

Chapter 7

An Expanded Framework for Facilitating Learner Autonomy and Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation Through Specifically– Designed Online Tasks: Technology–Enhanced Language Learning

Kasim Koruyan

King Saudi University, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the research gap in providing an extended framework for facilitating learner autonomy and enhancing intrinsic motivation through specifically-designed online tasks to enhance the development of reading skills in higher education. The approach to designing the reading tasks was informed by the comprehensive expansion of Chapelle's model explicitly to provide a theoretical framework for task design to assess the impact of the iPad-enhanced task design on the development of learner autonomy and motivation. Data collection and processing followed an exploratory case study approach applying mixed-method design. The differences in median scores for pre- and post-data were statistically tested using a Mann-Whitney U test. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report themes in qualitative data collected for this study. Analysis of the results suggests that changing the culture of instruction and preparing university students for the realities of the digital age seem to be both positive and necessary.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology-enhanced language learning refers to language learning that takes place in a technology-rich environment and the range of technologies used in language learning (Motteram, 2013). As Skehan (2003) argues, technology-enhanced classrooms are playing an important role in relation to motivation and autonomy in language learning. Sotiriou and Primalis (2013) also suggest that technology and its applications can be very powerful aids when delivering reading lessons, and that they can stimulate students' interest in reading. However, merely by providing technological tools, learning does not mean take place unless they are informed by pedagogy.

As far as learning English is concerned, despite English being generally accepted as an internationally important language for academic and professional success, Turkish students are reluctant to read in general and in English in particular. Indeed, a recent survey has reported that Turkish students had the poorest results in English exams in European countries (Education First, 2013). Commenting on the results of the survey, Bülbül, Mısırlıoğlu, Ceyhun, Araz and Altuğ (2014) suggested that by and large Turkish people and students in particular lack interest in reading, particularly in English. Some of the reasons for this may include:

- students' attitudes towards the learning situation (crowded classrooms),
- the way the English language is taught (teacher-centered classes),
- that the teaching and learning materials are based on the audio-lingual method, and
- difficulties in reading and writing in English due to learning differences.

As a result, many students have become dissatisfied with learning English. This type of dissatisfaction has been highlighted by their lack of interest in reading and their passivity towards English being taught in the classroom (Boyno, 2011). Thus, changing the culture of instruction and preparing university students for the realities of the digital age seem to be both positive and necessary moves and a first step that may encourage an active language learning process and enhance students' motivation to read. As Krashen (2004) suggests, reading is the most powerful tool we have in language education.

An exploration of the use of iPad-supported tasks for English language learning and reading in particular will contribute to the understanding of the nature and role of students' motivation with regard to learning English in the Turkish context. Another core problem, according to Boyno (2011), is that Turkish students are not given the chance to develop a sense of taking responsibility for their learning, because the concept of learner autonomy is absent in Turkish education. Consequently, students are not motivated to make their own choices and to take the initiative in terms of their learning; instead, they are told what they need to do. Saraç's observations (2013, p. 21) confirm that learners remain exposed to traditional educational methods where the teacher is the "sage on the stage" rather than the "guide on the side". Indeed, learners may not want to become autonomous learners, because they are accustomed to being "spoon-fed" and controlled (Deci & Flaste, 1995, p. 85), which may also explain a lack of motivation to learn English.

As a result, a teacher-centered, textbook-reliant, audio-lingual teaching method is commonly found to prevail in language classrooms in Turkey (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). This may be because the English language curriculum has not considered the needs and characteristics of students. Thus, this study conducted a needs analysis about students' interests and learning preferences before designing the online reading tasks and using 'FluencyWorlds', an interaction application. To encourage change, iPads were used

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