

**METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LESSONS BASED ON A COMMUNICATIVE-COGNITIVE APPROACH**

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Abstract: This article explores the methodology for developing and sustaining student motivation in English language lessons through the lens of the communicative-cognitive approach. Traditional language teaching methods often fail to address the complex, dynamic nature of motivation, leading to learner passivity and attrition. This study proposes an integrated methodological framework that synergizes the communicative principle—focusing on authentic interaction and meaningful use—with the cognitive principle—emphasizing mental processes, conscious rule acquisition, and the construction of a structured language system.

Keywords: Motivation, communicative approach, cognitive approach, English language teaching (ELT), methodology, learner engagement, intrinsic motivation, second language acquisition (SLA).

Introduction

Motivation is widely recognized as a cornerstone of successful second language (L2) acquisition. As Dörnyei (2001) posits, motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and the driving force to sustain the long, often tedious learning process. Despite its acknowledged importance, maintaining high levels of motivation in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom remains a persistent pedagogical challenge. Traditional methodologies, whether grammar-translation with its rote memorization or purely communicative models that sometimes neglect systematic cognitive structuring, often fail to cater to the multifaceted nature of learner motivation.

The communicative-cognitive approach emerges as a potent synthesis, aiming to bridge this gap. The communicative strand emphasizes language as a tool for social interaction, prioritizing fluency, authenticity, and meaningful exchange. The cognitive strand, conversely, focuses on the internal mental processes—attention, memory, problem-solving, and the conscious construction of linguistic rules—that underpin language acquisition. This article argues that by deliberately designing a methodology that leverages both principles, educators can create a powerful motivational synergy. This approach not only makes language learning relevant (communicative) but also intellectually engaging and empowering (cognitive).

This study aims to propose and evaluate a comprehensive methodology for developing motivation in English language lessons, grounded in the communicative-cognitive approach.

Literature Review

The conceptualization of L2 motivation has evolved significantly. From Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model distinguishing integrative and instrumental motivation, the field has shifted towards a more dynamic, situated perspective. Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, which includes the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience, represents a significant advance, emphasizing the role of learners' self-concept and the immediate learning environment. This study focuses on the "L2 Learning Experience," specifically the motivational potential of classroom instruction.

The Communicative Approach

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach revolutionized language education by shifting the focus from grammatical form to communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). Key principles include a focus on meaningful tasks, authentic materials, and interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning. While CLT has been lauded for enhancing engagement and pragmatic skills, critics note that a lack of explicit focus on form can lead to fossilization and a sense of insecurity for some learners, potentially undermining motivation (Swan, 1985).

The Cognitive Approach

The cognitive approach to language learning draws from cognitive psychology, viewing learning as an active process of constructing mental representations. Key concepts include information processing, schema theory, and the role of declarative and procedural knowledge. It emphasizes the importance of conscious learning, noticing, and the development of automaticity through practice (McLaughlin, 1987). By providing learners with clear, structured knowledge and strategies, this approach can enhance feelings of competence and self-efficacy, which are critical for intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1997).

Communicative-Cognitive Approach

A synthesis of these two approaches addresses the limitations of each. A communicative-cognitive approach acknowledges that communication is enabled by cognitive processing, and cognitive development is most effective when situated in meaningful communication (Skehan, 1998). It advocates for a balanced methodology where learners are guided to notice and analyze language patterns (cognitive) within the context of authentic, interactive tasks (communicative). This dual focus can cater to different learner preferences, provide multiple avenues for success, and build both the confidence (cognitive) and the perceived relevance (communicative) that fuel motivation.

This review reveals a gap in empirical studies that operationalize this synergy into a clear, phased methodology specifically designed to measure its impact on multiple dimensions of motivation.

Methods and Discussion

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase involved a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design with a control group. The qualitative phase used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to explore the nuances of the motivational changes.

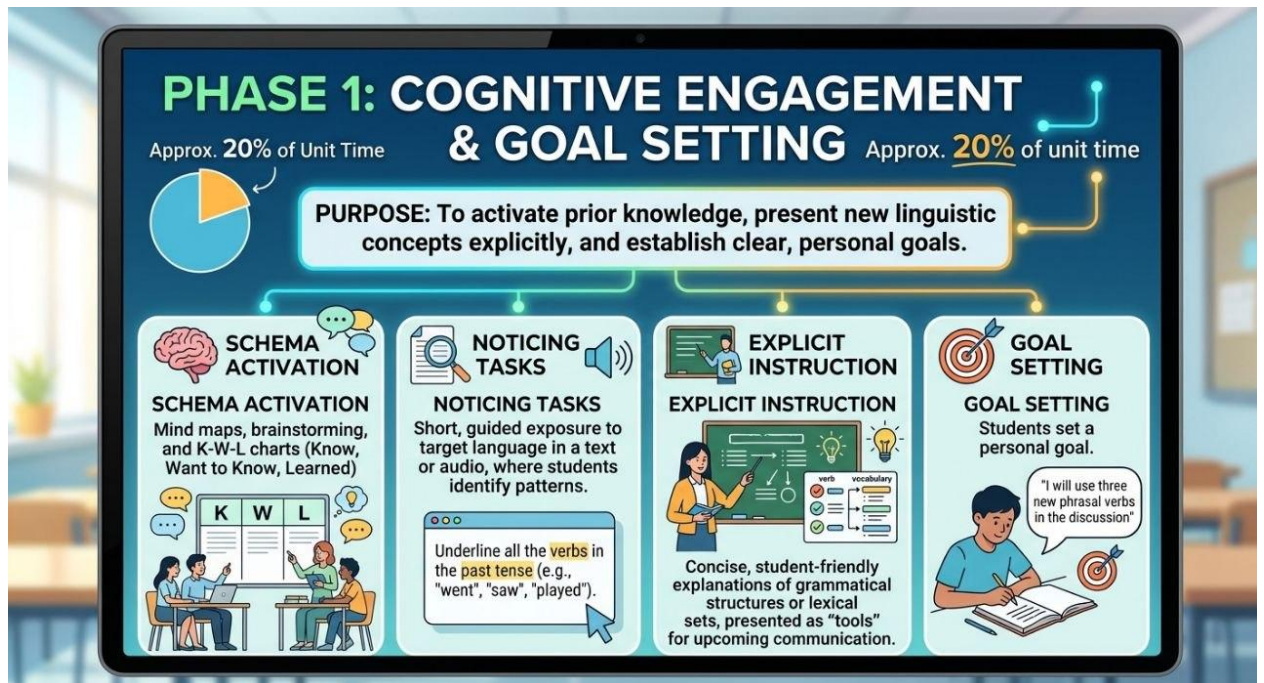
Participants

The participants were 60 students (A2-B1 CEFR level) at a language center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. They were divided into an experimental group (n=30) and a control group (n=30). Both groups were taught by the same instructor for 18 weeks (two 90-minute sessions per week). The control group continued with a standard communicative method (task-based learning with minimal explicit grammar instruction). The experimental group was taught using the proposed communicative-cognitive methodology.

The Proposed Methodology: A Phased Model

The methodology implemented with the experimental group was structured into three recurring phases per topic unit:

Cognitive Engagement & Goal Setting (Approx. 20% of unit time)



Phase 2: Communicative Activation & Collaborative Construction (Approx. 60% of unit time)

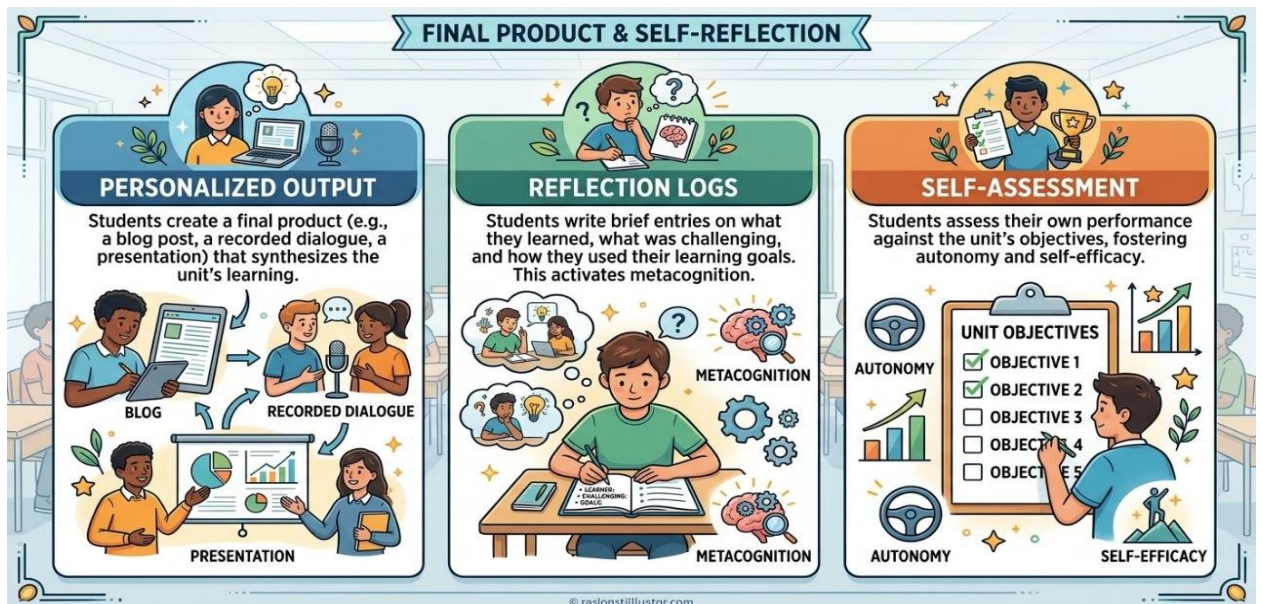
- Purpose: To use the cognitive tools in meaningful, interactive tasks, promoting fluency and collaborative knowledge construction.



Phase 3: Reflective Consolidation & Transfer (Approx. 20% of unit time)

- Purpose: To consolidate learning, reflect on progress, and prepare for transfer to real-world contexts.

Activities:



Data Collection Instruments

- Motivation Questionnaire: A 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 2004), measuring intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and motivational intensity.

- Language Performance Assessment: A pre- and post-test assessing speaking fluency (via a timed monologue), grammatical accuracy, and communicative task completion.
- Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with 10 students from the experimental group to gain deeper insights into their experiences.
- Classroom Observations: Structured observations using a checklist to record student engagement levels during each phase of the methodology.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data (questionnaires and test scores) were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test to compare pre- and post-intervention means within and between groups. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results

Quantitative Findings

The pre-intervention scores for motivation and language performance were comparable between the experimental and control groups ($p > 0.05$). After 18 weeks, significant differences emerged.

Variable	Group	Pre-Intervention (Mean ± SD)	Post-Intervention (Mean ± SD)	t-value	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	Experimental	3.2 ± 0.5	4.5 ± 0.4	12.4	< 0.001
(Scale 1-5)	Control	3.3 ± 0.6	3.6 ± 0.7	1.8	0.05
Self-Efficacy	Experimental	3.0 ± 0.6	4.3 ± 0.5	11.2	< 0.001
(Scale 1-5)	Control	3.1 ± 0.7	3.4 ± 0.8	1.5	0.05
Speaking Fluency	Experimental	85.2 ± 12.3	112.5 ± 15.4	8.9	<0.001
(words per minute)	Control	84.9 ± 11.8	91.3 ± 14.2	1.6	0.05
Grammatical Accuracy	Experimental	68% ± 8%	82% ± 7%	7.2	< 0.001
(% correct forms in task)	Control	69% ± 9%	73% ± 10%	1.3	0.05

Table 1: Pre- and post-intervention mean scores for motivation and language performance

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in all measured variables compared to the control group. The largest gains were observed in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

Comparison of Motivational Intensity Over 18 Weeks

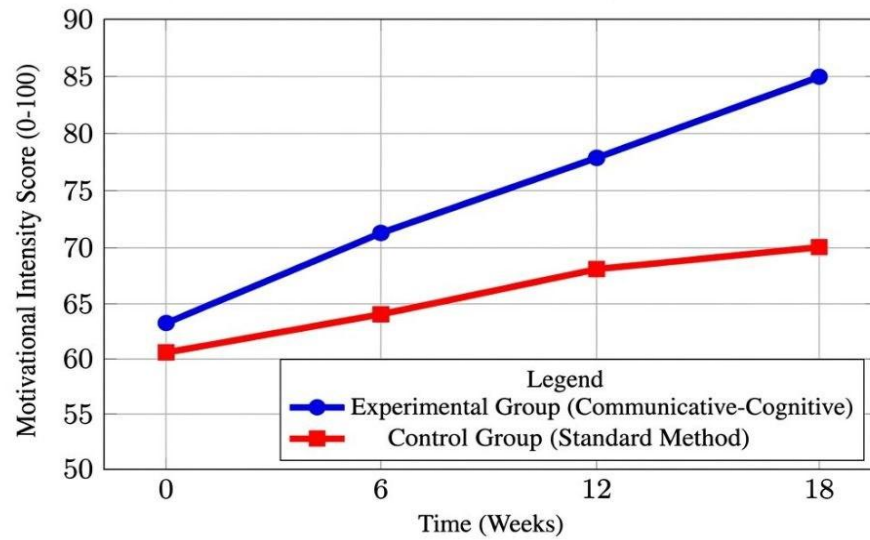


Figure 1: Motivational Intensity Trends: Experimental vs. Control Group

This diagram illustrates the sustained increase in motivational intensity in the experimental group, in contrast to the plateau observed in the control group.

Thematic analysis of interviews and observations revealed three key themes supporting the quantitative results:

1. From "Learning" to "Using": Students in the experimental group reported a shift in perspective. One student stated, "Before, English was a subject to study. Now, it's a tool I can use to say what I think. The first phase helped me understand the 'how,' and the second phase let me try it." Observations confirmed high engagement during the structured communicative tasks (Phase 2).

2. Increased Sense of Control: The explicit cognitive phase (Phase 1) was repeatedly cited as a source of confidence. A student explained, "Knowing the rules and patterns first makes me brave enough to speak. I am not just guessing anymore." This sense of "knowing the tools" reduced anxiety and fostered self-efficacy.

3. Value of Reflection: The consolidation phase (Phase 3) was identified as crucial for sustaining effort. Students appreciated setting and achieving small goals. As one participant noted, "Writing in my log and seeing that I met my goal to use new vocabulary... it felt good. It makes me want to do it again." This metacognitive practice reinforced intrinsic motivation.

Discussion

The findings provide compelling evidence for the efficacy of the proposed communicative-cognitive methodology in developing student motivation. The significant increase in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in the experimental group suggests that the structured integration of cognitive and communicative principles creates a more empowering learning environment.

The success of this methodology can be attributed to its ability to address two fundamental psychological needs: competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The cognitive phase (explicit instruction, noticing, goal setting) directly targets the need for competence. By

providing clear, accessible structures, it reduces the ambiguity and anxiety often associated with purely communicative tasks, building learners' confidence in their ability to succeed.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate a methodology for developing motivation in English language lessons based on a communicative-cognitive approach. The proposed three-phase model—Cognitive Engagement, Communicative Activation, and Reflective Consolidation—proved to be a robust framework. The results demonstrate that this integrated methodology is significantly more effective than a purely communicative one in fostering intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and communicative competence. While this study provides promising results, it is limited by its sample size and context. Future research should explore the long-term sustainability of these motivational gains and the applicability of this methodology across different age groups, proficiency levels, and cultural contexts. Further investigation into the specific types of cognitive tasks that best scaffold communicative activities would also be valuable.

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