

## An Investigation of Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Developing Learners' Cross-Cultural Sensitivity to Increase their Motivation

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استقصاء مواقف المعلمين والطلاب تجاه تطوير حساسية المتعلمين  
بين الثقافات لزيادة حافزهم

### الملخص:

يهدف المقال إلى دراسة تصورات الأساتذة وطلاب السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية تجاه تأثير الحساسية بين الثقافات لتحفيز المتعلمين في جامعة سطيف 2. و منه قام الباحث بتصميم وصفي باستخدام استبيانين. كشف تحليل البيانات أن الأساتذة يؤمنون بالدور المحوري للتحفيز في تعلم أي لغة أجنبية. ومع ذلك ، فشلوا في تنفيذ الأساليب المناسبة لزيادتها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، أظهر كل من الأساتذة والمتعلمين تصورات إيجابية تجاه العديد من تقنيات تطوير حساسية المتعلمين عبر الثقافات لزيادة كثافة التحفيز ، والرغبة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية ، والدافع الفعال والتكاملي. على الرغم من ذلك ، لم يكونوا متأكدين من بعض التقنيات. يتضمن هذا العمل توصيات لمصممي المناهج والمعلمين.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تعلم اللغة الأجنبية؛ الحضارة؛ الحساسية بين الثقافات؛ التحفيز.

## An Investigation of Teachers and Students' Attitudes towards Developing Learners' Cross-Cultural Sensitivity to Increase their Motivation

### Abstract:

This study is an endeavour to investigate teachers' and EFL first year students' perceptions towards the effect of cross-cultural sensitivity to increase learners' motivation at Setif 2 University. Hence, the researcher conducts a descriptive design employing two questionnaires. The analysis of the data revealed that teachers believe in the pivotal role of motivation in learning a foreign language. However, they fail to implement suitable methods to increase it. Additionally, both teachers and learners showed positive perceptions towards several techniques of developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity to increase motivational intensity, desire to learn English, instrumental and integrative motivation. Despite this, they were uncertain about some techniques. This work suggests recommendations to syllabus designers and teachers.

**Keywords:** Foreign Language learning; Culture; Cross-Cultural Sensitivity; Motivation.

### Introduction:

English language has become the world first language across all fields: education, business, and economics, to name few. This international language stimulates researchers to seek and investigate different ways to facilitate its learning. It is worth saying that motivation is a key solution and fundamental element in learning English. Holding the same view, Alizadeh states that "Motivation provides learners with an aim and direction to follow. Therefore, it has a pivotal role in language learning" (2016, p. 11). Additionally, Long, Ming and Chen confirm by saying that "spur students' motivation to heighten the teaching effect in English teaching and learning so as to the students' English practical ability" (2013, p. 143). However, teachers are still struggling with learners' unwillingness in learning it. Instead of studying it as a means, they consider it as a goal. The latter decreased their motivation and interest in learning this new language. Since language and culture are interwoven, in the sense that language is a part of culture and culture is a part of language, integrating culture into EFL classrooms has always been considered as a judicious resolution to solve language learning deficiencies. Developing cross-cultural sensitivity is an essential solution as the world becomes a small town and people are always in contact with members from different ethnic groups. In this paper, the researcher attempts to investigate teachers and students' perceptions towards developing learners' cross cultural sensitivity to increase their motivation at Setif 2 University. First, I will start with the literature review through explaining the main themes of the paper. Second, I will provide an overview about the methodology and procedures. Third, I will present the data and discuss it. Finally, I draw a general conclusion for this work.

### ***Cross-cultural Sensitivity***

Cross-cultural sensitivity posits understanding the similarities and differences between learners' native culture and target culture and to develop the ability to accept and tolerate such differences. As it was reported in the 5<sup>th</sup> central council for education of Japan (1996) that cross-cultural sensitivity is "open-mindedness and understanding regarding other cultures, and the development of an attitude that is respectful of these cultures and qualities" (As cited in Youssef, 2009, p.9).

In accordance with that, Stone defines it as "the ability to be sensitive to cues that are often subtle or unfamiliar and to adjust behavior and expectations accordingly" (Stone, 2006, as cited in Becirovic & Celjo, 2018, p 245)

### ***Cushner's Original Model of Cross-cultural Sensitivity***

Cushner developed a model in 1986. He called it the inventory of cross-cultural sensitivity, which is composed of five categories. Cultural Integration is the first category. According to him, it is about the integration and use of target culture elements and pattern in one's daily life. Second, cultural behavioral integration is the new behavior that is adopted by learners when interacting with others and to what extent they are at ease in such situations. Third, intellectual interaction is the interest and willingness of an individual to learn about other culture patterns and norms for a successful interaction. Attitude towards Others is the fourth category; it is the state of being open minded toward foreigners, accepting and tolerating the differences. However, Empathy Scale is the identification with others and the belief that all people are alike.

### ***The Updated Model of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity***

In 2014, Cushner and Mahon revised and updated the previous model. The new version is composed of four elements instead of five that are as follows: cultural inclusion,

cultural behavioral integration, cultural anxiety and cognitive flexibility. The element of cultural empathy within the previous model was dropped since it had low scores of validity.

Cultural inclusion, on Cushner's view, is the development of awareness towards the similarities and differences of the target culture while cultural behavioral integration is about the intended behavior or action that the learner is supposed to perform. Moreover, Cushner states that cultural anxiety is the learner's fear when interacting with foreigners. However, cognitive flexibility is the total acceptance of the differences between cultures and to act accordingly.

### *Motivation in Learning a Foreign Language*

Motivation has been the interest of researchers since ages. Multiple definitions have identified this term. Olusegun claims that it is "the ability to change behavior. It is a drive that compels one to act because human behaviour is directed toward some goals" (2012, p. 3). He adds that all definitions of motivation include terms like "desire, want, wishes, aim, goals, needs, and incentives" (p. 3). Holding the same opinion, Wlodkowski, in 1985, referred to it as "a force to arouse, give direction to, continue, and choose a particular behaviour" (as cited in Lim, 2004, p. 863). On the other hand, Gardner listed the characteristics of a motivated learner as "enjoy learning the language, want to learn the language and strive to learn the language" (As cited in Youssef, 2009, p. 12).

### *Types and Classification of Students Motivational Needs*

Gardner classified motivation into three sub parts based on students desires behind learning any foreign language: motivational Intensity, desire to learn English and orientation index. Motivation intensity refers to students' interests in

classroom work and activities. Gardner identified it as “the intensity of a student's motivation to learn French in terms of work done for classroom assignments” (1985, p. 3). While the desire to learn a language is the interest and willingness to learn English as a language in itself. Finally, orientation index refers to the learners’ aim behind learning the language whether instrumental or integrative. Instrumental motivation means to learn the language as a means or a tool to be used in their future career. However, integrative aim is learning to integrate and be a part within the target culture to communicate or make friendship with native speakers.

In accordance with that, Saqlain and Islam (2014) found that 68, 33% of learners in various language centers in Hyderabad have an instrumental motivation. Similarly, Hong and Ganapathy, 2017, found that the majority of Chinese students have an instrumental motivation. For instance, in their study, Suqlain and Islam found that learners “will stop learning English if English loses its instrumental usefulness for their practical lives” (2014, p. 80). However, Corbett (2003) found that the majority of learners have an integrative motivation.

Several studies tackle the needed techniques to increase learners’ motivation. Boekaerts suggests that classroom climate that catches students’ attention and curiosity is more likely to increase their interest in their English classes. In the same vein, Gardner (2004) confirms the fundamental role of classroom motivation and anxiety. Additionally, Dailey claims that “Being surrounded by the L2 will make the students feel that the culture is less foreign and can bring about enthusiasm in the students” (2009, p. 18). Dailey provides us with a technique to develop learners’ desire to learn English by “Having unique people come and talk to the class in person can encourage interest in the culture and a desire to want to learn more” (2009, p. 18). To develop

learners' integrative motivation, Corbett suggests providing learners with the needed activities that permit them to think like native speakers of the foreign culture. Additionally, Arabski and Wojtaszek claim that "teenagers have an integrative need and like to integrate within the target culture" (2011, p. 42)

### ***Developing Cross-cultural Sensitivity to Increase Learners' Motivation***

Developing cross-cultural sensitivity is a thriving vogue since it is the key to motivate learners. For instance, developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity will enable them to be integrated in different cultural contexts which will affect positively their motivation in learning this foreign language.

The intended desire of developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity is to sensitize learners about this international cultural world that they belong to. This will "conquer ignorance, bridge cultural gaps, and assist in creating international friendship" (Youssef, 2009, p. 13). The latter will influence learners' desire to be a part in this interesting world by learning this international language. Moreover, it "can help students acquire the ability to understand and adapt to the difference as well as the ability to be flexible and open when facing new experiences" (Youssef, 2009, p. 12). In his study, Youssef found that Japanese learners were able to be more sensitive and show a more understanding towards the other culture due to the cross-culture based program. The latter helps them to feel more comfortable and conscious about learning English.

Pidberejna argues that "instructors must be conscious of student motives and of the target language's culture. Without these two components, language learning is reduced to a one-sided, incomplete skill" (2015, p. 36). Dealing with the target culture, Dorney suggests shifting from the focus on cultural

differences to similarities to make the target culture familiar not only foreign and different (As cited in Dailey, 2009, p. 18). On the other hand, Gardner and Lambert (1959) talk about culture integration as it motivates learners (As cited in Alizadeh, 2016, p. 14). In the same vein, Clement and Kruidenier (1985) found that the contact with the target culture does not only influence learners' self confidence, it also impacts their motivation. Hence, it is the teachers' responsibility to increase learners' motivation through developing their cross-cultural sensitivity as Dailey (2009) insists on teachers' role to provide learners with a positive image about the target culture.

In seeking to investigate teachers and students' perceptions, this work opts for a descriptive design that enables the researcher to describe, record and interpret the different attitudes and analyse the problem under scrutiny.

This study took place at the University of Mohamed Lamin Debaghin, Setif 2 during the academic year 2019/2020. The chosen population was first year LMD students of English. Out of 300 students, the fifth (60) were chosen randomly to be the sample of this study in addition to 8 teachers. Consequently, they were the source of data for this work.

To fulfill the aim of this probe, two questionnaires were used to collect the needed data from participants. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 8 teachers aiming at investigating their perceptions towards developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity to increase their motivation. It was composed of five different questions that vary in their structure and content attempting to scrutinise their opinions, perceptions and classroom practices in relation to motivation and cross-cultural sensitivity.

Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to 60 learners that represent the sample of this work. It is a likert



scale questionnaire in which learners rate their level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements about the influence of cross-cultural sensitivity on motivation.

### Results and Discussion

#### *Results of Teachers' and Students' Questionnaires*

After collecting the data through the two questionnaires, they have been analyzed using the Scientific Package for Social Sciences that is suitable to this probe.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' Awareness	Yens	8	100	100
Using Different Techniques to Motivate Learners	No	2	25	25
	Yes	6	75	75
	Total	8	100	100
Frequency of Motivating Learners	Rarely	4	50	50
	Often	3	37,5	37,5
	Sometimes	1	12,5	12,5
	Total	8	100	100
Students' Motivational Intensity	Average	4	50	50
	Poor	4	50	50
	Total	8	100	100
Learners' Desire to Learn English	Good	1	12,5	12,5
	Average	2	25	25
	Poor	5	62,5	62,5
	Total	8	100	100
Learners' Instrumental	Good	5	62,5	62,5
	Average	3	37,5	37,5

Motivation	Total	8	100	100
Learners'	Good	1	12,5	12,5
Integrative	Average	1	12,5	12,5
Motivation	Poor	6	75	75
	Total	8	100	100

**Table 1: Teachers' Practices and Conceptions towards Motivation**

The results of table1 postulate that all teachers (100%) are aware about the importance of motivation in learning English. Thus, we can conclude that the real problem is not teachers' awareness about the fundamental role of motivation; rather, it is about whether they are seeking to increase it or no. 75% of teachers use different techniques to increase learners' motivation as games, role plays, and audio visual materials, to name few. However, the minority does not use any activities. Half of the teachers rarely motivate their learners. However, 37, 5% of teachers often motivate their learners while only 12, 5% of them sometimes motivate them.

Additionally, 50% of teachers claimed that learners have an average motivational intensity. However, the remaining 50% argued that learners' motivational intensity is poor. Moreover, they argued that learners' desire to learn English is really poor. However, the minority, with a percentage of 25%, claimed the average interest. Only, one teacher asserted that their desire in learning English is good. From the aforementioned percentages, learners are studying English for their professional career. Consequently, instrumental motivation scored higher with 62, 5%.

	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4
Mean	3,75	3,75	4	3,63
N	8	8	8	8

<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>0,707</b>	<b>0,756</b>	<b>0,744</b>
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**Table 2: Developing Learners' Motivational Intensity**

Table 2 demonstrates teachers' perceptions towards the use of different techniques to increase their motivational intensity and which technique among the four is the most effective. As the table supra indicated, teachers have positive attitudes towards the four techniques; for instance, the mean scores of the four items were above 3.5, that is, the medium score. Furthermore, item 3 "Talking regularly with native speakers prevents learners to get anxious when they have to answer a question in an English class" scored higher with a mean score of 4. Thus, it is the most effective technique to increase learners' motivational intensity from teachers' perspectives.

	<b>Item5</b>	<b>Item6</b>	<b>Item7</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3,67</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Std.Deviation</b>	<b>0,707</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0,577</b>

**Table 3: Developing Learners' Desire to Learn English**

The results of the table above displayed that teachers have positive perceptions towards the three suggested techniques to develop learners' desire to learn English. However, having friends whose mother tongue is English was the most appreciated technique with a mean score of 4.

	<b>Item8</b>	<b>Item9</b>	<b>Item10</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3,67</b>	<b>3,67</b>	<b>4,33</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Std.Deviation</b>	<b>0,577</b>	<b>0,577</b>	<b>0,577</b>

**Table 4: Developing Learners' Instrumental and Integrative Motivation**

The table below seeks to investigate teachers' perceptions towards different techniques to develop learners' instrumental and integrative motivation. Table 4 demonstrates that meeting and interacting with native speakers is a good technique to develop learners' instrumental motivation. However, being comfortable when talking to native speakers, which is item 10, scored higher than item 9 with a mean score of 4.33. Consequently, teachers viewed that this technique is the most effective.

In table 5, the researcher was investigating students' perceptions towards the use of different techniques of developing cross-cultural sensitivity to increase their motivational intensity

	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4
Mean	4,04	3,63	3,75	3,46
N	72	72	72	72
Std. Deviation	0,615	1,041	1,017	0,871

**Table 5: Developing Learners' Motivational Intensity from Learners' Perspectives**

As it is indicated in table 5, learners have positive attitudes towards the first three techniques. However, they are not sure about the fourth one, which was seen earlier as the most effective tool from teachers' perspectives. Learners consider decorating our English class as the most efficient technique with a mean score of 4.04. Consequently, teachers should take into consideration learners' needs and attitudes before applying or implementing any technique. Since what might be the most effective technique for teachers is the least one for learners. Thus, teachers should teach what learners need and like, not what teachers like.

	Item5	Item6	Item7
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Mean	4,17	3,92	4,29
N	72	72	72
Std. Deviation	0,949	1,045	0,615

**Table 6: Developing Learners' Desire to Learn English from Learners' Perspectives**

The abovementioned table posits that learners have positive attitudes towards all the techniques of developing their desire to learn English. However, accepting people from different cultures and appreciating cultural similarities and tolerating cultural differences scored higher with mean scores of 4, 17 and 4, 29 accordingly. Unlike teachers, learners argued that item 6 is the least effective technique Teachers' and learners' perceptions were quite different. Such difference may result in course and teachers' failure to reach the intended objectives.

	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Mean	4,17	3,5	4,13
N	72	72	72
Std. Deviation	0,993	0,822	0,838

**Table 7: Developing Learners' Instrumental and Integrative Motivation from Learners' perspectives**

As it is shown in table 7, learners had different perspectives towards the three techniques. Starting by introducing themselves to people rather than waiting for them to approach, learners have a neutral attitude toward it with a mean score of 3, 5, which is the medium score. However, their perceptions were quite positive towards being comfortable when talking to native speakers, with a mean score of 4, 13. To develop their integrative motivation, learners believe that being comfortable and at ease with native speakers are more essential than initiating a talk with them.

On the other hand, meeting and interacting with native speakers was a good technique, with a mean score of 4, 17, according to learners to develop their instrumental motivation.

### *Discussion*

This study aimed at investigating teachers' and students' perceptions towards developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity to increase their motivation. In doing so, this work relates the results of the quantitative analysis to the research sub-questions.

The first sub-question, which is about teachers conceptions and practices towards motivation, is answered through the first part of teachers' questionnaire. The findings showed that all teachers are aware about the importance of motivation in learning a foreign language. Vibulphol (2016) claimed about the high level of awareness among Thai schools' teachers. In this work, teachers view that learners have instrumental motivation rather than integrative one. Such results are in line with the findings of (Saqlain & Islam, 2014 and Hong & Ganapathy, 2017) and disconfirm the results of (Corbett and Arabski& Wojtaszek, 2011). However, their interest in attending English classes and desire to learn it scored low. 75% of teachers claimed that they use different techniques to motivate their learners like, games, role plays and listening audios, but they rarely motivate their learners. The latter findings are in accordance with Vanhala (2008), Dailey (2009) and Ceron (2014) where they found that teachers use songs, videos, games, peer practices to motivate their learners. Although teachers are using different ways to motivate their learners, the problem of learners' discouragement is still raised. Hence, the real problem is not the number of activities or techniques but the type and frequency of using suitable activities.

The second sub- question, which is about teachers' perceptions towards developing learners' cross-cultural sensitivity to increase their motivation, is answered through the second part of the teachers' questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that teachers illustrated positive perceptions towards almost all components of cross-cultural sensitivity. To develop learners motivational intensity, teachers prefer the use of "talking regularly with native speakers prevents me to get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class" as the most suitable technique. These findings support the views of Boekaerts and Gardner, who talked about the importance of classroom atmosphere that should be anxiety free. Similar findings were claimed by Dailey (2009) who insisted on the important role of surrounding learners with the foreign culture. On the other hand, "having friends whose mother tongue is English drives me to talk always with them in English" is viewed as the best technique to increase learners' desire to learn English. Finally, to develop integrative motivation, teachers preferred the use of "being comfortable when talking to native speakers allows me to meet and converse with more and varied people. This confirmed the findings of (Gardner& Lambert, 1959, Clement& Kruidenier, 1985), who illustrated the role of meeting, integrating and acculturating with the target culture on learners' integrative motivation. However, they recognize "meeting and interacting with native speakers are important in my career as a learner of English" to be appropriate way to develop learners' instrumental motivation.

For the last sub-question, which is about learners' perceptions towards developing cross-cultural sensitivity to increase their motivation, the results revealed that learners demonstrated positive views towards different components of developing cross-cultural sensitivity though they do not share the same perspectives of teachers about many statements. To

develop their motivation intensity and make English class more enjoyable, they prefer to decorate their English class with objects from the target culture. Concerning their desire and willingness to learn the language, they agreed that accepting people from different cultures, appreciating cultural similarities and tolerating cultural differences as being suitable techniques. Unlike the previous statements, learners share the same teachers' perspectives concerning the techniques to develop their instrumental and integrative motivation.

### Conclusion

The pivotal purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions towards the effect of cross-cultural sensitivity in motivating learners. In an endeavour to fulfill the aforementioned aim, a quantitative approach was followed through the use of two self- designed questionnaires. The current study embraced 60 students and 8 teachers, who were the exclusive source of data. The results revealed that even teachers are aware about the fundamental role of motivation as being the cornerstone in learning foreign languages; they fail to use the appropriate techniques to motivate learners and rarely motivate them. Both teachers and learners showed positive perceptions towards the different component of developing cross- cultural sensitivity and agreed about their judicious role in developing learners' motivational intensity, desire to learn English and orientation index. Teachers are considered as the primary source of knowledge and the main responsible for transmitting the content of the syllabus to learners. It is viable, at this juncture to recommend that teachers should be aware of the importance of increasing learners' three types of motivation and provide them with different tools, methods and techniques to facilitate the work. Their aim should be to sensitize learners about the importance



of developing their cross-cultural sensitivity. Finally, it is ineluctable that syllabus designers should grapple with cross-cultural sensitivity and motivation issues while doing their work.

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