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MOTIVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A STUDY OF UZBEK EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The integration of technology in language education has significantly transformed the learning experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This study investigates the relationship between technology use and learner motivation among Uzbek EFL students. The research aims to explore how digital tools influence students' engagement, participation, and overall motivation in language learning. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving questionnaire data, classroom observations, and student feedback.

The findings reveal that technology-enhanced learning environments positively impact students' motivation by increasing interactivity, autonomy, and access to authentic materials. Tools such as mobile applications, online platforms, and AI-assisted feedback systems were found to encourage active participation and sustained engagement. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, unequal access to technology, and potential distractions were also identified.

The study concludes that while technology can serve as a powerful motivational tool in EFL contexts, its effectiveness depends on purposeful integration and pedagogical support. The findings provide practical implications for teachers and

policymakers seeking to improve language learning outcomes through technology.

Keywords

Motivation, technology integration, EFL learners, Uzbekistan, digital learning, student engagement

Introduction

Motivation is widely recognized as one of the most critical factors influencing second language acquisition. It determines learners' level of engagement, persistence, and success in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001). In recent years, technological advancements have created new opportunities for enhancing motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Technology has become an essential component of modern education, particularly in language classrooms where exposure to authentic input is often limited. Digital tools, including mobile applications, online platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI)-based systems, provide interactive and personalized learning environments (Chapelle, 2001). These tools allow learners to practice language skills beyond the classroom, increasing both motivation and autonomy.

In Uzbekistan, educational reforms have emphasized the importance of integrating technology into teaching and learning processes. However, despite increased access to digital tools, there is still limited research on how technology influences learner motivation in Uzbek EFL contexts. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the impact of technology on motivation among university-level EFL students.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Participants

The study involved 60 university students studying English as a foreign language in Tashkent. Participants represented elementary to intermediate proficiency levels.

Instruments

Data were collected using:

- A 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire
- Classroom observations
- Informal student feedback

Procedure

The study was conducted over a four-week period. Students engaged with various digital tools, including mobile learning applications, online platforms, and AI-assisted feedback systems.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

Results

The findings indicate that technology integration has a positive effect on learner motivation. The overall mean score for motivation-related responses was **4.08 out of 5**, indicating a high level of agreement.

Table 1

Students' Perceptions of Technology and Motivation

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	Technology makes learning English more interesting	4.32	0.61
2.	I feel more motivated when	4.15	0.67

	using digital tools		
3.	Online platforms help me learn independently	4.05	0.70
4.	AI feedback improves my learning	3.98	0.74
5.	Technology increases my participation in class	3.90	0.72

A moderate positive correlation (**r = .58, p < .01**) was found between technology use and motivation.

Qualitative Findings

Three main themes emerged:

- **Increased Engagement:** Students reported that digital tools made lessons more interactive and enjoyable.
- **Learner Autonomy:** Technology allowed students to practice independently outside the classroom.
- **Challenges:** Students mentioned distractions, limited internet access, and varying levels of digital literacy.

Discussion

The results support previous research indicating that technology enhances motivation in language learning. According to Dörnyei (2001), engaging learning environments are essential for sustaining motivation, and technology contributes to such environments through interactivity and immediacy of feedback.

The findings are consistent with Reinders and White (2016), who emphasize the role of technology in promoting learner autonomy. Uzbek EFL students in this study demonstrated increased independence, which positively influenced their motivation.

Additionally, AI-based tools provide personalized feedback, supporting adaptive learning processes (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). These tools help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses, leading to improved learning outcomes.

However, challenges such as digital inequality and limited infrastructure remain significant concerns. As noted by Selwyn (2016), unequal access to technology can widen educational gaps. Therefore, effective integration requires both technological and pedagogical support.

Overall, the study suggests that technology enhances motivation when used strategically and purposefully in the classroom.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that technology has a significant positive impact on the motivation of Uzbek EFL students. Digital tools enhance engagement, autonomy, and access to authentic learning materials.

However, the effectiveness of technology depends on its proper integration into teaching practices and the availability of institutional support. Addressing challenges such as digital literacy and access to resources is essential for maximizing the benefits of technology in language education.

Future research should explore long-term effects and include larger sample sizes to provide more generalizable findings.

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