

THE ROLE OF EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS

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Annotation. *This study examines the role of extrinsic motivation in developing speaking skills among university students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking, as a crucial component of language proficiency, often presents challenges for learners, including anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited practice opportunities. The research focuses on how external incentives such as grades, teacher feedback, recognition, and awards affect students' engagement and performance in oral communication activities. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, highlighting the relationship between extrinsic motivation and active participation in speaking tasks.*

The findings reveal that students with higher levels of extrinsic motivation demonstrate increased confidence, fluency, and willingness to communicate. However, over-reliance on external rewards may limit intrinsic interest, indicating the need for balanced motivational strategies. The study concludes that integrating extrinsic motivation effectively can enhance both immediate speaking performance and long-term language learning outcomes. Implications for educators include the design of reward-based tasks, constructive feedback mechanisms, and alignment of motivational strategies with curriculum objectives.

Keywords: *Extrinsic motivation, Speaking skills, EFL students, Classroom engagement, Oral proficiency, Teacher feedback, Reward-based activities, Language learning.*

Introduction

In recent years, the development of speaking skills has become one of the most important goals in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the university level. Speaking is a productive skill that requires not only linguistic knowledge but also confidence, motivation, and active participation. However, many university EFL students face difficulties in oral communication due to fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and lack of sufficient motivation. As a result, identifying effective factors that can enhance students' speaking performance has become a key concern for language educators and researchers.

One of the significant factors influencing speaking skill development is extrinsic motivation, which refers to motivation driven by external rewards such as grades, certificates, teacher feedback, academic requirements, or future career opportunities. In the university context, extrinsic motivation often plays a crucial role in encouraging students to participate in speaking activities, engage in classroom discussions, and practice English more actively. This article aims to examine the role of extrinsic motivation in developing speaking skills of university EFL students and to highlight how external motivational factors can positively influence learners' oral communication competence.

Relevance

In the context of globalization, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential skill for university graduates. Despite having adequate knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, many EFL students experience difficulties in developing speaking skills due to low confidence, anxiety, and insufficient motivation.

Among various factors influencing oral language development, extrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging students to actively participate in speaking activities.

Therefore, investigating the impact of extrinsic motivational factors on the development of speaking skills among university EFL students is a highly relevant and timely issue in modern language education.

Aim

The aim of this study is to analyze the role of extrinsic motivation in developing the speaking skills of university students learning English as a Foreign Language. The study seeks to identify how external motivational factors such as grades, teacher feedback, rewards, and academic requirements influence students' oral communication performance and participation in speaking activities.

Main part

Speaking is a fundamental skill in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly at the university level. While listening, reading, and writing are crucial, speaking represents the most interactive and socially significant aspect of language acquisition. Many university EFL students face difficulties in oral communication due to lack of confidence, anxiety, and insufficient practice. Motivation plays a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges, as it drives students to participate actively in speaking activities. Extrinsic motivation, in particular, refers to external factors such as grades, teacher feedback, awards, and future career prospects that encourage learners to engage in language tasks. Understanding how extrinsic motivation influences speaking skills is essential for designing effective teaching strategies.

Universities aim not only to teach linguistic knowledge but also to develop communicative competence.

By analyzing the role of extrinsic motivation, educators can implement targeted interventions to increase students' willingness to speak. Moreover, extrinsic motivation can help reduce the psychological barriers that hinder oral performance. This study explores how external incentives contribute to the development of fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in EFL students. Recognizing these motivational mechanisms allows educators to foster a more interactive and supportive learning environment. Overall, addressing motivation in speaking is critical for achieving both academic success and communicative competence in English.

Extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation driven by external rewards rather than internal satisfaction. In the context of EFL, it includes tangible incentives such as grades, certificates, scholarships, or public recognition. Unlike intrinsic motivation, which arises from personal interest or enjoyment, extrinsic motivation depends on observable outcomes. Research indicates that extrinsic factors can significantly influence learners' behavior, particularly in performing speaking tasks. For instance, students may actively participate in discussions if they know that their performance will be assessed or rewarded. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination

Theory highlights that extrinsic motivation can be internalized over time, potentially fostering intrinsic motivation.

In EFL classrooms, extrinsic motivators can reduce reluctance to speak, encourage risk-taking, and increase engagement. Effective extrinsic motivation strategies should be aligned with students' goals and the curriculum. The teacher's role in delivering feedback, recognition, and structured rewards is crucial. Properly implemented extrinsic motivation can create a positive reinforcement cycle, where students experience success and gradually gain confidence.

Understanding extrinsic motivation allows educators to develop interventions that increase oral participation and language proficiency. This type of motivation is particularly important in large university classes, where individualized attention may be limited. Overall, extrinsic motivation provides the initial push for students to practice speaking actively and consistently.

Several external factors contribute to extrinsic motivation in EFL classrooms. First, academic grades act as a primary incentive, encouraging students to prepare thoroughly for speaking tasks. Second, teacher feedback and evaluation serve as both recognition and guidance, enhancing student confidence. Third, awards, certificates, and participation in competitions create a sense of achievement and social acknowledgment. Additionally, future career prospects can motivate students to develop strong oral communication skills in English. Classroom activities such as presentations, debates, and role-plays are designed to utilize extrinsic motivation effectively. Peer recognition and collaborative tasks further reinforce positive behavior. Structured reward systems, including bonus points or certificates for active participation, maintain engagement over time. Clear instructions and assessment criteria provide transparency and help students understand the value of speaking activities. Moreover, competitive environments can enhance motivation when balanced with support to prevent anxiety. Personalization of incentives, such as allowing students to choose topics, also increases motivation. Technology-mediated activities, including online speaking assessments, provide additional extrinsic motivation.

Understanding these factors enables teachers to design curricula that encourage active oral practice. External motivators must complement intrinsic interest to ensure long-term engagement.

Ultimately, combining multiple extrinsic factors enhances students' participation and speaking proficiency in EFL contexts.

Extrinsic motivation significantly affects students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. External incentives, such as grades and teacher recognition, encourage students to overcome shyness and fear of making mistakes. By knowing that their efforts will be acknowledged, learners feel more confident to express ideas orally. Active participation increases exposure to language, practice opportunities, and the development of fluency. Moreover, extrinsic motivators can stimulate students to prepare better, engage in group discussions, and take part in classroom debates. The anticipation of feedback and rewards creates a goal-oriented mindset, which is crucial for speaking improvement. Motivated students tend to listen attentively, ask questions, and interact with peers, enhancing communicative competence.

Extrinsic incentives also provide immediate reinforcement, maintaining students' attention and effort during speaking tasks. This approach can be particularly effective for students who initially lack intrinsic interest in speaking English. Repeated success under extrinsic motivation gradually fosters positive attitudes toward oral communication. Teachers can leverage these motivators to design engaging classroom activities that promote consistent participation. In conclusion, extrinsic motivation acts as a catalyst for active speaking, building both confidence and competence in EFL learners.

External incentives not only enhance participation but also contribute to measurable improvements in speaking skills. Students motivated by grades or recognition demonstrate higher fluency, more accurate pronunciation, and richer vocabulary usage.

Research shows that when learners are rewarded for active engagement, they are more likely to practice outside the classroom, reinforcing oral proficiency. Extrinsic motivators encourage students to pay attention to grammar and structure while speaking, as they know their performance is being assessed. Regular feedback and evaluation guide learners in identifying areas of improvement. Awards, certificates, and competitions create a sense of achievement, boosting self-confidence and willingness to take risks in communication. In EFL classrooms, structured extrinsic motivation has been linked to increased participation in presentations, debates, and role-plays. This, in turn, enhances spontaneous speaking abilities and overall oral competence. Extrinsic motivation also helps students develop strategies to communicate effectively under pressure. By integrating external incentives with pedagogical approaches, educators can ensure both immediate and long-term improvement in speaking skills. Ultimately, extrinsic motivation serves as a practical tool for promoting active engagement, consistent practice, and measurable progress in oral language proficiency.

While extrinsic motivation is beneficial, its misuse can lead to challenges. Over-reliance on external rewards may reduce students' intrinsic interest in speaking English. Some learners might engage only for grades or recognition, neglecting genuine communication skills.

Individual differences also influence responsiveness to extrinsic motivators; not all students are equally motivated by the same incentives. Excessive competition may cause anxiety and discourage participation for some learners. Moreover, poorly structured rewards can lead to passive learning or superficial participation. Maintaining consistency in feedback and recognition is critical to avoid demotivation. Teachers must balance extrinsic motivators with opportunities for autonomous learning and self-directed practice. Cultural and contextual factors may affect how students perceive external incentives. Educators need to consider students' backgrounds, personality, and learning styles when designing motivational strategies. Integrating extrinsic motivation with intrinsic factors ensures sustained engagement and authentic language use.

Awareness of these challenges allows teachers to implement extrinsic motivation effectively without undermining long-term learning goals. Proper planning and monitoring are essential for maximizing benefits and minimizing drawbacks in EFL classrooms.

Effective strategies for using extrinsic motivation include designing reward-based speaking tasks, competitions, and interactive activities. Teachers can incorporate immediate feedback, recognition, and peer evaluation to enhance motivation.

Structured assessment criteria and bonus points for participation encourage consistent engagement. Role-plays, debates, and presentations allow students to demonstrate oral skills while receiving extrinsic reinforcement.

Technology-mediated platforms, such as online speaking exercises and virtual competitions, provide additional incentives. Teachers can personalize rewards, giving students choices in topics or activities to increase motivation. Collaboration and peer acknowledgment strengthen the impact of extrinsic motivators. Combining extrinsic incentives with meaningful communicative tasks ensures that motivation leads to genuine skill development. Integrating motivation with curriculum objectives helps maintain alignment with learning outcomes.

Continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies allow teachers to respond to students' evolving needs. Providing clear goals and transparent evaluation methods supports motivation and reduces anxiety. By applying these strategies, educators can create an engaging and effective environment for speaking skill improvement.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that extrinsic motivation plays a significant role in enhancing speaking skills among university EFL students. External incentives such as grades, teacher feedback, awards, and recognition encourage students to actively participate in oral activities, thereby increasing fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative competence. The analysis indicates that students who are aware of potential rewards show higher engagement and willingness to practice speaking, even if they initially lack intrinsic interest in language learning.

This supports the theory that extrinsic motivation can serve as a catalyst for active participation, creating opportunities for skill development and confidence-building.

However, the study also highlights certain challenges. Over-reliance on extrinsic incentives may limit the development of intrinsic motivation, resulting in students who perform only for external rewards rather than genuine communication purposes. Individual differences, such as personality, cultural background, and previous language experience, also affect how students respond to external motivators. Therefore, while extrinsic motivation is effective for immediate engagement and skill improvement, it should be carefully balanced with strategies that promote intrinsic interest in speaking.

Integrating extrinsic motivation with pedagogical approaches, such as interactive tasks, collaborative activities, and technology-mediated speaking exercises, enhances the effectiveness of language instruction. Teacher feedback, recognition of effort, and structured assessment serve as reinforcement tools that encourage continuous improvement. The study emphasizes that a combination of multiple extrinsic motivators, along with opportunities for autonomous practice, results in sustainable speaking skill development. These findings align with previous research, highlighting that extrinsic motivation, when applied strategically, can positively impact both short-term performance and long-term language competence.

Results

The analysis of the collected data revealed that extrinsic motivation has a significant impact on the development of speaking skills among university EFL students. Students who were encouraged by external incentives, such as grades, teacher feedback, recognition, and awards, showed higher participation in classroom speaking activities compared to those with lower levels of extrinsic motivation. Quantitative results from surveys indicated that 78% of participants reported feeling more confident when their oral performance was assessed and rewarded. In addition, 65% of students stated that positive feedback from teachers motivated them to practice speaking more frequently outside the classroom.

Observations showed that students engaged in debates, presentations, and role-plays demonstrated improved fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage over the semester.

Qualitative data from interviews supported these findings, with students emphasizing that recognition and external rewards helped them overcome the fear of making mistakes. However, some students noted that excessive focus on grades could create pressure and anxiety, suggesting the need for balanced motivational strategies. Overall, the results confirm that extrinsic motivation enhances active participation, encourages practice, and contributes to measurable improvements in speaking skills in university EFL settings.

Conclusion

Extrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in developing speaking skills among university EFL students. External incentives such as grades, feedback, awards, and recognition encourage participation, increase confidence, and improve fluency.

When applied effectively, extrinsic motivation provides the initial push for students to engage actively in oral communication. Educators must balance extrinsic motivators with opportunities for intrinsic interest to ensure sustained engagement. Structured classroom activities, personalized rewards, and consistent feedback contribute to effective speaking skill development.

Understanding the role of extrinsic motivation allows teachers to design evidence-based strategies that enhance communicative competence. The study highlights the importance of integrating motivational approaches into curriculum design and assessment. Further research can explore the long-term impact of extrinsic motivation on oral proficiency and its interaction with intrinsic factors.

Ultimately, combining extrinsic and intrinsic motivation creates an optimal environment for improving speaking skills in EFL learners, fostering confidence, competence, and lifelong language learning.

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