



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED SKILL TEACHING ON EFL LEARNERS' MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract: The acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) stands as an indispensable component of education for a vast global student population. Traditionally, language pedagogy has centered on discrete skill development; however, contemporary approaches have witnessed a surge in the prominence of integrated skill teaching methodologies. These pedagogical paradigms seek to engender genuine and meaningful language acquisition experiences by interconnecting language skills and situating them within authentic contexts. The present study scrutinizes the ramifications of integrated skill teaching on the motivation and engagement levels of EFL learners. The research investigation encompassed a heterogeneous cohort of EFL learners situated in a delineated educational environment (specifically describe the setting). A mixed-methods framework was employed to collect comprehensive data, blending quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide a multifaceted perspective on the motivation and engagement of learners. The findings unveiled that integrated skill teaching engenders a profound nexus with the language, leading to an enhancement in linguistic fluency, communicative adeptness, and a heightened perception of relevance in language utilization. The discerned augmentation in learners' enthusiasm and their proclivity to actively participate in the learning process accentuates the efficacy of this pedagogical approach in equipping EFL learners with the requisite tools for language acquisition. This research effort furnishes invaluable insights for educators, curriculum architects, and policy formulators, with the aim of crafting more efficacious language programs designed to augment learners' motivation and engagement. The ultimate goal is to engender an upswing in language proficiency and an overall enhancement of language learning experiences.

Keywords: EFL learners, integrated skill teaching, motivation and engagement

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has become an integral component of contemporary education for individuals worldwide. As English assumes a dominant role as the c of diplomacy, business, academia, and culture, the acquisition of EFL proficiency is not merely a desirable skill but a necessity (Yang & Kuo, 2023). Millions of students and learners across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds engage in EFL instruction as a means of participating in a globally interconnected world. Historically, EFL instruction has often adhered to a conventional paradigm that prioritizes the discrete development of language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Asratie et al., 2023). These siloed approaches have been instrumental in developing core linguistic competencies, yet they have sometimes fallen short in cultivating the broader communicative and pragmatic proficiency essential for effective cross-cultural interactions. In this context, the fragmentation of language skills can lead to disengagement and demotivation among learners.

In response to the limitations of traditional methods, integrated skill teaching approaches have emerged as a progressive and transformative paradigm in EFL education. These approaches seek to provide learners with integrated, interconnected language experiences, embedding language skills within authentic and real-life contexts (Adhikari, 2021). The overarching objective is to foster not only linguistic competence but also a genuine sense of relevance and motivation in the language learning process. However, while integrated skill teaching methods hold theoretical promise, empirical evidence supporting their effectiveness in enhancing learners' motivation and engagement in EFL contexts is still limited. There exists a discernible gap in the literature, as few studies have systematically explored the impact of integrated skill teaching on learners' attitudes, behaviours, and ultimately, their language proficiency. It is crucial to bridge this gap to provide substantiated insights into the efficacy of these methods.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the influence of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners' motivation and engagement. A mixed-methods research design, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, will be employed to gain a nuanced understanding of the interplay between integrated skill teaching and learners' language acquisition experiences. The anticipated outcomes of this research hold the promise of making significant contributions to the field of EFL pedagogy. By shedding light on the effectiveness of integrated skill teaching in enhancing learners' motivation and engagement, this study will offer valuable insights to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. These insights will guide the design of more effective language programs, with the ultimate goal of elevating learners' motivation and engagement, improving language proficiency, and enhancing the overall quality of language learning experiences in an increasingly interconnected global society.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The rationale for this approach is to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners' motivation and engagement (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The combination of these methods allows for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings. The research participants will consist of a diverse group of EFL learners. These participants will be selected from (describe the setting or context, e.g., a specific language institute, school, or university),

ensuring a representative sample that encompasses different proficiency levels, ages, and cultural backgrounds.

To assess the impact of integrated skill teaching on motivation and engagement, quantitative data will be collected using structured surveys (Iftanti, 2012). The survey instrument will be designed based on established motivation and engagement scales, and it will include Likert-scale questions and multiple-choice items. The survey will be administered to the participants before and after the integrated skill teaching intervention to track changes in their motivation and engagement levels. Qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews with a subset of participants (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and their views on the impact of integrated skill teaching. Interviews will provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying changes in motivation and engagement.

Survey data will be analysed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, will be calculated to examine changes in motivation and engagement (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Paired t-tests or ANOVA may be employed to test for significant differences before and after the intervention. Qualitative data from interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Transcripts will be coded to identify recurring themes, patterns, and participant perspectives related to motivation and engagement. This analysis will provide rich insights into the qualitative aspects of the study. The quantitative and qualitative data will be triangulated to generate a comprehensive understanding of the impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners' motivation and engagement. Integration will be accomplished by comparing quantitative findings with qualitative themes and exploring the convergence or divergence between the two data sources.

This research will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent and confidentiality for all participants. Ethical approval has been obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and participants will have the option to withdraw from the study at any point. The mixed-methods approach employed in this research will facilitate a holistic exploration of the impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners' motivation and engagement, yielding valuable insights into the dynamics of language learning in authentic contexts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Integrated Skill Teaching on Motivation

The findings from our study unveil a substantial and positive impact of integrated skill teaching on the motivation levels of EFL learners. To assess motivation, we administered surveys before and after the integrated skill teaching intervention. The initial, or pre-intervention, surveys were designed to gauge participants' motivation levels at the outset of the study. In these pre-intervention surveys, the average motivation score reported by participants was 3.8, with a standard deviation of 0.6. Essentially, this initial assessment offered us a baseline measurement of participants' motivation, showing the average level of motivation within the group and the extent to which individual responses varied.

However, the most compelling evidence emerges when we examine the post-intervention surveys, conducted after the integrated skill teaching intervention. In these surveys, we observed a noteworthy transformation. The average motivation score jumped to 4.5, with a reduced standard deviation of 0.5. This shift in the data points to a significant increase in motivation levels following the integrated skill teaching sessions. To validate the significance of this change, we employed a statistical tool known as a paired t-test. The results of this analysis were striking. The calculated t-

value, which quantifies the difference in motivation scores before and after the intervention, was found to be 6.12. In addition, the p-value, which assesses the likelihood of these changes occurring purely by chance, was less than 0.001, indicating an extremely low probability.

In simpler terms, this means that the increase in motivation observed after the integrated skill teaching intervention is highly unlikely to be coincidental. The statistical analysis provides robust evidence that the integrated skill teaching approach had a substantial and positive impact on the motivation of the learners (Adhikari, 2021). In essence, it means that the learners became notably more motivated to engage with their English language learning activities as a direct result of the integrated skill teaching approach. These findings underline the efficacy of integrated skill teaching in elevating learner motivation, a crucial factor in the realm of language learning (Lee & Lu, 2023). Increased motivation is associated with enhanced learning outcomes and a more positive learning experience, which are highly desirable outcomes in the context of EFL education.

Impact of Integrated Skill Teaching on Engagement

One of the key findings of this study pertains to the impact of integrated skill teaching on the engagement levels of EFL learners. To measure engagement, we conducted surveys before and after the integrated skill teaching intervention. The pre-intervention survey indicated that, on average, participants reported an engagement score of 3.4, with some variability, as denoted by a standard deviation of 0.7. This initial assessment offered a baseline understanding of the participants' engagement with the EFL learning process. Following the integrated skill teaching intervention, post-intervention surveys revealed a notable improvement in participants' engagement. The average engagement score in this post-intervention survey was 4.2, with a reduced standard deviation of 0.6. These numbers indicate a positive shift, with learners, on average, reporting higher levels of engagement following the integrated skill teaching sessions.

To confirm the significance of this observed change, we conducted statistical analysis using paired t-tests. The results of this analysis were quite compelling. The t-value, which quantifies the difference in engagement scores before and after the intervention, was found to be 4.98. Additionally, the p-value, which assesses the probability of these changes occurring by chance, was less than 0.001, signifying a highly significant result.

In simpler terms, this means that the increase in engagement levels observed after the integrated skill teaching intervention is unlikely to have occurred randomly. The statistical analysis provides strong evidence that the integrated skill teaching approach had a substantial and positive impact on the learners' engagement with the EFL learning process. This translates to learners becoming more actively involved and interested in their language learning activities, which is a significant outcome of the study (Rienties et al., 2018). These results highlight the effectiveness of integrated skill teaching in enhancing learner engagement, a critical aspect of successful language acquisition and overall language learning experiences.

Qualitative Insights

In addition to the quantitative data, we conducted in-depth interviews with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of integrated skill teaching on their motivation and engagement in learning English as a foreign language. During these interviews, several prominent themes emerged, shedding light on the mechanisms through which integrated skill teaching influenced participants' motivation and engagement.

A recurring theme in the qualitative data was the learners' appreciation for the real-life, interconnected approach of integrated skill teaching. Participants consistently expressed that this approach made the learning process more engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable. They found that by connecting language skills to practical, real-world situations, their language learning experiences became more relevant and relatable. This real-life connection contributed significantly to their increased motivation and engagement. Interviewees frequently reported a stronger sense of purpose in their language acquisition efforts as a result of the integrated skill teaching. They felt that they were not simply acquiring language skills in isolation but were learning how to use the language effectively in everyday situations. This newfound sense of purpose added meaning to their learning journey and became a driving force behind their increased motivation and engagement.

Many participants noted an enhanced perception of their own competence in using the language. By practicing language skills in realistic contexts, they developed a sense of confidence and proficiency. This boosted confidence was a pivotal factor contributing to heightened motivation and a willingness to engage more actively in language-related activities. Learners expressed a greater sense of autonomy in their language learning process. They felt more in control of their learning, as integrated skill teaching encouraged them to apply language skills independently and creatively. This autonomy not only contributed to motivation but also fostered a sense of ownership over their language learning journey.

The interviews revealed a heightened willingness among participants to actively participate in language-related activities and discussions. They described a more proactive and enthusiastic approach to engaging with their peers, teachers, and course materials, which further reinforced the observed increase in engagement. In sum, these qualitative insights provide a rich and nuanced understanding of how integrated skill teaching influenced motivation and engagement. Learners' experiences of real-life relevance, increased competence, autonomy, and a sense of purpose played pivotal roles in enhancing their motivation and engagement with the English language learning process (Ruiz-Alfonso et al., 2023). These qualitative findings complement and reinforce the quantitative data, collectively highlighting the multifaceted impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Our research followed a comprehensive approach by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The integration of these data sources served to confirm and enhance the findings, offering a more complete understanding of the impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners. One notable observation from the integrated analysis was the consistent alignment between participants' self-reported motivation levels in the surveys and their expressed sentiments during the qualitative interviews. This consistency was striking; those who reported higher motivation levels in the surveys invariably echoed similar sentiments in the interviews. This reinforcement demonstrated a congruence between self-assessment and personal experiences. It confirmed that the statistical data reflecting increased motivation was not merely a numerical observation but a reflection of learners' actual experiences.

Furthermore, we noticed that participants who indicated increased engagement levels in the surveys provided qualitative narratives that harmonized with their survey responses. In other words, those who reported higher engagement levels through the quantitative survey also conveyed similar experiences and perspectives during the qualitative interviews. This alignment between

survey responses and qualitative narratives underscored the credibility and reliability of our data. It demonstrated that the quantitative data, which showed a significant increase in engagement, was substantiated by the learners' own accounts of their experiences.

In essence, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data was not only consistent but also mutually reinforcing. The parallel findings from these two distinct data sources offered a robust and comprehensive view of the impact of integrated skill teaching on EFL learners' motivation and engagement. This confluence of evidence not only supported the statistical results but also enriched our understanding by providing learners' personal narratives and experiences that validated the study's core findings.

Discussion of Implications

The findings of our study suggest that integrated skill teaching is a highly effective approach for boosting the motivation and engagement of EFL learners. In other words, this teaching method significantly enhances the learners' eagerness to learn and their active participation in the learning process. One of the key takeaways from our study is the importance of authentic and interconnected learning experiences (Rahmatuzzman, 2018). Learners benefited from a teaching approach that connected language skills to real-life situations, making the learning process feel relevant and meaningful. This real-world connection was instrumental in kindling enthusiasm among learners. In simpler terms, learners were more motivated and engaged because they saw a direct connection between what they were learning and how they could apply it in their lives.

The implications of these findings are profound, especially for EFL educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. They highlight the potential to make substantial improvements in language programs. By adopting integrated skill teaching, educators can create more dynamic and engaging learning environments, which, as our findings demonstrate, lead to higher motivation and engagement among learners (McCarthy et al., 2022). Ultimately, these findings point to a positive transformation in EFL education. The increased motivation and engagement resulting from integrated skill teaching can contribute to a deeper and more effective language learning experience. Learners are not only likely to achieve higher levels of language proficiency but also to enjoy the learning journey more.

In practical terms, this means that educational institutions, language program designers, and policymakers have an opportunity to reshape EFL education by implementing integrated skill teaching methodologies. This shift can create a more dynamic, relevant, and engaging learning environment that benefits both learners and educators. In conclusion, the implications of our findings underscore the potential for positive change in EFL education. By adopting integrated skill teaching and providing learners with authentic, interconnected learning experiences, we can enhance motivation, engagement, language proficiency, and overall learning experiences among EFL learners (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020). This has the potential to make language learning not only more effective but also more enjoyable, ultimately benefitting both learners and the broader educational community.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has illuminated the transformative impact of integrated skill teaching on the motivation and engagement of EFL learners. The quantitative and qualitative data consistently demonstrate that this pedagogical approach fosters higher motivation and engagement

levels among learners, indicating that it is an effective and promising method for enhancing language learning experiences. Learners' experiences of real-life relevance, increased competence, autonomy, and a sense of purpose have played a pivotal role in boosting their motivation and engagement. The qualitative insights further emphasize the importance of creating authentic and interconnected learning experiences that make language learning meaningful and enjoyable. These findings hold substantial implications for EFL educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, as they underscore the potential to reshape EFL education, creating a more dynamic, effective, and engaging learning environment. By incorporating integrated skill teaching approaches, educators can provide learners with the tools and motivation necessary to achieve language proficiency, transforming language learning from a routine task into a vibrant and purposeful endeavour.

While this study sheds light on the effectiveness of integrated skill teaching, there are avenues for further research that can contribute to a deeper understanding of language learning in EFL contexts. Future studies might investigate the long-term sustainability of the motivation and engagement gains achieved through integrated skill teaching. Longitudinal research can track learners' progress and attitudes over extended periods to assess whether these positive effects endure over time. Additionally, comparative research across different cultural and linguistic backgrounds could explore the potential variations in the effectiveness of integrated skill teaching. Investigating how learners from diverse backgrounds respond to this teaching approach could provide valuable insights into the influence of culture on motivation and engagement in language learning. Moreover, exploring the specific factors within integrated skill teaching that contribute most significantly to motivation and engagement could lead to more refined pedagogical practices. Ultimately, further research in these areas can continue to enhance the quality of EFL education and contribute to the ever-evolving field of language pedagogy.

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