

THE EFFECT OF MOTIVATION ON JORDANIAN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL IN ENGLISH

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Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the effect of motivation on English writing skills among Jordanian 10th grade students in Al-karak Directorate of Education during the second semester 2011\2012. The sample of the study consisted of (198) male and female students, which was stratified randomly selected from Alkarak secondary school for boys and Alkarak secondary school for girls . The researcher developed a questionnaire where reliability and validity of the instrument were ensured . The results of the study indicated that there were statistical significant differences at($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between external and internal motivation due to gender variable. and that there were statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among 10th grade students due to the level of motivation.

Keywords: Motivation, EFL Students, Writing Skill, Applied Linguistics

1. Introduction and Background

Writing as a productive skill is one of the four basic skills of the English language. Writing is a comprehensive ability involving grammar , vocabulary , conception , rhetoric , and other parts of the language (Zhang &Chen ,1989). Writing enhances language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences, and other elements of writing to communicate their idea effectively, and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class(Bello,1997). Writing is an important skill to be mastered in learning English as a foreign language. It is not only a means of communication where students can share their views and thoughts, it is actually a pre requisit to master other language skills . "Man has primitive needs to write Children want to write , in fact need to write , before they want to read" (Elbow,1973) .

The purpose of teaching writing as one of the four language skills is to facilitate students' learning , career , and their daily communication. Writing as a psychological need in the sense that it provides learners with evidence that they are making progress (Takrouiri , 2002) . Writing also makes language learning more effective and authentic through creating a variety of activities inside and outside the classroom.

Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989) considered writing as significant language skill that should be developed at an early stage of learning the foreign language .Yet, writing is a skill that should not be learned in an isolated form, it should be taught interactively with other language skills, i.e. Listening , speaking , and reading .

Writing has many important aspects ,it makes students more relaxed and confident with new language because it allows them to work at their pace. It also allows them to make changes and revision without pressure to perform on the spot that is associated , for instance , with speaking (Mahmoud,2000).

Writing plays two distinct roles in schools ; First, it is a skill that requires mastering basic sub skills and processes such as; handwriting , spelling, a rich knowledge of vocabulary, mastery of the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, word usage, grammar ,and the use of strategies ; planning, evaluating, and revising text. All are necessary for the production of coherently organized essays containing well developed and pertinent ideas, supporting examples, and appropriate detail .This role can be characterized as “learning to write.” Second, writing is a means to extend and deepen students' knowledge, it acts as a tool for learning subject matter (Graham&Perin,2007).So, writing is a psycho-socio- mental linguistic skill.

1:1 The status of teaching English in Jordan

(Al-Kataybeh & Al-Shourafa,2011) mentioned that The growing importance of English as an international language is observed in all countries of the world among them Jordan where the government recognized the growing importance of teaching English, so it is taught in all stages as a basic subject from the kindergarten to university level .

English is taught from first grade at public and private schools in Jordan, and has become the language of instruction in the colleges of the whole scientific and medical major in Jordan. The cultural environment of Jordan is distinguished by it is widespread use of English as a foreign language in addition to the use of Arabic, the native language, in formal and informal settings At present, there is a serious gap and deficiency in Jordanian students' abilities to acquire and use spoken English effectively for the purpose of general and formal

communication. Although English has become a common, global language for the purposes of industry, trade, education, and general communication In Jordan school systems particularly, Jordanian students sometimes have a challenging time acquiring the language, both in written and oral forms. It is a fact that a challenge to effective EFL instruction in Jordan is that many EFL instructors are not very well educated and prepared in particular to accommodate and understand the unique linguistic learning styles of some native Jordanian students , which constitute a great problem that faces English language teaching in Jordan. Another problem is that the Jordanian EFL teachers revert back to the Arabic language to explain what a word means when students are unable to understand its meaning Among the many challenges that face teaching the English language in the Jordanian public schools is the crowded classrooms. Despite the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education in Jordan to develop students EFL writing skills in general and creative writing, including short story writing in particular, most students still face difficulties in executing their writing tasks and show low level in their abilities to write in the target language . For the Jordanian educational system, the Ministry of Education pointed out that at the end of the basic stage (tenth grade) students are expected to:

1. Write a 3 well- developed paragraphs on a topic of general interest.
2. Write a 3 well – developed paragraphs explaining a concept (E.g.: what good citizenship means to me)
3. Write a story with a problem and solution(68).

1:2 Statement of the problem

Teachers often complain about the low level of their learners in leaning English language skills, this may be due to such internal factors as the motivation level (Hamilton,2006). In spite of the stated goals of teaching English of the Ministry of Education in Jordan , the traditional methods fail to provide the students with the necessary motivational processes that enable them to improve their writing and enhance their language , for this reason ,the researcher intended to study the effect of motivation on Jordanian 10th grade students' writing skills .

1:3 Significance of the study

This study derives its significance from the importance of writing skill in EFL classroom as one of the important tools for communicating with others .

Mastering the skill of writing is an essential need for any learner whose final goal is to use English , since writing logically complements the other basic language skills, namely reading and speaking .So this study comes to investigate motivation as one of the important factors that influence second or foreign language learning .

1:4 Purpose of the study

This study attempts to investigate the effect of motivation on English writing skills among Jordanian 10th grade students in Al-karak Directorate of Education during the second semester 2011\2012.

1:5 Questions of the study

1. What is the level of motivational orientation in general , external and internal motivation on the writing skill in the 10th grade students?
2. Are there any statistical significant differences at($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the students' writing skill (as measured by students' response on the questionnaire) attributed to gender ?
3. Are there any statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in both internal and external motivation attributed to the level of motivation ?

1:6 Operational definition of terms

- Motivation : the students' task engagements and persistence in reaction to an activity as measured by their responses to the test prepared by the researcher .
- Writing skill: is a process of delivering ideas through written texts or translating what is on mind through written language that will be expressed by the students in the given instrument of the study
- 10th grade students : male and female 10th graders who had studied English for ten years and their age is around (16) years old.

2. Theoretical framework

Learning a foreign language has a great educational value. Such learning gives the opportunity to enrich students awareness and appreciation of their own language and culture as well as introducing them to other cultures and various ways of life and types of thinking (Takrouri,2002).

Teaching and learning writing skills is hardly ever the most motivating component of a language curriculum, appropriate stimuli are rare in a 2- or 3-year purely skills-oriented training, involving one-to-one communication using traditional tools, and often lacking clearly differentiated and sequenced goals per “level”. In addition, writing curricula often fail to be embedded in a research environment nor in an overall view on language acquisition and learning(Buyse,2006)

Al-Jarrah(2001) defined writing in a foreign or a second language as an overwhelming experience, particularly , for students whose native language, i.e. Arabic –speaking students writing in English.

Wikipedia (2009) defined motivation as the internal condition that activates behavior and gives it direction; energizes and directs goal- oriented behavior. According to various theories like Maslow's (1970), motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure , or it may be included specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, hobby goal, or it may be attributed to less- apparent reasons such as altruism and morality.

Motivation is closely related to the learning process. It can help us plan to achieve to objectives we desire. Implementing specific activities can make the achievement of these objectives slow but effective. One can realize that there are two types of motivation defined according their impact . These motives are internal motivation and external motivation . Internal motivation emerges from the person him\her, while external motivation comes from external sources such as the teacher, school administration, parents and peers (Okolo,1995).Mean while (Fisher,1990) called them as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from within and is based on needs, wants, attitudes, values, or beliefs and no apparent reward, where as external motivation comes from things one gets after he/she achieves success and anticipates a reward from outside and beyond the self, such as better paying jobs or a more economically stable lifestyle. He also pointed that educational psychologists point out to three major sources of motivation in learning : the learner's natural interest (intrinsic satisfaction), the teacher/ institution / employment (extrinsic reward) and success in the task (combining satisfaction and reward).

2:1 The Importance of Motivation in Learning and Language Learning

Gage & Berliner (1992:225) defined learning as " the process whereby an organism changes its behavior as a result of experiences". This means that learning takes time because it may lead to a change in the behavior that occurs in the process of learning .

Motivation in education effects on how students learn and how they behave towards a subject matter . It can direct behavior toward particular goals , lead to increased effort and energy.

Prakash (2007) explained that motivation is the heart of significant age level. When motivation is high, students learn things without taking much time , but when it is low , they take longer time to learn the writing skill aspects and they are exposed to make many errors in learning the material.

Motivation is considered as the central construct in both educational and psychological research and plays a significant role in several theories of human development and learning (Weiner,1990).Learning is equally essential for performance, learning enables learners to acquire new knowledge and skills, whereas motivation provides the impetus for showing what we have learned .

Motivation is an important psychological construct that affects learning and performance in at least four ways: firstly, it increases an individual's energy and activity level (Pintrich, Marx, Boyle,1993). Secondly, it directs an individual toward certain goals (Eccles and Wigfield,1985). Motivation affect choices people make and the results they find rewarding . Thirdly, it promotes initiation of certain activities and persistence in those activities (Stipek,1998). It increases the likelihood that people will begin something on their own, persist in the face of difficulty , and resume a task after a temporary interruption. Fourth , it effects the learning strategies and cognitive processes an individual employs (Dwek and Elliott,1983). It increases the likelihood that people will pay attention to something , study and practice it , and try to learn it in a meaningful fashion . It also increases the likelihood that will seek help as they encounter difficulty .

Educational psychologists have long recognized the importance of motivation for supporting student learning. More recently, the partnership for 21st century skills has identified *initiative* as one of the life and career skills necessary to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workforce. However, many educators may be unfamiliar with methods for evaluating and encouraging motivation, particularly at the elementary level. The purpose of this literature review is a fourfold: (a) to explore the ways in which motivation has been defined by researchers, (b) to investigate how motivation develops, (c) to learn how teachers can encourage development of motivation in their students, and (d) to review best practices in assessing motivation(Emily,2011).

Gupta and Woldemariam (2011) conducted a study examining the influence of motivation and attitude on the writing strategy use of undergraduate EFL students at Jimma

University, Ethiopia. The students are required to develop their writing skills to meet academic requirements and future demands of writing in professional settings. Data was collected from respondents about their motivation and attitude, writing ability and writing strategy use using questionnaires, proficiency test and interviews (n=680, 668 and 46 respectively). Analyses and summaries of the data were done using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Results obtained indicated that undergraduate students with strong motivation demonstrated high level of enjoyment, confidence, perceived ability, and positive attitude towards effective teaching methods of writing, and they were found to have employed writing strategies most frequently. That is, highly motivated students were found to use more writing strategies than less motivated ones. Moreover, students who frequently practiced writing, exerted adequate effort, scored expected grades, and obtained early support and encouragement from significant others were also found to be high writing strategy users. The study also revealed that the majority of the undergraduate students were instrumentally motivated when learning writing. This motive has been found to be one of the main driving forces in developing writing skills of learners in the EFL context

Gditawi, Noah, & Abdul Ghani (2011) conducted a study investigating motivation relationship with learning reading and writing in sixth graders in public schools in the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan . This major goal includes the following items: identifying the level of motivation in sixth graders attending public schools in Jordan , identifying their academic achievements in reading and writing , identifying the influence of motivation on their learning reading and writing . The sample of the study consisted of 852 students, 460males and 392 female. The study found out that the mean of motivation is above average(3.91), the mean of reading and writing achievement is above average(11,92).The study also indicated a positive significant correlation between motivation and learning reading and writing. The results have pinpointed the influence of motivation on learning reading and writing.

3. The population of the study

The population of the study consisted of (1884) female and male 10th grade students : (950) male students and (934) female students in Al-karak Directorate of Education during the second semester 2011/2012.

3:1 The sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of (198) male and female students, which was stratified randomly selected from Alkarak secondary school for boys and Alkarak secondary school for girls .

3:2 The instrument of the study

The researcher designed a questionnaire of (35) items in its draft form of three dimensions ; motivational orientation consisted of (11) items , extrinsic motivation consisted of (6) items and intrinsic motivation consisted of (6) items .

3:2:1 Validity of the instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire , it was given to a jury of TEFL specialists, professors, teachers and supervisors of English language to examine it and to provide their comments. Consequently, some items of the questionnaire were modified , other were omitted according to the suggestions and comments provided by the jury . The items of the questionnaire in its draft shape were (35) before judgment and then became (31) in its final shape .

3:2:2 Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cornbach Alpha by administering it to a pilot sample of (30) 10th male and female students (excluded from the sample of the study) within two weeks stability . The Cornbach Alpha was (0.78) , which was appropriate to such study .

3:3 Procedures of the study

This study attempted to find out the effect of motivation and writing skill in English of the Jordanian 10th graders in Al-karak Directorate of Education during the academic year 2011\2012 and whether those students were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated .

The researcher selected the population of the study , then she selected the sample of the study .

The researcher developed a questionnaire and it was translated in to Arabic directed to the targeted students .

Validity and reliability of the instrument were ensured. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the researcher herself handed out the questionnaire to the students and

precisely instructed them on how to answer them. Having collected data, it was statistically processed and analyzed using SPSS program .

4. Results and discussion of the results of the study

This study investigated the effect of motivation on Jordanian lower basic stage pupils' writing skill in English skill in Alkarak Directorate of Education during the second semester 2011/2012 on a sample consisting of 102 male and female 10th graders.

The results of the study will be discussed according to the questions of the study respectively.

4:1 Results related to the first question: What is the level of motivational orientation in general , external and internal motivation on the writing skill in the 10th grade students?

To answer the first question standard deviations, means were calculated table(1) show standard deviations and means to the level of motivation among 10th grade students.

Table(1)

standard deviations and means to the level of motivation among 10th grade students

type	means	std	level
motivational orientation	1.89	.59	low
external	1.93	.49	average
internal	2.39	.77	average

As shown in Table (1), the level of motivation was low with means (1.89) and a standard deviation (0.59) , as well as external motivation was a low with means (1.93) and standard deviation (.,49) while the internal motivation was average level with means(2.39) and a standard deviation (.,77). The means of all items was calculated for further analyses.

4:2 Results related to the second question: Are there any statistical significant differences at($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the learners' writing skill (as measured by learner' response on the questionnaire) attributed to gender ?

To answer the second question of the study, t- test was conducted for independent for independent samples to indicate differences in the external and internal motivation due to the gender variable . Table (2) shows the results of t-test to identify the differences between external and internal motivation due to the gender variable.

The results of the first question of the study indicated that there were statistical significant differences between external and internal motivation due to gender variable.

The researcher attributed the findings that the males superior to the females with regard to internal and external motivation because females have less confidence in their ability as they feel that they are less than males or because they have less control over their future .

Table (2)

The results of t-test to identify the differences in the external and internal motivation according to gender variable (male / female)

Kind of motivation	Level of motivation	means	Stander deviation	number	Freedom scores	T value	T statistical sig
external	male	2.06	.44	88	196	3.48	0.001
	female	1.82	.51	110			
internal	male	2.67	.69	88		4.95	000
	female	2.16	.75	110			

As shown in table (2) there were differences in the level of motivation among 10 grade due to gender (t) was (3.48) in favor of males and also showed that there were differences in the level of internal motivation among 10th grade students due to gender variable in favor of males.

4:3 Results related to the third question: Are there any statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in both internal and external motivation attributed to the level of motivation ?

To answer the third question T test was conducted for independent samples to indicate differences in the external and internal motivation depending on the level of motivation Table (3) The results of t-test to identify the differences in the external and internal motivation according to the level of motivation.

Table (3)

The results of t-test to identify the differences in the external and internal motivation according to the level of motivation .

Kind of motivation	Level of motivation	means	Stander deviation	number	Freedom scores	T value	T statistical sig
external	low	1.87	.43	183	196	7.39-	000
	high	2.83	.57	12			
internal	Low	2.31	.70	186		5.83-	000
	high	3.54	.85	12			

As seen from table (3) there were differences in the level of extrinsic motivation among 10th grade students due to the level of motivation , where the value of t (7.39) in favor those who motivation is high and also there are differences in the level of intrinsic motivation among 10th grade students due to the level of motivation , where the value of t (5.83) in favor those who motivation is high.

Regarding the research third question, the results showed that there were statistical significant differences in the level of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among 10th grade students due to the level of motivation and that might be because whenever the level of stimulation increase the level of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation will increase also .

5. Recommendations

In light of the results of the study , the following recommendations were proposed.

1. Try to encourage the growth of intrinsic satisfaction and the rewards of learning in students .
2. Employ a variety of teaching strategies and material . A teacher who effectively uses models, simulation , and activities instead of textbook explanation is likely to keep all students motivated .
3. Teachers should concentrate on increasing students' motivation and developing the skills or strategies to make them more competent so that they are able to take ownerships of their own learning .

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