# The Effect of Oral Corrective Feedback (CF) on English Language Learners' Motivation in Communicative Classrooms- A Study Based on Communicative Approach

#### Lalit Premakumara

## සාරසංක්ෂේපය

පංති කාමරයේ ඉංගීුසි විදේශ භෂාවක් වශයෙන් භාවිත කිරීමේදී කථන නිවැරදි කිරීමේ පුතිපෝෂණ කුමය තත්ත්වයක් පවතී. මෙම පර්යෙෂණයේ අරමුණ වන්නේ එසේ කථන දෝෂ පංති කාමරයේ එම අවස්ථාවේදීම නිවැරදි කිරීම සිසුන්ගේ භාෂා වර්ණය සඳහා ජුරණයක් ලෙස බලපාන්නේද යන්න (Oral Corrective Feedback) කෙසේ බලපාන්නේද යන්න වර්මානයේ අපැහැදිලි සොයා බැලීමයි. රැස් කර ගත් දත්ත විගුහ කරන විට පෙනී යන්නේ සිසුන් යම්තාක් දුරට අභිජේරණය වන බවත් ඒ අනුව ඔවුන් අධෛර්ය හැඟීමකටද ලක් වන බවයි. ඒ අනුව පර්යේෂණයේ නිගමනය වන්නේ මේ කුමවේදය අභිජේරණය සදහා බලපාන අතරම අධෛර්යමත් කිරීමටද හේතුවන බවයි.

**Keywords:** Corrective feedback, communicative classrooms, Direct/Indirect corrective feedback, EFL, Implicit/Explicit corrective feedback, motivation

යතුරු පද : සදොස් පුතිපෝෂණය, සංතිවේදන පංතිකාමර, ඍජු/ වකු සදොස් පුතිපෝෂණය, ඉංගීසි භාෂාව විදෙස් භාෂාවක් වශයෙන්, අභිපේරණය,

## Introduction

Several studies have already been conducted on the effect of corrective feedback on the motivation of students' learning English as Foreign Language (EFL). However, most of those studies focus on written or grammar elements with very few studies on the speaking skill, especially in areas where English is taught as a foreign or second language. Today, the Communicative Approach is being utilized throughout the world as the teaching methodology.

The Communicative Approach, also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasizes interaction and problem solving as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning English - or any language. As such, it tends to emphasize activities such as role play, pair work and group work.

It switched traditional language teaching's emphasis on grammar, and the teacher-centered classroom, to that of the active use of authentic language in learning and acquisition.

As the name implies, the central concept in communicative language teaching is "communicative competence". This covers both the spoken and written language and all four language skills. Learning strategies, like allowing learners to become more self-directed and more independent in learning the new language help them to participate actively in communication. One major feature of communicative language teaching is pair and group work. This type of work is suggested to encourage students to use and practice functions and forms. That helps the students

to become more independent and to accept responsibility. The learner should enter into situations where communication takes place as much as possible to increase his or her communicative proficiency.

The teacher adopts different roles. On the one hand she is a "facilitator, a guide and a helper" and on the other hand a "coordinator, an idea-person and a co-communicator".

## Research Problem

How does the Oral Corrective Feedback (CF) affect the learner's motivation in the class room?

#### Aims of the Research

The purpose of the current study is to explore the students' attitudes towards speaking English at the university classrooms and to observe how it is influenced by corrective feedback. In the current study, the researcher hypothesised that EL learners are significantly motivated to correct their errors if they are given corrective feedback. However, the corrective feedback can also de-motivate them from speaking in English L2. As such, this will be beneficial to the language teachers and learners as well.

# Significance of the Study

In the current context, the English language occupies a central position in the world. There is a great need to improve the communicative skills of who learn English. The modern world focuses on the communicative competence to a great extent. Communicative competence is the progressive acquisition of the ability to use a language to achieve one's communicative purpose. Communicative competence involves the negotiation of meanings between two or more persons sharing the same symbolic system. Communicative competence applies to both spoken and written language. Communicative competence is

context specific based on the situation, the role of the participants and the appropriate choices of register and style. For example: the variation of language used by persons in different jobs or professions can be either formal or informal. The use of jargon or slang may or may not be appropriate. Communicative competence represents a shift in focus from the grammatical to the communicative properties of the language; i.e. the functions of language and the process of discourse. Communicative competence requires the mastery of the production and comprehension of communicative acts or speech acts that are relevant to the needs of the L2 learner.

# Research Background

The communicative approach to language teaching was first identified by Roberts (1982: 97, 1983:99) as 'the British tradition" because it was pioneered by British linguists and applied linguists. D. A. Wilkins was the first to use the term "Communicative approach" (1974) work for the Council of Europe on the "common core in a unit/credit system", from which the concept of NOTION and FUNCTION emerged, was crucial to the further development of the approach. It encouraged learner comprehension and production of fluency and correcting for accuracy could be offered by teachers subsequently. Howatt distinguishes between a "strong" and a "weak" version of Communicative Language Teaching:

There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching. The 'strong' version of communicative

teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it. (1984: 279).

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered as an approach rather than a method in ELT. The approach is a larger concept that can be translated into practice through a variety of methods. The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. As is rightly pointed out,

"Communicative Language Teaching appeared at a time when indent the quotation British language teaching was ready for a paradigm shift. Situational Language Teaching was no longer felt to reflect a methodology appropriate for the severities and beyond. CLT appealed to those who sought a more humanistic approach to teaching, one in which the interactive processes of communication received priority. The rapid adoption and implementation of the communicative approach also resulted from the fact that it quickly assumed the status of orthodoxy in British language teaching circles, receiving the sanction and support of leading British applied linguists, language specialists, publishers, as well as institutions, such as the British Council" (Richards 1985).

This approach is linked to social, cultural and political factors. Still the teachers are wondering whether oral corrective method can make positive impacts on the student's attitudes.

## **Research Limitations**

This research is based on the university students. In this case, school children have not been taken into consideration.

### Literature Review

#### **Corrective Feedback**

As indicated by Yoshida (2011), corrective feedback refers to any indication to the learners, either by the teachers or by the learners' peers that the learners are inaccurate in their use of the language in writing or in communication. There are several types of corrective feedback which relates to L2 learning which are: explicit correction feedback, recasts feedback, feedback that could be group as either explicit or implicit (Pınar Babanoğlu, 2015). Explicit correction feedback corrects what the student had written or spoken at the same time indicating what was not linguistically correct while recast feedback provides a reformulation of all or part of what the students had written or spoken with incorrect parts replaced with what is correct. Clarification requests feedback, on the other hand, indicates that what the student had written or spoken is incorrect or is not legible to show that it needs to be reformulated while metalinguistic feedback questions the correctness of what a student had written or spoken without explicitly providing what is correct. Elicitation feedback requires the students to provide the correct form of what is written or spoken by the students while repetition feedback type repeats what had been written or spoken incorrectly by a student with a change in the intonation.

It has been found that both implicit and explicit corrective feedback are used in speaking classes with explicit corrective feedback (explicit correction, elicitation and repletion) being used more widely than implicit corrective feedback (implicit correction, recasts, clarification requests and metalinguistic feedbacks) (Haryanto, 2015; Kirgoz & Agcam, 2015; Motlagh, 2015; Ozturk, 2016; Zohrabi & Ehsani, 2014). Moreover, it has also been found that corrective feedback

enhances the performance of students in post-speaking activities (Eine, Gorjian, & Pazhakh, 2013) and communicative oral tasks (Fageih, 2015; Haifaa & Emma, 2014). Oral corrective feedback, whether explicit or implicit, has been found to be perceived by the students to be highly important in the enhancement of their speaking abilities (Muslem, Zulfikar, & Asrila, 2017; Tomczyk, 2013). As a matter of fact, it has been found that in speaking classes, students prefer oral corrective feedback to written corrective feedback (Ananda, Febriyanti, Yamin, & Mu'in, 2017). A study by Gamlo (2019) revealed that EFL Saudi learners prefer to have immediate CF on their grammatical speaking errors they make by their teachers who they considered are the best source of feedback since the teachers are the most qualified and expert in the field. A recent study by Alsolami (2019) concluded that oral CF is an efficacious pedagogical approach in the EFL classroom since it assists with capturing various aspects of English L2 language lessons such as pronunciations and spelling. This is in addition to the fact that oral CF also offers an important opportunity for both, teachers and learners in error identification and eradication. Another recent study by Alharbi (2020) explored the preferences of EFL Saudi learners with regards to oral CF. She concluded that when EFL teachers aim to identify and match their students' preferences of oral CF, it will lead to great improvement and development in their English L2.

Studies against the use of corrective feedback in speaking classes are very limited and extended search on the literature could not identify specific empirical studies against the use of oral corrective feedback.

Studies by Eslami (2014), Ghandi & Maghsoudi (2014) and Van-Beuningien et al. (2010) have indicated that students become more motivated to write and provide good writing if

provided with meaningful feedback such as the direct or indirect corrective feedback. This is not contrary from what had been indicated at the onset of the current study. However, contrary to the results of the current study, the studies by Abdollahifam (2014) and Mollestam & Hu (2016) indicated that corrective feedback can fail to influence the learners' motivation in a writing or grammar class or result in a negative effect. The two studies however noted that this occurs only when the corrective feedback is not interactive. Given the nature of a speaking class, it is not to be doubted that the corrective feedback given to the students in the current study were interactional. This is probably the reason why contrary to what had been indicated by the studies by Abdollahifam (2014) and Mollestam & Hu (2016), the results obtained in the current study had indicated that the learners' motivation to correct their errors in a speaking class is influenced significantly by the corrective feedback provided to the learners by their teachers.

Studies advocating the use of corrective feedback in speaking classes have indicated with conformity that the feedback made the students want to perform better in post-speaking activities and oral communicative tasks because of the way they enhance speaking abilities of the student regardless of whether it is implicit or explicit (Eine et al., 2013; Faqeih, 2015; Haifaa & Emma, 2014; Muslem et al., 2017; Tomczyk, 2013). This is an indication that corrective feedback motivates the learners to correct their errors they make during speaking in a speaking classroom similar to what was concurred in the current study. Students in speaking classes however prefer oral corrective feedback more than written corrective feedback (Ananda et al., 2017), especially those that are explicit being used widely by teachers in the enhancement of the speaking abilities of the students (Ajabshir, 2014; Pınar Babanoğlu, 2015; Zohrabi &

**Ehsani, 2014).** This could imply that similar to the situation in the writing and grammar classrooms, corrective feedback could make the learners significantly more motivated to correct their errors in speaking classrooms.

#### **Motivation**

From a cognitive point of view, motivation is explained by two theories, which are the expectancy theory and the goal setting theory (Braver, 2015). As indicated by O'Neil, Drillings, & O'Neil (2012), the expectancy theory of motivation explains why and how individuals choose one behaviour option over others based on the belief that effort results in performance that is highly valuable in terms of rewards, with the rewards being guaranteed after the performance. On the other hand, the goal setting theory of motivation explains how task performance is influenced by the nature of goals set by the person (O'Neil et al., **2012).** Based on these two theories, the learners' motivation in a classroom may depend on the learners' goals and the beliefs that effort results in performance that is highly valuable in terms of rewards with the rewards being guaranteed after the performance. Available studies have indicated that students are motivated to write and produce good writing due to meaningful is given to the students directly or indirectly by the teachers (Eslami, 2014; Ghandi & Maghsoudi, 2014; Van-Beuningien, De-Jong, & Kuiken, 2010).

# Methodology

# **Study Design**

The study design that was utilised in the current study to guide the collection and analysis of data was the quasi-experimental design (Reichardt & Little, 2019). Participants were assigned to either the experimental group or the control group nonrandomly with each of the two groups having 15 participants. Participants assigned to either of the two groups were matched in terms of age, proficiency level and classrooms to control the potential confounding factors.

# Participants and sampling

Participants in the current study were 30 University, male and female, students aged between 22 years and 29 years with English proficiency levels ranging from low to intermediate according to their previous exam results at the University. The selection of the participants was made randomly by selecting students at two universities: Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka and Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, randomly using the stratified random sampling method to enhance the representativeness of the sample.

#### Measures

Learners' reaction and motivation questionnaire (LRMQ) was used in the study to measure the learners' motivation in the investigated communicative classrooms. The questionnaire had six items on a 5-point Likert scale where one represented the 'always' response and the other five represented the 'never' responses .A pilot study was undertaken to investigate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire before it was used in the collection of the main primary data of the study.

## **Procedure**

Participants in the study were given a speaking task to complete regardless of their groups. Those participants were assigned to the experimental group and were given several types of corrective feedback in addition to the speaking task while the second batch of participants were assigned to the other group (the control) and were not being given any form of feedback. 166 පුභාපා

The participants were then required to report their reactions and motivation regarding corrective feedback by completing the questionnaire. Each of the participants was advised to respond to the questionnaire independently with the researcher assuring them that their identities and personal details would remain anonymous throughout the study and the responses which they provided would be treated with the utmost privacy and confidentiality.

#### **Theoretical Frame**

The origin of CLT can also be traced to the geo-social developments in Europe when it was full of migrant workers. A common language had to be in use. The Europeans had their own language, but English was to be the common language for communication. The Council of Europe conceived of notional and functional approach to language learning which was to be meant for the adult learners. From this the concept of 'ESP' or English for Specific Purpose came up. The term "communicative" got attached to the goal of such functional English which was need-based. Although the movement began largely as a British innovation, focusing on alternative conception of a syllabus, since the mid-1970s the scope of Communicative Language Teaching has expanded. Both American and British proponents now see it as an approach and not a method. Its aims are

- 1. To make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and
- 2. To develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.

M.A.K.Halliday's theory of the functionalities and performatives of language as regards textuality and semantics underpins the linguistic theory of communication in CLT: "Linguistics ... is concerned... with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus" (Halliday1970: 145). In a number of influential books and papers, Halliday has elaborated a powerful theory of the functions of language, which complements Hymes's view of communicative competence for many writers on CLT (Brumfit and Johnson 1979; Savignon 1983). In his book Foundations of sociolinguistics. An Ethnographic Approach (54-62a, Hymes emphasizes the language user's understanding of the context in which words are used rather than the vocabulary. He formulates a speaking model of language that can be stated in the following manner:

- Setting and Scene The setting refers to the time and place while scene describes the environment of the situation.
- ii. P Participants This refers to who is involved in the speech including the speaker and the audience.
- iii. E Ends The purpose and goals of the speech along with any outcomes of the speech.
- iv. A Act Sequence The order of events that took place during the speech. K Key The overall tone or manner of the speech.
- v. I Instrumentalities -The form and style of the speech being given. N Norms Defines what is socially acceptable at the event.
- vi. G Genre The type of speech that is being given.

Hymes's theoretical propositions can be summed thus: language teaching is concerned with real people in real situations, often in heterogeneous speech communities (classrooms).

Acquisition of competence can be seen to involve both sociocultural and non-cognitive factors. Linguistic competence alone doesn't ensure ability to communicate. Linguistic competence does not guarantee appropriateness which is essential to successful communication. There is no straight equation between grammatical structures and uses of language.

According to Savignon's "Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching", at the time of pattern practice and error avoidance, learners were encouraged to "ask for information, to seek clarification, to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could muster to negotiate meaning, to stick to the communicative task at hand, teachers were invariably leading learners to take risks, to venture beyond memorized patterns".

Canal and Swain (1980, 1981, 1983, and 1984) worked upon communicative competence and found that the concept of communicative competence is more important than grammatical competence. In an online webpage the four components of communicative competence suggested by Canale & Swain (1980) are as follows:

- 1. Linguistic competence —the knowledge of the language code (grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, etc.);
- 2. Sociolinguistic competence the mastery of the sociocultural code of language use (appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness, and style in a given situation);
- 3. Discourse competence the ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive and coherent texts (e.g. letter, political speech, poetry, academic essay, cooking recipe);

4. Strategic competence — the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies which can enable us to overcome difficulties when communication breakdowns occur and enhance the efficiency of communication.

While in traditional language teaching, stress was put on grammatical competence, whereas in modern language teaching programmes, especially CLT,

what is emphasized is the communicative competence and even strategic competence, or the knowledge of verbal and nonverbal strategies such as

paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, reluctance, avoidance of words, structures or themes, guessing, changes of registers, style, modification of message, etc. The strategic competence assumes a very wide range of abilities that are at once cognitive and non-cognitive, linguistic and cultural. Thus, in the post- Hymes era, CLT assumes the following objectives as cited in an online webpage on CLT

- 1. Students would learn to use language as a means of expression
- 2. Students would use language as a means of expressing values and judgments.
- 3. Students would express the functions that best meet their own communication needs.
- 4. Communicative language teaching uses almost any activity that engages learners in authentic communication.

According to Breen and Candlin, the teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process among all participants in the classroom, through various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. Other roles

assumed for teachers are needs analyst, counselor, and group process manager.

According to Jack C. Richards, in the article "Theories of Teaching in Language Teaching" (2002), with CLT, "... lessons, syllabi, materials, and teaching techniques can be judged as more or less 'communicative'... Teaching quality and teacher's effectiveness can be assessed according to the degree of 'communicativeness' found in his/her lessons..." (24).

The teacher has the freedom to plan activities for each class and customize the theory classes like prose, poetry or non-detailed texts according to CLT framework. As an observer, the teacher keeps an eye on those who do not interact in English. Making pair or groups for an activity has to be done discreetly so that a poor/slow learner is helped by a better one. Thereby the teacher facilitates cooperative learning. Selection of tasks is another crucial area which can motivate the learners. At no point, the learners should be demotivated. Thus, the teacher's role cannot be underestimated. Traditional class is teacher-centered, but the CLT class is learner-centered.

The goals of learning have also changed. The target is not accuracy but being able to communicate effectively and convey meaning in the target language. LI is not totally banned as in Audio Lingual Method (ALM). There is judicious use of LI. The purpose is to help the learners convey meaning in L2. The students are made independent, and responsible for their own learning. The teacher sets the stage through activity so as to prompt interaction among learners. Hence, the teacher is a facilitator, guide and observer. S/he talks less and pays more attention to the students' output. In addition, the teacher also identifies the students' learning strategies and helps the students to improve upon them if necessary and shows them how to work independently. Instructional tasks become less important and

fade into the background. That doesn't mean that they are not used at all. They are used, but used sparingly.

In the CLT class, the teacher has great scope for variety and creativity.

Relinquishing the status as a person of authority in a teacherlearner hierarchy, the teacher assumes the responsibility to be creative and prepare appropriate materials at home. The teacher can also assume some other roles, for example, like that of the analyst, the counselor or the group process manager (Richards & Rodgers 2001). In a CLT set up, the learners cannot afford to remain passive. They have to do the activities while interacting in English. They need to understand the processes of learning a skill from a particular activity. They have to assume a greater responsibility towards learning outcome in a class, be it planning, executing or evaluating the performance. They need to cooperate and collaborate throughout as most of the tasks are group-oriented. They need to involve everyone in interaction for achieving success in group tasks. The poor /weak learners are helped by their peers/partners during the activity. They can also bring learning materials to the class which is motivating. They have the freedom to perform their task (speech/writing) without caring for mistakes. While negotiating semantic/syntactic needs of the peers, the learners assume the role of a teacher. In fact, Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes "self-direction for the learners" (Oxford 1990:10). As the teacher won't be around to guide them the whole time, especially not when the learners speak the language outside the classroom they are expected to undertake a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. According to Oxford, 'this is essential to the active development of the new language" (4). In order to increase his or her communicative proficiency the learner should enter into situations where as much communication takes place as possible.

# **Hypothesis**

For the motivation, the null H0 and the alternative H1 hypotheses that were tested in the current study were as stated below.

H0:  $\mu$ 1= $\mu$ 2 (EFL learners were not significantly motivated if provided with corrective feedback)

H1:  $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$  (EFL learners were significantly motivated if provided with corrective feedback

## **Discussion and Results**

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## **Scoring and Analysis**

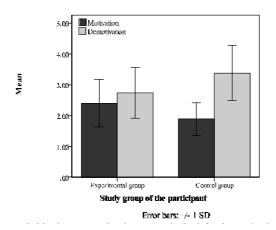
A score was obtained to check how the learners were motivated to correct their errors and if they felt demotivated to speak. This score was obtained by finding the average of the scores obtained for each of their respective questionnaire items. Analysis of the collected data was undertaken using SPSS® version 23 by calculating the means, standard deviations and considering the 95% confidence interval for the mean and by undertaking t-tests.

The average obtained for the learners' motivation scores was higher for the participants who were not given any form of feedback (M=2.40, SD=0.768) when compared with the one for the participants who were given corrective feedback (M=1.89, SD=0.530) (Figure 1) with the difference being statistically significant at the 5% level of significance (t (28) =2.121, p=.043). The EFL learners in the experimental group were therefore significantly motivated to correct their errors when given the corrective feedback.

For the demotivation, the null and the alternative hypotheses that were tested in the current study were as stated below.

H0:  $\mu 1 = \mu 2$  (Corrective feedback did not significantly demotivate the participants from speaking)

H1:  $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$  (Corrective feedback significantly demotivated the participants from speaking)\



The average obtained for the learners' demotivation scores was lower for the participants who were not given any form of feedback (control group) at (M=2.73, SD=0.828) when compared with the one for the participants who were given corrective feedback (experimental group) at (M=3.38, SD=0.890) (Figure 1) with the difference being statistically significant at the 5% level of significance (t (28) =-2.054, p=.049). Corrective feedback therefore significantly demotivated the students from speaking.

This is probably the reason why the scores obtained for the motivation part were identified to be higher for individuals who had not received any form of feedback (control group) than for individuals in the other (experimental group) with the difference being statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. It is also probably the reason why the scores obtained for

demotivation were identified to be higher for individuals who had received corrective feedback (experimental group) than for individuals in the other (control group) with the difference being statistically significant at the 5% level of significance.

From the results obtained in the current study, the investigated students were significantly motivated to correct the errors made in speaking if the teacher provided them with the corrective feedback. This is not contrary to what was expected since the current study had hypothesised that students are significantly motivated if corrected based on review of the available literature. The results obtained however indicated that the corrective feedback had demotivated the students from speaking contrary to what had been hypothesised by the study. It has actually been found that individuals in the study who had been given corrective feedback provided lower scores for all the questionnaire items measuring motivation when compared to individuals who were not given the corrective feedback, which is an indication of a higher level of motivation. Individuals who had been given corrective feedback however provided a higher score for all the questionnaire items reflecting the level of demotivation when compared to the individuals who were not given any form of feedback, which was an indication of a higher level of demotivation among the experimental group. However, the results obtained in the current study indicated that the reliability of the questionnaire in the measurement of what it had been intended to measure could be questioned.

#### **Conclusion**

From the results obtained in the current study, it was found that the provision of oral corrective feedback significantly motivated the participants to correct their speaking errors. However, on the other hand, it demotivated them from speaking. The current

study therefore concludes that corrective feedback makes EFL learners at secondary school EFL classrooms motivated to correct their errors, but demotivates them from speaking. However, the validity and reliability of the results obtained in the current study could be questioned due to the limitations of the research methodology and the instrument that was used in the collection of data in the study. The research method used and implemented in the current study was purely quantitative using a quasi-experiment research design that was neither observed fully nor triangulated where the instrument was also not adequately reliable. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be undertaken on the effect of corrective feedback on the EFL learners' motivation in communicative classrooms using a mixed methods research design. Furthermore, other experimental designs that are observed and triangulated would give more indications to learners' performance. Finally, a more reliable measure of assessment for learners' motivation should be utilised in order to reflect more comprehensibly and reliably on the students' level of motivation.

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