them feel bored were found demotivating by the participant students. Thus, it can be concluded from their study that students need breaks and some fun not to get bored during lessons. The quotation of an interviewee in the current study supports this finding. The participant stated that:

“I become very happy and motivated when my teacher takes a break because I feel that s/he understands us and gives importance to our feelings. If our teacher goes on lecturing, I cannot concentrate on what s/he is saying. But, after these breaks, I can continue listening to my teacher willingly again.”

Teacher's having a sense of humor was also found to be very motivating by the students. Humor may affect students in a positive way, and help them feel less anxious when learning takes place. Hence, a teacher with a sense of humor might lessen students' prejudices and negative attitudes towards the teacher, learning, and English. Owing to these possible reasons, humor might have been regarded as a motivator by the students. A research study by Gorham and Christophel (1992) reported that teacher's using humor in classroom has a high relationship with student motivation. The participants were asked to list the motivating teacher behaviors, and most of them included teacher's using humor in their favorite list. Related to this finding, here are two quotations of two interviewees:

"When our teacher tells a joke or talks about funny things, I feel more concentrated. These jokes and stories refresh me and make me laugh, so I feel more energetic and ready for the rest of the lesson."

"Naturally, after some time, I lose my concentration on the lesson and my teacher, and I start to think about other things. When my teacher tells jokes, s/he draws my attention and I begin to listen to my teacher attentively after laughing and enjoying a little."

Another motivating behavior was found to be teacher's being energetic during the course time. It can be noted that students want to have a teacher who is active and full of energy in the classroom. Indeed, this is very natural; because people are affected positively when a person in the surrounding is energetic. In a study conducted by Top (2009), teacher's being active during class time was also found to be a motivating teacher behavior by the students. For this reason, it can be concluded that a teacher who is energetic transmits her / his positive energy and motivation to the students. On this issue, two participants said that:

"When my teacher sits at her / his desk, I get easily bored. But, when s/he stands or walks, I pay attention to my teacher more."

"When my teacher comes near me, I can have the opportunity to ask the things I do not understand and nobody hears the questions I ask because my teacher is just by my side."

Teacher's creating a relaxing atmosphere in which students can easily exchange ideas was also found to be a motivating behavior. Students are individuals, and all individuals would like to express themselves clearly and confidently and they want to be accepted by the people around them. When a teacher creates such a relaxing environment, and students are allowed to express themselves freely, students become more self-confident. When a person becomes more self-confident, that person becomes more motivated and willing in that environment. Thus, in this context, students get more motivated and eager in the classroom when they have a teacher who facilitates learning by preparing the appropriate setting. This result is in line with the opinions of Ginot (1972) who maintained teachers should create the emotional climate for learning in order to facilitate student motivation. To support this finding, below is the statement of a participant:

"When the atmosphere is relaxing, I can say any possible answers that come to my mind. I do not focus on my mistakes, and I do not think whether my answer is true or not. As I am stress-free, I can express myself better."

The students found teacher's correcting mistakes with a smiling face a very motivating teacher behavior. Students come across difficulties while learning a foreign language, and owing to these difficulties they experience stress and sometimes lack of confidence. It is teachers' responsibility to help students in that challenging period and assist them to overcome such difficulties together. In order to help students, a teacher should be present with a smiling face in the role of a motivator while s/he corrects the mistakes of the students. By doing so, students do not feel inferior, but feel that these mistakes are natural and the teacher is with them in the learning process. This behavior was considered to be very motivating by most of the students, and this result indicates similarity with the suggestions of Dörnyei (2001a). Dörnyei suggests that teachers should provide motivational feedback so as to motivate their students. On this issue, an interviewee commented as follows:

“When I answer a question, I feel nervous. Sometimes I know the answer, but because of my anxiety I make mistakes. When my teacher smiles at me or tells me “yes, good job, you can do this” etc, I feel encouraged and believe in myself more. When I believe in myself, I feel more self-initiative and more motivated.”

The seventh most motivating teacher behavior was chosen as teacher’s displaying friendly behaviors where appropriate according to the answers of all the students. Hence, it can be said that students want to have a teacher who is friendly and sincere where appropriate. They do not want to see their teacher as an authoritarian figure but a friendly figure. It may be because of the fact that when a teacher displays friendly behaviors, students feel more relaxed and less stressful and nervous. Thus, they can express themselves better, and their affective filter becomes lower with the help of the friendly behaviors of the teacher. Accordingly, learning takes place better in that situation. This finding shows parallelism with the following studies. Gorham and Christophel (1992)’s study indicated friendly attitude of teachers was found to be a very motivating teacher behavior by the students taking part in the study. The studies carried out by Vural (2007) and Top (2009) also supported the result of this study. In both studies, teacher’s being friendly was regarded as a very motivating teacher behavior by the students. On this issue, a student said that:

“A teacher is very important in a student’s life. So, if my teacher is friendly, I feel relaxed and I can express myself better. I do not get afraid of making mistakes.”

According to the data, teacher’s being open to new ideas was considered to be very motivating. It may be said that students do not want to have a teacher who is self-monitored and too strict. Besides, they do not want a teacher who decides, initiates, and activates things in the classroom. Instead of this, students want a teacher who is open to new ideas and gives importance to students’ ideas. Davis (1993) stated that, when possible, teachers should allow students to have an idea in selecting the next topic to be studied. If a teacher is open to the options and ideas of the students, students get happier and more motivated. A student stated that:

“A teacher should be open to new ideas. It means that the teacher is not arrogant, and gives importance to students’ ideas. It also means that this teacher gives importance to the students.”

Another student commented that:

“A teacher knows a lot of things, okay, but sometimes there are some occasions in which the teacher is not aware of what we like or dislike. Hence, in these cases, students can suggest an idea and if the teacher sees it valuable and accepts, students think that the teacher loves them and sees them as individuals.”

Teacher’s making use of certain topics (music, TV, etc.) that draw students’ attention was seen as a motivating behavior by the students. It means that students become more motivated when their teacher incorporates interesting topics into the course. It might be owing to the fact that the interesting topics draw students’ attention and when students get interested in the course they become more motivated and eager to learn. Gorham and Christophel (1992) found that interesting topics increased student motivation. Dörnyei (1994) also suggested certain strategies to motivate students, and one of these motivational strategies was increasing the attractiveness of the course content. Teachers can increase the attractiveness of the course content by incorporating interesting, attractive and motivating topics that affect students positively, and in turn, enhance student motivation. An interviewee said that:

“My present teacher integrates latest movies, music and dramas into her lesson, and now I know lots of things about it. I am more knowledgeable and aware of what is going on around me and around the world now.”

Another interviewee uttered that:

“I really like talking about music and films. I often talk about these issues with my friends. It is more exciting to do this with a foreign language. It is very enjoyable and interesting to mention this in English. These topics draw my attention.”

Another very motivating behavior was considered to be teacher’s using her / his mimes while teaching. In other words, teacher’s making use of her / his mimes while lecturing makes students motivated. The reason of this may be that students understand better when teacher’s mimes escort her / his lecturing. Chesebro and McCroskey (2001) stated that instructional research has determined the use of gestures as an effective teacher behavior. Besides, in Hsu (2010)’s study with 303 Taiwanese students, the participants chose teacher’s mimes and gestures while talking to the class as a motivating behavior. One of the interviewees supported this finding by saying:

“Especially when my teacher is lecturing in English, her / his facial expressions help me a lot. Her / his mimes accompany what s/he is talking about, and by making connections between her / his mimes and statements I can understand better.”

The other very motivating teacher behaviors were teacher’s knowing her / his students well, being affectionate towards her / his profession and having students feel it, making use of her / his body language while teaching, giving importance to teacher-student and student-student interaction based on course objectives, and lastly encouraging students to use the language by saying “you can do this”. Gorham and Christophel (1992) found teacher’s enthusiasm for teaching and teacher’s good comments and positive responses about students increased student motivation. Velez and Cano (2008) found teacher’s body language is an effective factor in student motivation, and they also found that encouraging students to talk and use the language in language classrooms is a motivator for students. In parallel with these results, one of the students said that:

“If my teacher is enthusiastic about what s/he is doing, I become more enthusiastic and motivated. I understand that my teacher is happy with what s/he is doing. Besides, when my teacher is fond of her / his job, s/he is also fond of teaching. When s/he does her / his job eagerly, I believe that I can learn because s/he will make plenty of efforts to teach me instead of giving up.”

Another student uttered that:

“I want my teacher to know and care about me. When my teacher asks me how I am, whether I am happy or unhappy in my personal life, and when s/he talks to me about ordinary things, I feel very happy. I can understand that my teacher loves me, and I am important for her / him. Thus, I participate in the lesson more as I feel more responsible towards my teacher.”

Another student said that:

“For example, when our teacher is teaching something and s/he is speaking English, I cannot understand it. However, when s/he makes use of her mimes and body language, I try to combine her/his behaviors with the topic studied that day. So, I understand better.”

### 3.2. *The least motivating teacher behaviors in English classes*

The second research question attempted to reveal the least motivating teacher behaviors and the results of the questionnaire are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The least motivating teacher behaviors according to the students (items having mean score below 4)

Teacher Behavior	M	SD	%
20. always lecturing in English	3.02	1.29	45.5
8. giving importance to seating for effective language teaching	3.22	.89	30.9
59. giving homework regularly	3.29	1.17	52.5
25. encouraging students to make oral presentations in English about various topics ( depending on the topic studied)	3.57	1.04	59.5
18. emphasizing the importance of English frequently	3.61	1.07	54.5

29. giving information about English and American culture in the class hour	3.67	1.06	55.4
58. stating the objectives of homework s/he gives	3.72	.86	68.1
30. stating the objectives and steps of the lesson at the beginning of the lesson	3.85	.82	67.2
60. giving importance to homework that help students learn and improve themselves autonomously	3.86	1.01	72.6
15. encouraging students to take part actively during the lesson	3.87	1.00	71.4
11. encouraging students to display their products created during classroom activities	3.90	.91	68.1
61. assessing students' homework on time and giving feedback	3.91	1.02	73.9
10. giving equal importance to each and every learning experience in the class	3.97	.84	73.5
50. being aware of some big events in students' lives	3.98	.96	65.3
6. sharing her / his rules and expectations about her /his lecturing style frankly with the students at the beginning of the term	3.98	.83	72.6
45. using time efficiently	3.99	.96	76.1

M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, %: Percentage of the students perceiving the item as less motivating

The behaviors listed in the table above according to their mean scores were perceived as the least motivating teacher behaviors by the students. The items whose mean scores are below 4 were identified as the least motivating teacher behaviors. As the items in the questionnaire are all motivational behaviors, it seemed that the participants did not tend to use 2 (It decreases my motivation) and 1 (It diminishes my motivation) categories in the questionnaire a lot while indicating their opinions.

The findings of the interviews in Table 5 below showed that majority of the students found giving homework regularly not very motivating. Most of the students uttered that stating the objectives and steps of the lesson at the beginning of the lesson had a less motivating effect on them. Some of them stated that they found always lecturing in English not very effective and motivating. Few of them stated that giving importance to seating had a less motivating effect on them. These teacher behaviors are in parallel with the results of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the students uttered some more teacher behaviors which they thought not very motivating. These teacher behaviors were posing immediate questions to the students, lecturing all the time in order to cover the topics of that week, changing her / his tone of voice during lecturing, allocating plenty of time to vocabulary activities, making use of group activities, and revising homework in detail during course time.

**Table 5.** The least motivating teacher behaviors according to student interviews

1. giving homework regularly
2. stating the objectives and steps of the lesson at the beginning of the lesson
3. always lecturing in English
4. giving importance to seating
5. posing immediate questions to the students
6. lecturing all the time in order to cover the topics of that week
7. changing her / his tone of voice during lecturing
8. allocating plenty of time to vocabulary activities
9. making use of group activities
10. revising homework in detail during course time

The second research question looked into the least motivating teacher behaviors according to learners. The results showed that the least motivating teacher behavior was teacher's always lecturing in English. Thus, it can be concluded that students want to expose to their mother tongue more rather than the target language. They may think that when they are taught via target language, they will not understand anything; and as a result, they cannot learn that language. However, if a teacher uses their

mother tongue, they may feel safer and more self-confident for learning. This result shows parallelism with the result of Vural (2007)'s study. She also displayed that the participants found teacher's speaking English as one of the least motivating behaviors. On this issue, one student said that:

“When my teacher uses 100 % English, I am afraid that I am not going to understand my teacher. As I have fear, I cannot become very motivated and eager to pay attention to what my teacher is saying.”

The second least motivating teacher behavior for the students was teacher's giving importance to seating for effective language teaching. It can be noted that teacher's forming seating arrangement in the classroom is not very important for the students. It means that wherever the students are seated, it does not play an important role in motivating them. This result does not collide with the utterances of Levin and Nolan (1996). They stated that by carefully arranging seats in the classroom, teachers can increase and facilitate learning. Despite their positive sentences about seating, the participant students in this study did not see seating as a very motivating and beneficial factor.

Homework provided by the teachers regularly was also identified as another least motivating teacher behavior by the students. That means regular homework does not give a positive feeling to the students. They may think that they are under regular pressure, and regular homework bores them and puts them under stress.

“I hate doing homework every day. Sometimes I want to study English for fun just because I want to study. However, as I have regular homework and I have to do it, I feel totally stressed and even sometimes angry.”

The students also thought that teachers' encouraging students to make oral presentations in English about various topics (depending on the topic studied) is one of the least motivating behaviors. As oral presentations increase their stress level, they do not find it very motivating. One of the participants supported this by pointing out that;

“Making oral presentations is very beneficial for us to be good at our jobs and expressing ourselves better. However, it is also very stressful. Before my presentation, I cannot listen to my friends' presentations. I just focus on mine and repeat what I am going to say when I stand up.”

Another interviewee uttered that:

“Before presentations, I am so stressed that I cannot breathe thoroughly, I feel as if I am going to faint.”

Another least motivating teacher behavior was teacher's emphasizing the importance of English frequently. Students' answers displayed that students do not feel very motivated when the teacher often talks about the positive sides of learning English. That behavior of teacher may lead them towards more responsibilities, and may remind them to give more importance to learning and they should take learning English more seriously. Simply, being reminded of their responsibilities frequently by their teacher might make the students nervous and stressed. As a result of these possible reasons, teacher's often saying that English is crucial was not found very motivating by the students. Vural (2007)'s study also indicated that teacher's talking about the benefits of English was regarded as one of the least motivating teacher behavior by the students. One participant supported this finding saying that:

“I already know that English is important. So, I am here in preparatory class to learn English. However, when my teacher frequently says that it is important, I get bored, and it does not motivate me a lot to study more enthusiastically.”

Another student stressed that:

“I already know that English is important and I am a hardworking and responsible student. However, when my teacher often reminds me the benefits of English, I have the impression that s/he does not know how often I study English. I believe that how often I study is not enough for her and s/he is trying to push us, but I am doing my best. So, what s/he says does not have much effect on me.”

The sixth least motivating teacher behavior was teacher’s giving information about English and American culture in the class hour. According to the answers of the participants, it is apparent that students are not interested in the culture of the language they are learning. Maybe it is due to the fact that they do not see learning the rules of a language and the culture of it as a whole, but rather see them separately. Hence, they may see learning the culture of the target language as not very important and helpful in their learning process. It may also be because of the exams. As the questions in the exams are not about culture, they do not find it very important and motivating.

In addition to these results, the students found teacher’s stating the objectives of homework s/he gives as not a very motivating teacher behavior. It can be concluded that according to the students, the objectives of the given homework is not so important and motivating. In other words, the reason why their teacher gives that homework does not motivate them positively, or make them eager and enthusiastic for learning.

Another behavior which was regarded as one of the least motivating teacher behaviors by the students was teacher’s stating the objectives and steps of the lesson at the beginning of the lesson. Like in the previous teacher behavior (teacher’s stating the objectives of homework s/he gives), students do not seem to be very interested in learning the objectives of the lesson. Learning the objectives of that lesson does not make them motivated and eager. This teacher behavior and the previous teacher behavior, which is teacher’s stating the objectives of homework s/he gives, were not found very motivating by the students. It can be concluded that the participant students are not very willing to hear what will happen next, and they do not want to have awareness about learning. These results do not agree with the commandment of Dörnyei and Csizer (1998). They stated in “Ten commandments” that one of the ways to enhance student motivation is to increase the learners’ goal-orientedness. However, in this study it seems that the students are not very interested in being goal-oriented. Teacher’s giving importance to homework that helps students learn and improve themselves autonomously was found to be one of the least motivating teacher behaviors. It means that students do not find the homework given by their teacher to develop their autonomy very motivating. A student commented that:

“We have already 25 hours of English every week. We are already exposed to English a lot. When my teacher gives us a lot of homework, I do not feel very motivated and happy.”

Another item in that list was teacher’s encouraging students to take part actively during the lesson. The students thought that teacher’s effort to encourage the students to take part in the lesson was not very motivating. They may feel that they are forced to do something; hence, they lose their motivation and willingness during the course time. This result shows contrast with the one provided by Gorham and Christophel (1992)’s study in which the learners perceived that behavior as a motivating one. The difference between these two studies indicates that the different learner groups may perceive the same behavior differently.

The other least motivating teacher behaviors whose mean scores are below 4 were teacher’s encouraging students to display their products created during classroom activities, assessing students’ homework on time and giving feedback, giving equal importance to each and every learning experience in the class, being aware of some big events in students’ lives, sharing her / his rules and expectations about her / his lecturing style frankly with the students at the beginning of the term, and

finally using time efficiently. It is clear that the participants considered these teacher behaviors not very motivating. Thus, it can be concluded that the students do not give much importance to teacher's encouragement to display their products created during classroom activities. The reason may be that they do not want their friends to see their own products. The fear of being criticized by their friends might be behind this unwillingness. They may be afraid of the fact that their classmates have the opportunity to see their mistakes if they display their own products; so they are not very fond of showing them. The participants also do not give much importance to teacher's assessing students' homework on time and giving feedback, teacher's giving equal importance to each and every learning experience in the class, teacher's being aware of some big events in students' lives, teacher's sharing her / his rules and expectations about her /his lecturing style frankly with the students at the beginning of the term, and teacher's using time efficiently.

#### 4. Conclusion and suggestions for implication

This study focused on students' perceptions of several teacher motivational behaviors in language classes and certain remarkable effects of these behaviors on student motivation. The results and findings of this study are significant for teachers and the field. With the help of this study, teachers can have the opportunity to have an idea about very motivating teacher behaviors according to the students. Table 6 presents some suggestions based on the results of the questionnaire and the interviews.

**Table 6:** Suggestions for teachers to motivate students in language classrooms

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1. put a smile on your face in the classroom
  2. take some breaks when students are tired or bored
  3. have a sense of humor
  4. be energetic
  5. create a relaxing atmosphere in which students can easily exchange ideas very motivating
  6. correct mistakes with a smiling face and by motivating
  7. display friendly behaviors where appropriate
  8. be open to new ideas
  9. make use of certain topics (music, TV, etc.) that draw students' attention
  10. use your mimes and your body language while teaching
  11. know your students well
  12. be affectionate towards your job
  13. give importance to teacher-student and student-student interaction based on course objectives
  14. give positive feedback such as smiling and verbal praises
  15. inform your students that mistakes are natural during learning process
  16. inform your students about the learning strategies for better learning
  17. try hard for students to have positive attitudes towards learning a language
  18. call students by their first names instead of "you"
  19. do warm-up activities at the beginning of the lesson
  20. make use of activities such as games, songs and participating in these activities
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The behaviours listed above are perceived as the most motivating teacher behaviours in language classrooms. These results are significant in the sense that they are derived from students' ideas. By taking all these behaviors into consideration, language teachers may have more opportunities to motivate their students, to create more relaxed atmosphere in their classes and to have a more fruitful language teaching process.

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## Yabancı dil sınıflarında motive edici öğretmen davranışları: Öğrencilerin Algısı

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### Öz

Bu çalışma yabancı dil sınıflarında en çok ve en az motive edici öğretmen davranışlarını ve bunların potansiyel etkilerini üniversite öğrencileri açısından incelemektedir. Çalışmaya bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce hazırlık programındaki 314 öğrenci katılmıştır. Veriler katılımcılara uygulanan bir anketle toplanmış ve öğretmen davranışlarıyla ilgili daha fazla veri toplamak için 19 öğrenciyle de görüşme yapılmıştır. Nitel veriler tanımlayıcı istatistiklerle analiz edilmiş, nitel verilerin analizinde ise içerik analizi yönteminden faydalanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, motive edici öğretmen davranışlarıyla ilgili önemli bilgiler ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, elde edilen sonuçlar çerçevesinde sunulan bilgilerin öğretmenlere sınıf ortamında rehberlik edeceği düşünülmektedir.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Motivasyon; motive edici öğretmen davranışları; Türk öğrenciler

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