



## THE ROLE OF TEACHER ATTITUDE IN PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Children seem to be motivated to get new things into their lives. However, it may sometimes be meaningless for a child to be interested in learning a foreign language for its own sake. The fact that they catch new things with no consciousness is undisputable but there is a crucial point that in a learning atmosphere, they need to be strongly motivated to learn the language. Based on this premise, this study aims to discuss the importance of motivation in teaching English to very young learners, the reasons of demotivation and as to what teachers could do to increase motivation and keep students motivated in classrooms of 5-6 year-old learners. The participants consisted of 45 children studying in two difference classrooms. The study aims to seek answers to the following questions: *What factors lead to preschool children's motivation in language classrooms? What factors lead to preschool children's demotivation in language classrooms?* The data of the study gathered throughout video recordings, observation notes, protocols and a questionnaire was applied to find out children's feelings about the most appropriate attitudes of language teachers. The study may have significant implications for English teachers, second language researchers, preschool language teachers, teacher trainees who focus on importance of motivation in EFL learners' performance in language classes.

**Keywords:** *Motivation, English language teaching, young learners, classroom language activities, teacher attitude.*

### INTRODUCTION

Role of motivation for young learners in foreign language education has been studied extensively so far. It has been consistently stated so far that the effectiveness of learning and teaching process is measured according to the level of motivation of learners during that process. Albert Einstein states 'the most important motive for work in the school and in life is the pleasure in work, pleasure in its result and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community (Wlodkowski, 1990).

It is strongly essential to know the language for communication. At this age, the English language is the only language that most can understand. To express it in another way, it has become the ideal choice to express our feelings. In a situation where English is regarded as the lingua franca of the world, the teaching of this language has gained considerable significance starting from childhood.

Most adults find foreign language learning quite difficult. They struggle a lot to make even small achievements in their abilities in a foreign language. However, a child seems to just pick new things up without any conscious effort in a foreign language. They learn new languages very easily. They are given a magical innate capability to learn languages. This magic, however, may start to disappear year by year. It can be concluded from this fact that language education in childhood is a matter of the utmost importance.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children seem to be motivated to get new things into their lives. However, since everything has a reason of existence on earth, a child cannot be expected to learn a language without any reason to do so. That is, it is not that likely for a child to be interested in learning a foreign language for its own sake. The fact that they catch new things with no consciousness is undisputable, however, there is a crucial point and at the same time a subtle distinction here: in a learning atmosphere, they need to be strongly motivated to learn the language. Role of motivation for young learners in foreign language education has been studied extensively so far (ex. Gardner's, 1982; Norris-Holt, 2001; Chambers, 1999; Falk, 1978; Cameron, 2001). Researchers have put forth theories about the reasons of demotivation of young learners in classroom settings. Besides, it is a common fact that it is impossible for learners to go on with their learning process effectively if they feel unmotivated or demotivated. Demotivated learners may have poor concentration and low self-esteem. They often make little or no effort to learn. They may occasionally distract other pupils, shout out with no reasons, and fail to bring their materials to classes (Chambers, 1999). Unmotivated learners however do not have any motivation to learn from the very beginning so it may be very struggling for the teacher to make them eager to learn. Thus, it can be inferred that they are different from demotivated learners in that they do not lose their enthusiasm since they had none in the first place.

So far, people have suggested a variety of techniques and strategies in order to motivate students. For instance, Dornyei (2001a,b) states that 'teacher skills in *motivating* learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness'. Thus, the value of the result of the learning and teaching process is measured according to the level of motivation of learners during that process. Teacher's behavior and the relationship between the teacher and the student affect the student's motivation towards the lesson. Teacher behavior is a "motivational tool". The key point is to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with learners. This situation may lead to enthusiasm (Thanasoulas, 2002). As at the age of five or six kids are very vulnerable and sensible, it is very important to know as to how one should approach them. They can sometimes consider the teacher as a mother or a father. The most crucial thing is how to motivate them for the lesson; for this, the teacher should be careful in their way they treat them. Below are cited some tips for teachers aiming to motivate students:

**Keep yourself motivated:** The very first thing for the teacher to do is to keep herself motivated. If the teacher seems to be bored, without any energy, then students will often lose interest in the lesson (Westwood & Arnold, 2004). The teacher should be enthusiastic enough in order for students to be excited for the lesson. Kids become motivated when they see the teacher energetic, jumping, and/or walking around the classroom. Also, the students get motivated and excited when they have a funny teacher. Being funny and happy, which is a sign of motivation, is very appealing for the young children. They love playing with language sounds, imitating, and making funny noises.

**Encourage your students:** If students do not feel encouraged, they will also not feel motivated to learn. When you see them demotivated and unwilling, a few sentences such as "I know this is very easy for you; you have done more difficult things and it is a piece of cake for you" will

be enough to motivate them again. Dornyei (2001a) presents three strategies about encouraging students to trigger motivation:

- Promoting attributions to effort rather than to ability,
- Providing motivational feedback,
- Increasing learner satisfaction and the question of rewards.

İnceçay (2010) states that the features of the teacher's language use facilitate learner involvement and construct potential for learning. According to her, teacher's talk should include content feedback which consists of both negative and positive feedback. However, there is an important point that even though it is right to give negative feedback from time to time, there shouldn't appear obstruction in the involvement.

*Be a caring teacher:* A caring teacher always tries to develop a good relationship with students. When students know that you are not going to get angry, you are supportive and understanding and the reason you are trying so hard is because it is important for you that students learn well, and then the reaction from your students will be nice and effective in turn in terms of motivation (Lile, 2002). Increased parental awareness is crucial to a child's motivation (Bantjes, 1994). As they are so young, they sometimes want you to hug and kiss them like their mothers. Even doing this motivates them and provides them with positive feelings towards your lesson.

*Give proper and comprehensible instructions and use a few words in their mother tongue to make the statements much clearer to them:* Proper and comprehensible explanation is needed, so that students can well understand what is expected of them. As these 5-6 year-old learners are not proficient even in their mother tongue, as teachers, we cannot expect them to fully understand the instructions given in target language so it is inevitable for the teacher to use their native language in these sessions. As the explanation part is very important for them to complete the task, if they do not understand it properly, they feel demotivated from the very beginning.

It is believed that communication breakdown is a common feature of L2 classrooms of young learners. It often occurs because of the fact that learners do not know a particular word or phrase or do not recall the necessary information. İnceçay (2010) mentions an important issue called "repairing", which is teacher's role of intervening and providing missing language. That is, the teacher scaffolds the learners when they cannot remember the pieces of language that they have learned before both by the help of students' native language and some key words. It is necessary for the teacher to use L1 for complicated directions for activities. It is better to make a difficult expression comprehensible by translating it into L1.

*Avoid talking for long periods of time:* Kids get bored very quickly, if the teacher does not know when to stop talking. So, it is better to make short and clear explanations because learners want to go into the activity very immediately. They understand by experiencing so it will have no sense for them to explain it for a long period of time. When they put the things into practice, they enjoy what they deal with.

Therefore, in accordance with all previous studies and researches, it can be inferred that motivation, which moves learners to act has the most crucial role for an effective outcome of foreign language education and teacher attitude and behavior do play a very crucial role to attain motivation in young learners language learning classrooms.

## **METHOD**

It is a descriptive study in design because it aims to identify attitudes of learners in terms of motivation through three aspects which are teacher's attitude towards the students, suitability of the activities and lastly, the classroom atmosphere. First of all, the study intends to observe the causes of students' demotivation in some situations and then how they become motivated again towards the lesson. In general, in this descriptive study the main concern is to identify the most appropriate teacher behavior, the most suitable activities and the best classroom atmosphere to enhance students' motivation for English Language Learning. The aim of this particular study is to discuss the importance of motivation in teaching English to very young learners, the reasons of demotivation and as to what teachers could do to increase motivation and keep students motivated in classrooms of 5-6 year-old learners at Bilfen College in Adana, Turkey.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study are forty-five young learners who are at the age of five or six. There are two classrooms and in each there are about twenty-two students. The research was conducted at the pre-school section of Çukurova Bilfen Private School complex located in Adana, Turkey. Students come from families living in the centre of the city. Also, as it is a private school, the social and economic conditions of families are considered fit middle-class family standards.

Since the target group taking place in the study is already an existing group, there was no need to implement any sampling methods. That is, the sampling was done for convenience.

All students are at the age of five and six and they speak Turkish as their mother tongue. Also, the fact that almost all of them start to learn English in this year is a very important aspect which needs to be taken into consideration.

### **Instruments**

In order to validate the study, triangulation was used. Specifically, observation notes, video recordings, interviews, and questionnaires led to more valid and reliable analysis.

### **Observation and Video Recording**

The data was collected with the help of regular classroom observations. In each classroom, the observations were applied equally. The researcher was the observer of each classroom. The goal was to evaluate the students' motivation in terms of three aspects mentioned above; classroom atmosphere, activities and materials, and teacher attitude.

All lesson sessions were recorded in order to have the opportunity to analyze each section in detail after observation sessions. During these observations, an observation checklist which describes the characteristics of motivated and unmotivated learners was used. Also, through the recordings, each case was examined in terms of the situation, action and the consequence of it. That is, learners' actions, verbal or nonverbal, which were resulted from some situations or cases, were examined with the consequences clear from students' signs of motivation and demotivation.

### **Protocols and Interviews**

After each section, both observed and recorded, the researcher had protocols with some specific students whose behaviors were recorded as the signs of motivation or demotivation. Through these sessions of protocols, the researcher aims to identify some underlying causes of learners' motivation and demotivation by asking them some key questions which were related to particular situations.

### Questionnaire

After this process was completed, the researcher applied a questionnaire for each student involved in the study. As the learners have not learned how to read and write even in their native language yet, the researcher again had protocols with each student one by one to complete the questionnaires. Also, as they do not have proficiency in English, these protocols were held in their mother tongue to have more reliable results. Also, to help them understand the questions better, the researcher gave an example for each question. In order to triangulate the data, quotations were excerpted from the interviews between class teacher and the students (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990).

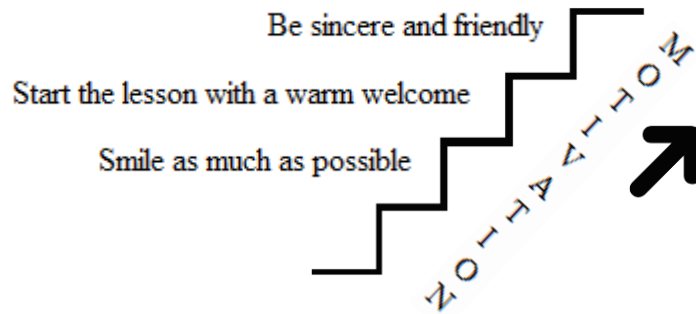
When necessary, paraphrases of the statements in the questionnaires were used to clarify them. The statements were about teacher's attitudes towards students. The aim was to describe what kind of a teacher the learners like or dislike in that age.

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Analysis of the Video Recordings and Observation

Findings show that how the teacher approaches to their students has a significant contribution to their motivation towards the English lesson. As the pre-school children are just five or six year-old learners, they need affection and parental care.

In one of the lessons, the teacher began the lesson in a very friendly and sincere way with a warm welcoming. Seeing their teacher in front of the door with a smiling and positive face, the students moved out of their seats to hug her. The students gave the impression that they really would like to have that English lesson. They started to listen to their teacher with great care and attention. It has been verified once more that if the students like their teacher and feel closer to her, they also like the lesson and become more willing to do the activities.



**Figure 1.** Appropriate teacher attitude

In one of the speaking and listening activities, the teacher became a bird whose name was *Birdy* and a student became *Tiggy*. They started to chat on a few pictures. In this activity, the teacher changed her tone of voice and talked just like a parrot which was very appealing and funny for the students. As the teacher's miming and body language attracted the learners' attention, almost all of them were eager to be involved in that activity.

During such motivating activities, it may sometimes be difficult for the teacher to cope with each student and let them participate in the activity equally. In that session, there was a highly-motivated child who insistently wanted to be *Tiggy*. His endless insistency to perform the

activity made it clear that his motivation level was higher than the other participants. It was also apparent that he was trying to attract teacher's attention. While presenting the characteristics of very young learners Reiley & Ward (1997) state that small children try hard to get the teacher's individual attention as much as possible. He was shouting and jumping to be *Tiggy* but the teacher ignored his willingness. She did not let him participate at the very beginning maybe because of the fact that he was shouting very loudly and in a disturbing manner. He went on struggling but the teacher was also persistent to ignore him. Seeing that none of his attempts ended in participation, he gave up shouting. It was apparently seen that he just became demotivated because of being ignored for a long time by the teacher. After a few more students did the activity, the teacher noticing student's demotivation decided to give him the chance to re-motivate him. Luckily, she was successful in her effort to gain the student's motivation and enthusiasm towards the lesson again. However, she may not have been so lucky if the student had been more sensitive and touchy. Instead of persistently ignoring that highly motivated learner, she could have given him the opportunity to participate in the activity by reminding him the fact that he didn't need to shout to be involved in the lesson as they all would do the activities equally.

In such a case it is pretty significant to make the students aware of the fact that there are some rules which they are supposed to obey and not shouting to be involved in the activities is one of them. It is known that in that age they tend to imitate their friends very easily so the teacher should take some precautions against this tendency.

Conversation between the students and the teacher below presents how teacher's ignorance affects students' motivation in class.

**T:** This is your friend, *Birdy*, you know and this is *Tiggy*.

(*Tiggy* and *Birdy* say "Hello!")

Now, close your eyes everybody, close your eyes!

OK, good. *Tiggy* is coming to..... *Tiggy* is coming to .....

**S1:** Öğretmenim *Tiggy*'i bana verin lütfen. Öğretmenim, *Tiggy*'i bana!

(Teacher! Give *Tiggy* to me, please! To me, please!)

(Teacher ignores.)

**T:** *Tiggy* is coming to ... Mert!

(Teacher talks with Mert who has got the *Tiggy*.)

**T:** Hello, *Tiggy*. How are you?

**S2:** I am fine How are you?

**T:** Thank you. What is this, *Tiggy*?

**S2:** Lemonade!

**T:** Right, well done! Next question...

**S1:** Öğretmenim *Tiggy*'i bana!

(Teacher! To me, please!)

(Teacher ignores.)

**T:** What is this, *Tiggy*?

**S2:** Lollipop.

**T:** Right! Do you like banana?

**S2:** Yes yummy!

**T:** OK, well done *Tiggy*. Kisses... Thank you!

Now, close your eyes again, close your eyes! *Tiggy* flies to ... *Tiggy* flies to...

**S1:** (stands up and runs towards the teacher) Öğretmenim bana! Öğretmenin *Tiggy*'i bana verin!

(Teacher! To me, please! Give *Tiggy* to me, please!)

(Teacher ignores.)

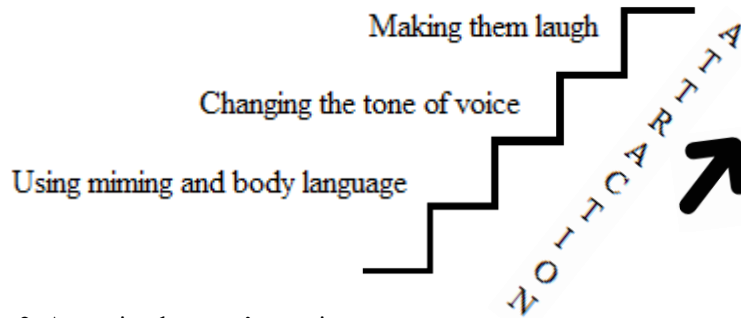
**T:** *Tiggy* flies to ... İpek!

**S1:** (seems to be unhappy, bored and tired of shouting to be involved in the activity) Offf!!!  
(Teacher has the same conversation with İpek and then she flies *Tiggy* to Atalay, Perihan, Erdal and then lastly, Arda.)

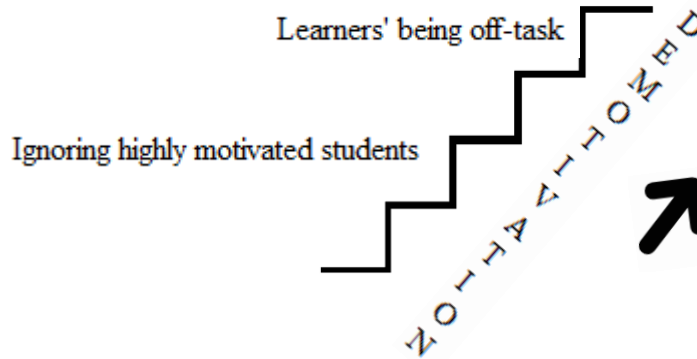
**T:** *Tiggy* is coming to... *Tiggy* is coming to...

**S1:** (stands up and runs to the teacher by shouting) Öğretmenim bana!  
(Teacher! To me, please!)

**T:** Sshhh! Sit down! *Tiggy* is coming to ..., *Tiggy* is coming to ... you, Arda!  
(Arda sits down getting very happy and excited).



**Figure 2.** Attracting learners' attention



**Figure 3.** Leading to demotivation

In another activity, the students played a game in which they moved around the classroom without stopping. It was recorded that the teacher also moved and changed her location with the students; that is, she played the game herself with the students. Feeling that their teacher became a student enjoying the lesson made them much more motivated and energetic. Based on the recordings when the teacher also acted the role as a participant, students were more motivated and willing than the role of being an organizer or the teacher.

In another session, the teacher decided to have a competition activity which was a bit over-challenging for the students to get the rules. Being aware of the fact that the students had difficulty in understanding the activity, the teacher told a few sentences in Turkish and all the students comprehended what to do. Before that instruction told in their mother tongue, they were feeling very uneasy and stressed. However, after knowing the routes, they felt safer. This suggests that the teacher should switch to mother tongue when necessary. Especially, while

giving instructions, it is important to be sure that all the learners understand it well. Not knowing what to do next in an activity always makes students nervous and anxious.

Also, in another lesson, during a drawing and coloring activity, feeling that it was necessary to use mother tongue to help the students comprehend what they are supposed to do, she gave some key points to students in Turkish and it was seen that the students felt better and got motivated. The conversation between the teacher and the students during this activity is below;

**T:** What can you see in a fire station? Böyle kocaman iki tane ne olur?

(What are two things very big?)

**Class:** Fire truck!

**T:** Yes, fire truck. Peki, fire çıktığı zaman ne ile söndürürüz?

(Well, how can we put out fire?)

**A few students:** Hortumla.

(With a fire hose.)

**T:** Peki ne çıkar hortumdan?

(Then, what is it in that fire hose?)

**Class:** Water!

**T:** Very good! Şimdi fire station'a kocaman bir red fire truck çizelim. Oradan hortumuyla water fişkırsın fire'in üzerine.

(Now, let's draw a very big red fire truck which is blowing water on the fire.)

(The students start drawing and the teacher wanders around)

**T:** Bengisu, beautiful!

**S1:** Öğretmenim ben çizemiyorum.

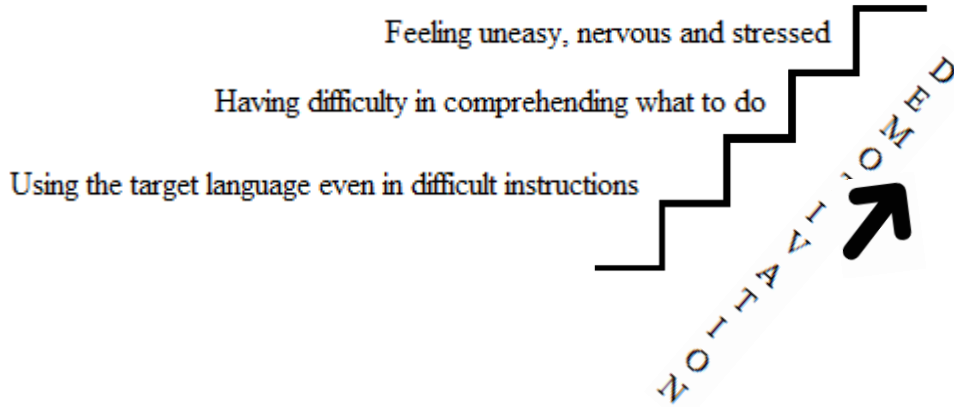
(Teacher! I cannot draw)

**T:** Peki ben buraya bir tane fire truck çizeyim. Çizmekte zorlananlar buraya baksın.

(Ok, I am going to draw my own truck here, if you have difficulty, look at mine and then try again)

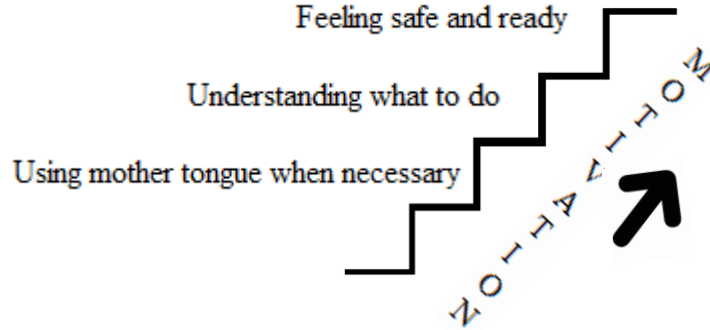
(draws a fire truck) Look at me. Fire truck'ın aşağıda iki tane circle'ı olur. Here comes the water. Şuraya da fire çizelim. That's good. Look at this.

The point to be inferred from this dialog is that teacher's reinforcement and praising for the students' work make them feel satisfied, confident and more motivated.





**Figure 4.** Effect of using only target language



**Figure 5.** Effect of mother tongue usage when necessary

In another session, the teacher involved the students into a game. In this activity, the teacher was holding a few pictures without looking at them. She was just showing the pictures to the students and trying to guess the picture according to students' guidance. She was guessing and the students were saying "yes" or "no" by looking at the pictures. She could also get some clues from the students by asking some questions such as "what color is it?" when she needed. However, the recordings show that a few students were a bit unclear about what they were expected to do. When the teacher showed the picture, they said the word directly, but it was the teacher's role to guess it. Here is a conversation script below taken from that lesson;

**T:** (shows a picture of a post office) This is a hospital.

**Class:** No!

**T:** This is a fire station.

**Class:** No!

**T:** This is an ambulance.

**Class:** No!

**T:** Post office?

**Class:** Yes!

**T:** Ohh, post office! Yes!

OK, another one. Fire truck?

**Class:** No!

**T:** Fire station?

**Class:** No!

**T:** Ambulance?

**Class:** No!

**T:** What is the color of it? The color?

**Class:** No!

**T:** The color?

(A student called Seray raises her hand.)

Seray?

**S1:** Böyle zıplanan bişe.

(It is something you jump on it)

**T:** Ohh, fine. It is a jungle gym.

**Class:** Yes.

**T:** Another one. It is a restaurant.

**Class:** No!

**T:** What is the color of it?

(Derin raises his hand.)

Yes, Derin?

**S2:** Yenen bişе.

(Something to eat)

**T:** OK, I see it is a food. But what is the color of it?

(Mert raises his hand)

Yes Mert?

**S3:** Chicken.

**T:** No, Mert! The color.

It is a chicken, OK.

**S2:** Ya Mert, niye söyledin?

(Hey Mert! Why did you tell it!)

**T:** Derin, sshh! It's OK.

(shows another picture.)

**S4:** Banana!

**T:** Ohhh! Who is this? Kim söyledi çocuklar? Don't tell it. Eğer söylerseniz heyecanı kalmaz. Unutmayın benim bilmem gerekiyor.

(Who told it? If you tell, then there is no excitement. Don't forget that I am going to guess it)

(shows another one) the next one. Banana?

**Class:** No!

**T:** Lemonade?

**Class:** No!

**T:** What is the color of it?

(A student called Nil raises her hand)

Yes, Nil?

**S5:** Red.

**T:** Fire Station?

**Class:** No!

**S6:** Yenen bişе, öğretmenim.

(Something to eat)

**T:** Nasıl yenir? Show me...

(Show me how it is eaten)

(Most of the students show how it is eaten.)

**S7:** Circle.

**T:** Ohh, circle. I see. It is an apple.

**Class:** Yes!

The conversation shows that giving the instructions in a very clear way even in their mother tongue if necessary before beginning the activity has a significant role. They sometimes find things very complicated even when the teacher explains the activity in mother tongue. Also, pre-school children have difficulty in comprehending things even when they are familiar with it. Although they played that specific game a few times in the previous lessons, they needed to be reminded the rules of that game again to perform it in the right way.

Another inference is that understanding the questions of the teacher may be challenging for them from time to time. In that activity, the students could not get the question of "what is the color of it?" Noticing this, the teacher repeated that question insistently for a few times to make them remember it. Finally, one of the students could answer it correctly. In such cases, exemplifying the question may work. To illustrate, the teacher may have given them some guidance by showing them an object and telling its color like "this is red" and then asking the question of "what is the color of it?" again. As they are at the age of 5 or 6, they may always need sample statements to understand something better. Another conversation confirming this point of view is presented below;

**T:** (pointing the screen on which there are a father and a daughter in the zoo) Where is it?

**Class:** Father!

**T:** (pointing the father and the girl) OK, this is father and this is girl.

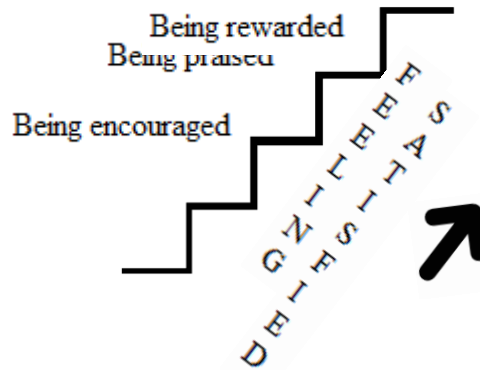
(Pointing the zoo) But where are they? Where is it?

**Class:** Hayvanat bahçesi! Zoo!

**T:** Zoo, right. Thank you.

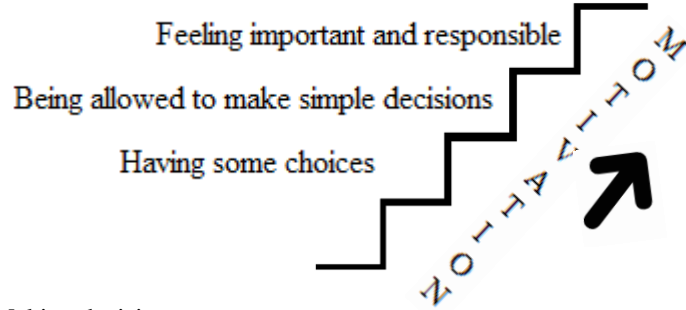
Encouraging and praising also has great contribution to the issue of motivation of very young learners. It is made clear from the recordings that children aged 5 and 6 always need to be reinforced by the teacher. Keeping the idea that they will get a “well done”, if they do it well in mind, they do their best to accomplish it. However, if they do not gain anything at the end of their struggle, they may feel that their efforts are in vain.

Video recordings presents that one of the teachers of those pre-school children was always praising the students participating the activities. She had a puppet friend in her hand and she used it as a reinforcement tool. For instance, when a student performed an activity correctly, the puppet was moving towards and kissing him/her and saying well done to that student. It was great pleasure and source of confidence for them and they made strenuous effort to be kissed and praised by their puppet friend. Also, the same teacher had a very motivating habit that she was giving lovely stickers to top five students each day. This consideration of the possibility of being chosen as one of the top five students triggered their motivation a lot. They value being rewarded so much, so they did their best to have more stickers than everyone in class.



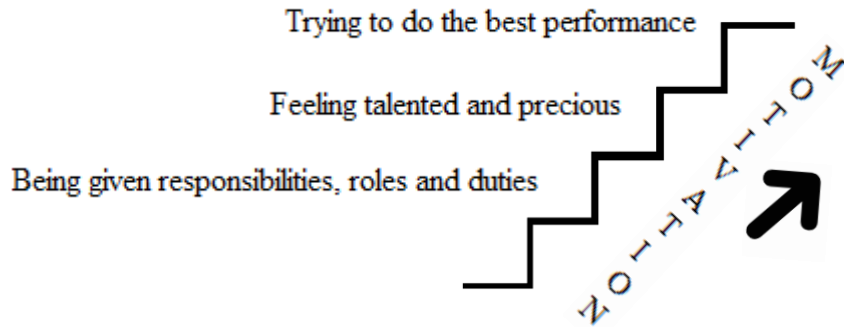
**Figure 6.** Positive feedback

Another activity was a coloring activity in which the children were told the number of the pictures and the colors to paint them. However, they were also allowed to choose the color of one of the pictures by themselves, which made them very enthusiastic. It is apparent that children in this study became motivated and happy because of being given a few chances to make decisions. Providing the students with the right of making a few simple decisions during the lesson is something very easy to do for the teacher. Another way to make the students feel excited is to give them choices in an activity. It is shown that students feel more responsible and sometimes even more important when their opinions are valued.



**Figure 7.** Making decisions

Another sign of motivation was seen in one of the recordings during a song activity in which the children were singing the song and at the same time imitating their teacher who was doing the actions of the song. After a few practices, it was time to choose a student to do actions like a teacher for their friends. A student came to the board and acted like her teacher. Having the role of the teacher was a great pleasure for that student and also reinforcement to the others who struggled a lot to do the actions without any mistakes to be chosen as the teacher. This proves that children at this age enjoy being given some different roles and duties in class. In this way they feel very talented and precious.



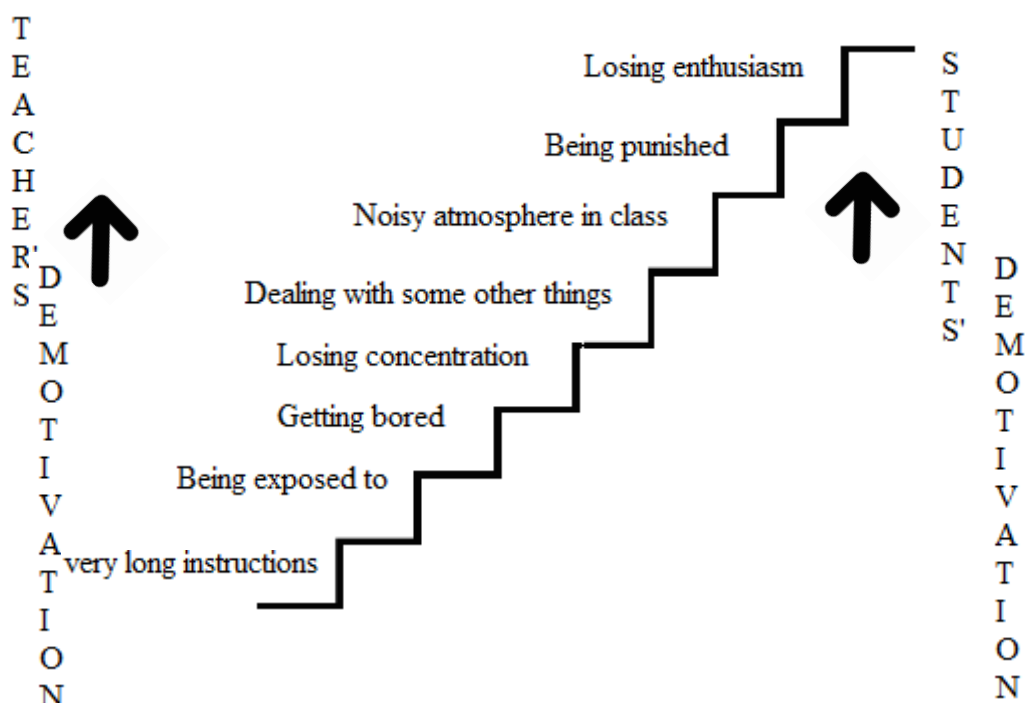
**Figure 8.** Having responsibilities

In another session, the teacher decided on an activity and started to give the instructions. As she thought that it was a different activity and they may have difficulty in comprehending, she tried to explain it in detail. While she was trying to explain the activity, the students got bored and started to make noise because the teacher had been talking for more than 5 minutes. The learners wanted to begin the activity immediately so they did not want to listen to those long instructions. Actually, they were right in their reaction because it is known that that age group learns by doing. Sometimes, very long instructions and explanations may be meaningless for them. They may get the point when they find themselves in the activity. At the end, they did not keep silent for a while so they lost their concentration and started to deal with some other things.

During this instruction process, one of the students was holding a piece of plastic in his hand and playing with it. The teacher who was trying to draw the learners' attention again noticed that student and took the plastic out of his hand and suddenly threw it to the bin. The student trying to explain that that piece of plastic belonged to his pencil case and was very important for him seemed to be very anxious and unhappy. The teacher was also angry and anxious

because of the disturbing noisy atmosphere in class so she did not listen to the child explaining his excuse. She only told him to sit down. The student went straightly to his seat and sat down. Unfortunately, after that event, he put his head on the desk and stopped participating in the lesson.

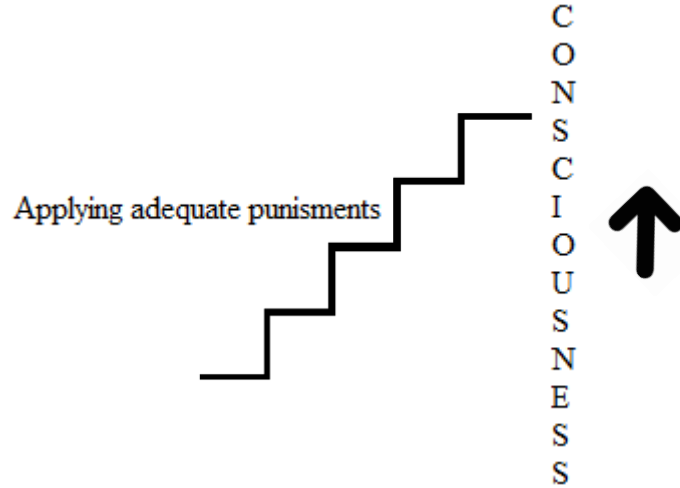
In the following activity, all the students were expected to get out of their seats to sing their song. As they love singing and moving around the class, they jumped out of their seats however; he was still sitting with his head on the desk. The teacher called him for a few times but he ignored his teacher and everything happening around him. This was an evidence for the assumption that the children at that age may be very sensitive. The things having no value for us may sometimes be very precious for them. Losing that piece of plastic made the little boy very unhappy. Also, not being cared by the teacher while trying to explain something offended him a lot. Because of that event which may seem to be a trivial one caused him to lose his enthusiasm for the coming sections.



**Figure 9.** Losing enthusiasm

In another class, there was a misbehaving student ignoring the teacher and the activities during the lesson. He was just trying to attract other pupils' attention by disturbing them. This inevitably spoiled the classroom atmosphere. He was lying on the floor or running between the desks in spite of the teacher's warnings. The teacher noticing that some other students were being affected by the behaviors of that child and started to imitate those wrong behaviors punished the misbehaving child. She took the child to the back seat of the classroom and also he was deprived of the following activities. It was an adequate punishment and it helped the student be aware of his mistakes. Also, the other students witnessing such an event became more conscious as they inferred that they may be punished when they misbehave during the lesson. They tried to be well-behaved students for the rest of the lesson. Pre-school children tend to imitate each other's behaviors without considering whether they are right or not. Thus,

teachers' one of the major roles is to make the students be aware of the classroom rules and some adequate punishments.



**Figure 10.** Effect of adequate punishments

Here is a dialog between the teacher and a student having behaving inappropriately during the lesson and teacher's punishment;

(During a game activity, one of the students insistently tried to kiss his friend although his friend does not let him do it.)

**T:** (goes towards the student) Umut! Ne yapıyorsun? Kalkar mısın? Gel buraya!

(Umut! What are you doing? Please, stand up! Come here!)

(takes the student to the back of the class)

Burada oturacaksın sen. Ben sana izinsiz kimseyi öpmemen gerektiğini söylemedim mi? Cezalıydın burada oturacaksın. Bu oyunu oynayamazsın.

(You are going to sit here. I told you not to kiss anyone without permission. You are punished so you cannot play this game.)

(Umut sits down at the back of the class until the end of the game)

#### **Analysis of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire consists of *agree* and *disagree* statements (See Appendix 1). The intention of this data tool is to identify the most appropriate teachers' attitudes to increase motivation of very young learners towards learning English in a classroom setting.

Table 1 below, illustrates the descriptive analysis of this questionnaire and chi-square results.

**Table.1.** Analysis of Appropriate Teacher Attitudes Questionnaire

| Items | A<br>f/% | D<br>f/% | chi – square<br>$\chi^2$ |
|-------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| 1     | 44/97.8  | 1/2.2    | .000                     |
| 2     | 44/97.8  | 1/2.2    | .000                     |
| 3     | 45/100   | 0/0.0    | .000                     |
| 4     | 30/66.7  | 15/33.3  | .025                     |
| 5     | 44/97.8  | 1/2.2    | .000                     |
| 6     | 44/97.8  | 1/2.2    | .000                     |
| 7     | 44/97.8  | 1/2.2    | .000                     |
| 8     | 8/17.8   | 37/82.2  | .000                     |
| 9     | 38/84.4  | 7/15.6   | .000                     |
| 10    | 43/95.6  | 2/4.4    | .000                     |
| 11    | 5/11.1   | 40/88.9  | .000                     |
| 12    | 36/80.0  | 9/20.0   | .000                     |
| 13    | 3/6.7    | 42/93.3  | .000                     |

Table 1 presents that the students strongly agreed with the following statements regarding the attitudes of the teacher; *I like my English teacher when she is friendly* (item 1: 97.8%) and *funny* (item 2: 97.8%). All the students are also in the same opinion about another statement which is that *I like my English teacher when she smiles during the lesson* (item 3: 100.0%). The results of these three items indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between *agree* and *disagree* statements.

Item 4 proves that 66.7% of the students expect their teacher to help them during the activities while 33.3% of the students disagree with this idea. The results of both the questionnaire and recordings indicate that these learners who are at the age of 5 or 6 sometimes need help from their teacher to feel safe and motivated, however, it is an also inevitable fact according to the findings that these very young learners may sometimes have very high self-esteem and they desire to do the things alone. They feel very satisfied and confident when they prove that they are able to do a task on their own. When they were asked whether they need help from their teacher or not, 15 (33.3%) out of 45 students told that they do not need any help as they have the talent and capacity to do the things alone. These 15 students said that they know how to do everything.

According to the results of item 5, 6, and 7, 97.8% of the students are in agreement that they love being encouraged, praised and rewarded by the teacher. Accordingly, the chi-square results of these three items indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between *agree* and *disagree* statements.

Item 8 proposes that the students strongly disagree with the statement that they like their teacher when she sits on her chair and teaches there. Item 9 indicates that 84.2% of the students prefer a classroom in which the teacher moves around.

Item 10 illustrates that 43 (95.6%) out of 45 students states that they like their English teacher when she uses her body language. The observations and recordings prove the fact that the teacher attracted the attention of the learners in this study when she used her body language. Seeing their teacher so energetic and motivated, they had great fun. According to Arıkan and Ulaş-Taraf (2010) it can be stated that teachers should create learning environments in which children get aural support in meaningful contexts.

In Item 11, 40 (88.9%) out of 45 students disagree the statement that they get pleasure from the lesson when their teacher talks for long periods of time. During the interviews conducted to fill in the questionnaires, the students insistently said that they got bored when they were expected to listen to their teacher for a long time. They told that they immediately want to start the task instead of listening to their teacher. Thorkildsen (2002) asserts that young children at the age of 5 to 7 need physical involvement in learning, do not sit and listen well, and remember information best when presented in a meaningful context through action.

Item 12 shows that 80.0% of the students want their teacher to show them how to do the task instead of explaining and giving instructions. Cameron (2003) states that young children are motivated to find meaning in action and interaction. Their developmental growth requires them to have some concrete examples as they are not able to conceive the abstract concepts yet. According to Item 13, 93.3% (43 out of 45) of the students state that they do not have fun in English lessons when they are forced to complete a task when they do not desire to do so.

## CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the importance of motivation in EFL learners' performance especially with young learners. Since there is strong difference between 5-7 and 8-10 year old group, the techniques for developing motivation of students highly differ. Teachers of young learners do possess different and appropriate techniques to improve their students' performance in language classes.

When the overall results are evaluated, it is observed that teacher's attitude towards the learners has a great role on students' feelings about the lesson. In accordance with the findings, it is concluded that all the potential motivating factors are available; the internal factors of the young children are activated. All these positive external reinforcements enable the young children to feel excited, happy, safe, confident and very positive towards the lesson.

Although the motivation in class has been much discussed, teachers tend to neglect its effect in most of the situations and activities. Such studies indicate that motivation is very influential in students' current success and future attitude towards language and its culture. In order to benefit much from language classes, language teachers should be exposed to psychological training courses or in-service training concerning raising motivational elements in formal settings. Moreover, teachers may follow latest trend in language classes underlining the high importance of motivation of their students so that they can imply the positive effects of motivation and transfer such knowledge and application to their current language classes.

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