THE IMPACTS OF TEACHER SUPPORTIVE MOTIVATIONAL DISCOURSE INTERVENTION ON LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT: MASTERY- VS PERFORMANCE-AVOIDANT EAP LEARNERS

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Abstract: This interventional study examines whether the language achievement of mastery-avoidant and performance-avoidant English for Academic Purposes (henceforth EAP) students can be improved through the teacher supportive motivational discourse (TSMD). This study also explores how the students perceive the effects of this discourse on their language achievement. To this end, we purposively selected 99 EAP students, of whom we placed 31 students in a control group, and the rest, mastery-avoidant (henceforth MAV) and performance-avoidant (henceforth PAV) participants, into two equal intervention groups. Then, we assessed both groups' L2 achievement using an achievement test (the end-of-semester test prepared based on the EAP book) before and after a ten-week intervention. To understand the perceptions of the students about the intervention, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 students who were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate. Out of the 20 students, 10 were purposively chosen to reflect on key episodes related to TSMD and explain the reason behind their actions. Statistical analysis (non-parametric ANCOVA) carried out in the quantitative phase revealed that in comparison to the control group, the intervention group's achievement was significantly higher. However, the differences between both intervention groups were slight. Content analysis in the qualitative phase also showed that the intervention effect on students' achievement was mediated by learners' autonomy and willingness to communicate (henceforth WTC). The implications of this intervention for enhancing teachers' performance and students' learning are discussed.

Keywords: achievement, goal-orientation, mixed-method, motivational discourse, WTC

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Different researchers have found a relationship between motivation and language learners' achievement (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Syafnan et al., 2021). Compared to less motivated counterparts, motivated learners have a higher chance of success in learning English, and cognitively competent students with a low level of motivation may fail to fulfill educational goals (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Teachers' contribution to students' achievement by influencing their motivation has received much attention (Darmanto,

2020; Hedayati, 2019; Hsu, 2010;). Educational research provides evidence of the contribution of teacher motivational strategies to English language achievement (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) and Dörnyei (2001) defines teacher motivational strategies (TMSs) as the intentional motivating factors used to obtain some systematic and long-term favorable impact. Researchers have classified them differently (see Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Williams & Burdern, 1997). Dörnyei (2001) published an inclusive wide range of macro and micro motivational strategies and called researchers to put the strategies to the test. Later, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) supported the strategies with updated theoretical and empirical support but highlighted that applying all the strategies is impossible and in selecting them, socio-cultural contexts, classrooms, and recommended teachers enhance the students' internal motivation.

The available research on TMSs has been teachers' views about the significance and frequency of the strategies used (Guilloteaux, 2013; Lee & Lin, 2015), the degree of agreement between what teachers perceive about the importance of these strategies, and what they do (Ruesch et al., 2012), instructional motives behind ELT teachers' motivational strategies (Yang & Sanchez, 2021). Some observations were conducted to understand how learners' motivation and learning are affected by TMSs (Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Wong, 2014). Such studies have mainly tested the efficacy of Dörnyei's framework and there is a gap in knowledge on motivational strategies that have been included in his framework (Lee & Lin, 2019). One of the major deficiencies in all studies on teacher motivational strategies is that they have portrayed a very general practice of teachers (Alrabai, 2016). Few studies have empirically tested whether these strategies are effective (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Bokan-Smith, 2015). It seems that only two studies exist on the causal relationship between TMSs on learner language achievement (Alrabai 2016; Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). The necessity for more causal studies on motivational strategies and achievement has been highlighted by Lamb (2019).

In the first study, Bernaus and Gardner (2008) investigate whether TMSs can increase their high school students' motivation and achievement through a model. Using path analysis, they found that highly motivated students outperformed the ones with lower motivation. The study highlighted that students' English achievement is affected not only by what teachers do in the classroom but also by students' attitudes and motivational orientations. In the second study, Alrabai (2016) carried out a quasi-experimental study in Saudi Arabia to understand if the use of TMSs can enhance learner motivation and L2 achievement. A total of 204 EFL teachers were observed and the most popular TMSs of Saudi teachers were identified, then teachers in experimental groups were trained to implement six strategies for 10 weeks and learners completed the motivation survey before and at the end of the intervention. The results of the study showed the enhancement of learner motivation and L2 achievement in the intervention group. One of the major limitations of Alrabai (2016) and Bernaus and Gardner (2008) is that these studies are quantitative and do not portray how teacher motivational strategies have influenced students' achievement. More importantly, all students are assumed to benefit from motivational strategies in the same way regardless of their individual differences. Comparing strategies used in these two studies shows that their results have been inconclusive though both indicate that teachers and students have realized how significant the

strategies are. In describing the differences associated with teacher motivational strategies, there is a consensus that the TMSs are culturally sensitive, and their importance varies depending on the setting (Tavakoli et al., 2018). According to Lamb (2019), it is unclear if the current variances in results in the study on TMSs are due to cultural variables, differences in teacher training, or learner differences. He maintains that individual differences in learners need to be taken into consideration (Lamb, 2019) and adds that it is time to implement motivational strategies and see if they enhance learners' achievement. In the field of education, Hulleman and Barron (2016) have called for implementing teaching intervention methods to advance the impact of motivation research on educational performance.

Emphasizing the context, some researchers (e.g., Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Ruesch et al., 2012), argue that the efficacy of TMSs is associated with learners' perceptions. A perusal of the literature shows that students with different goal orientations hold different perceptions of teachers' motivational strategies (Malik et al., 2013). The objective(s) for which pupils engage in achievement-associated behavior is referred to as goal orientation. Students with mastery goals are more likely to use adaptive behavioral patterns (Lüftenegger et al., 2012). Compared to this group, performance goal-oriented students, on the other hand, try to avoid facing difficulties and have a negative attitude toward barriers (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Huang, 2012). Though there is an argument that mastery goal-oriented students are ideal learners, the association between this goal orientation and achievement is not conclusive (e.g., Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Kaplan et al., 2002; Pintrich, 2000). Drawing upon Atkinson's (1957) theory of approach and avoidance goal orientation, researchers have come up with a smaller division of mastery and performance orientations. The term approach refers to motivation that keeps students engaged in tasks, as there is a positive outcome, while avoidance stands for motivation that prevents students from getting engaged with tasks because there is a possibility of failure (Lee, & Bong, 2019). The first proposed goal orientation model divided the performance goal into avoidance and approach and considered one subdivision for the mastery goal, which was the mastery approach (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Data based on this model indicates that performance-avoidance orientation was related to low achievement while high achievement was often related to performance or mastery approach orientation (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Harackiewicz et al., 2002). To better determine the association between goal orientation and achievement, Elliot and Murayama (2008) proposed an achievement goal framework in which they described the one with MAV as those who shun mastery strive to prevent misunderstandings, and tend to leave tasks unfinished, especially those who believe they are less capable and are terrified of failure (Lee, & Bong, 2019). Sideridis (2008) found a link between fear of failure and mastery avoidance goals. He reported that MAV students with such a goal experienced fear of embarrassment. Some researchers added that learners are more likely to feel emotionally hurt compared to their counterparts, namely PAV. Goal theory researchers then attempted to understand the role of teachers' motivational practices during instruction and scrutinized how such practices can communicate to students the importance of achievement effort, they are more likely to encourage performance goals in students (Malik et al., 2013). Proponents of achievement goals (e.g. Turner et al., 2002; 2003; Turner & Meyer, 2004) concur that motivational practice by teachers needs to create conditions for learners to encourage them to partake in classroom

activities and make them willing to deal with challenging tasks and take risks. Such classrooms are perceived to be most encouraging and discourage students from cheating, self-handicapping, being unruly, and avoiding seeking help. TSMD helps students to have a more positive self-appraisal of themselves because they might not feel about their failure in the classroom (Turner et al., 2002; 2003). This issue is important to performance-avoidant students who are more likely to feel anxious (Middleton & Midgley, 1997), their academic achievement is lower or they would rather employ self-handicapping strategies than ask for help (Midgley & Urdan, 2001). Gertsakis et al. (2021) highlight the gap in TSMD in a classroom context. The term TSMD refers to the 'motivational and emotional support' that students receive from the teachers through discourse during teaching (Turner et al., 2002). This framework includes three components. The definitions and examples of each are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. **Teacher Supportive Motivational Discourse (TSMD) (Turner et al., 2002)**

Components of TSMD	Definition	Examples
Focus on learning	Focusing on the process of learning, challenging students, viewing errors as constructive, or supporting persistence	April: (I don't understand this.) Teacher: You know what? That's why we're going to keep working on it today and tomorrow. You'll get it. Okay? We're just now starting it, April, so I don't expect you to fully understand it right away
Positive emotions	Using enthusiasm or humor, or reducing anxiety; Addressing emotional needs	A student gives an incorrect answer and the teacher responds, "Okay, he's probably just checking to see if I was awake."
Peer support and collaboration	Building collaboration, emphasizing joint goals— shared responsibilities	"Marco, he's your partner, so come up with him.

EAP Students' Perception of Teacher Motivational Discourse

Available studies on motivational strategies have documented the discrepancies between teachers' and students' perceptions of the importance of TMSs. For instance, Ruesch et al. (2012) compared the effect of such strategies from the perspectives of American teachers and foreign students and found an agreement between the teachers and students on the key role of teacher, rapport, and climate in learners' motivation. However, there was some disagreement between them on the effect of other motivational strategies caused by cultural differences. Lamb and Wedell (2015), TMSs increased their interest in learning English and their self-confidence. Wong (2014) used one-way ANOVA to examine the relationship between

TMSs in the Chinese classroom and the academic achievement of learners through researchers', learners', and teachers' views. The findings showed some discrepancies among these three groups of participants and the study identified six strategies in which the role of humor during classroom discourse was important in language achievement. Mauludin (2021) conducted a quantitative study on Indonesian EAP students' perception of teacher motivational strategies. The study found that the autonomy with which their teachers provided their students was not motivating for them. Aligned with the Asian culture, students highlighted that their teachers should assist them through modeling, demonstration, and feedback and avoid comparing students with each other. These studies consistently highlight that although many teachers' motivational strategies are universally applicable, their effectiveness can vary based on cultural factors and there are also some discrepancies between teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies and those of their students even if from the same culture.

EAP Iranian Students' Perceptions of Teacher Motivational Discourse

A large number of Iranian students majoring in different fields attended compulsory EAP courses. Though the courses have gained popularity in Iran, EAP learners' low achievement, their lack of ability to use EAP (Atai et al., 2017; Moslemi, et al., 2011), and their unsuccessful language learning experiences (Atai et al., 2017) have been a cause of concern. EAP learners' lack of WTC in the classroom (Alemi et al., 2011) and high anxiety (Amin, 2013; Gaibani & Elmnefi, 2014), as factors contributing to language achievement, is hotly disputed. EAP learners see teachers accountable for their learning (Hosseini & Shokrpour, 2019). Regardless of the low achievement of EAP students, still, EAP courses have had no great change (Tavakoli & Tavakol, 2018). Teachers' motivational discourse in EAP neither in Iran nor any other country has been the focus of studies while teachers are the first and most motivating force in EAP classrooms (Hosseini & Shokrpour, 2019). This issue is of great importance because EAP students are passive and dependent (Ghodrati et al., 2014). The argument by EAP students shows that the ignorance of EAP students' motivation in learning in the Iranian context has been a concern (Jafari Pazoki & Alemi, 2019). Most of the available studies on EAP students have focused on EAP challenges or examined the reasons why EAP students have failed (Atai et al., 2017; Behafarin & Mahdavi, 2010). The only existing literature on TMSs by Tavakoli et al (2018) focuses on teachers' motivational strategies in the Iranian context suggesting a need for further research on students' perceptions. In their study, Tavakoli and his colleagues reported that in the Eastern world, such as Iran, learner autonomy and learner-centeredness were unappreciated because of the teacher's authoritarian role in decision-making and highlighted the cultural specificity of certain motivational practices. So far, it seems that no study has investigated the effect of TMSs on the language achievement of learners, especially MAV and PAV students who are at a higher risk of low achievement. The reason for the present interest is the conceptualization of students' motivation as an interpersonal construct that depends on learning engagement opportunities and support provided by teachers (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Turner et al., 2002). Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do PAV EAP students differ from their MAV counterparts based on TSMD in terms of language achievement?
2. How do PAV students and their MAV counterparts think of the usefulness of teacher motivational discourse in improving language achievement?

Individuals who pursue performance-avoidance goals "construe the achievement setting as a threat, because they perceive the demands of the task as outweighing their resources" (Chalabaev et al., 2009, p. 991). Individuals who pursue performance-avoidance goals "construe the achievement setting as a threat, because they perceive the demands of the task as outweighing their resources" (Chalabaev et al., 2009, p. 991).

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

We employed an embedded mixed methods research design to assess the effects of an intervention, on language achievement, EAP learners with mastery or performance goal orientation. The rationale for this design was to address the limitations or biases of data gathered through one research method and to provide a holistic perspective of the issue (see Cresswell, 2009), which was the effects of teacher-supportive motivational discourse. The total sample in the quantitative phase consisted of an EAP teacher (the first author) and 99 EAP students who were purposively selected. EAP learners were studying at Refah University in Tehran at the time of data gathering. The participants were non-English majors attending compulsory English classes ranging from 18 to 32 years. Convenience sampling was used in recruiting the initial participants due to the lack of access to a large sample of mastery and performance-avoidant students. To understand the perceptions of students about the intervention, 20 students were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate to gather rich data (Cresswell, 2009). Out of 20 students, 10 were purposively selected to reflect on key episodes related to TSMD and explain the reason behind their actions.

Research Instruments, Methods, and Materials

Quantitative Method and Instruments

We employed a cross-sectional survey design and standardized testing approach to gather quantitative data for the first question. We administered questionnaires via an online platform and collected the quantitative data through the Oxford Placement Test, and the achievement goal orientation questionnaire and achievement test. To gather quantitative data, we administered a 60-question OPT before the intervention to be sure that the participants in both control and intervention groups had the same English level of proficiency. The test included reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. Scores ranging between 20 and 40 showed intermediate level and under 20 signified elementary, while above 40 identified advanced students. The reliability of this test in the current study was 0.89. We also assessed mastery and performance-avoidance orientation using items on the learners' goal orientation questionnaire

(Elliot & Murayama, 2008). This questionnaire measured the achievement goals of 4 groups of students (mastery approach; mastery avoidance; performance approach; and performance avoidance) on a 5 point-Likert scale. There were three items for each subscale. Scores for each goal orientation were calculated by averaging across the items. Cronbach's alpha coefficients in the original study by Elliot and Murayama (2008) for the four subscales were between.84 and.94. In this study, the values were between 0.68 and 0.79. We used a language achievement test to understand the extent to which the language taught during the interventional period had been learned by mastery-avoidant and performance-avoidant students. Language achievement was the final grade that students achieved at the end of the course and it was measured by the end-of-semester test scores which indicated to what extent students learned the materials. It is worth noting that students' final grades in the Iranian school grade system go from zero to twenty (0-20). The test was developed based on students' EAP books by the English department of Refah University. The test included 30 items on vocabulary (items 1-10), reading (11-20), and grammar (21-30) to be answered in 80 minutes. EAP teachers with 10 years of experience in material design were asked to check the achievement test for its suitability, wording, clarity, and relevance. The items of the test were evaluated in terms of facility and difficulty. Cronbach's alpha reliability index for 30 items was.84. A factor analysis using the principal axis factoring method and varimax rotation was carried out to probe the underlying constructs of the 30 items of the achievement test (see Appendix 1).

Quantitative Method and Instruments

To collect the qualitative data, we observed, video-recorded, and transcribed classroom teaching-learning activities focusing on TSMD between the teacher and mastery-avoidant and performance-avoidant students. The purposes of the observations were as follows: a) to provide a thick description of the class setting and students' non-verbal behaviors and help us to have a better interpretation of the classroom events, and b) to help us to be sure that the teacher's supportive motivational discourse was properly implemented and there is no bias, c) to select key episodes for stimulated recall interviews with the help of the observer. The observations were carried out by the supervisor of the university, an EAP teacher from the same university. There were a total of 10 observational classroom visits. Each class visit was 90 minutes. To avoid the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972) and decrease the effect of the presence of the observer on students' behaviors, she was requested to sit at the back. We used semi-structured interviews to understand what learners think about the contribution of TSMD to their language achievement. Such interviews helped us to get a better picture of students' experiences with teachers' actions at the moment of interactions between the teachers and students. We selected those episodes in which TSMD was being practiced with MAV and PAV students from the intervention classes. We asked the students to watch those episodes, reflect upon those episodes, and explain their actions.

Materials

The materials we used in the interventional and control classrooms were selected from an EAP book for psychology students named *Essentials of Psychology* which includes academic

reading texts on different topics in Psychology. The supportive motivational discourse strategies that were practiced in interventional classrooms were as follows:

a) Focusing on the learning process, encouraging students, considering mistakes as helpful, or encouraging perseverance.

b) Reducing anxiety via excitement or humor; addressing emotional requirements.

c) Encouraging collaborative activities, with a focus on common objectives and shared duties.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the recruitment of participants and data collection, we obtained ethical approval from Refah University in Tehran. In the first phase of the study, Following Cohen et al. (2007), we informed the participants about their rights, risks, and intervention through the consent form. We selected mastery-avoidant and performance-avoidant students and then placed them into 1 control and 2 intervention groups. The classes for the intervention and control groups were on different days of the week. The intervention period was 10 weeks. Pre-intervention data including students' achievement, OPT, and goal orientations were gathered using questionnaires and tests as noted earlier. We evaluated the language proficiency of students in the intervention and control groups before the intervention to ensure of homogeneity of the groups in terms of language proficiency and that any change in language achievement during the intervention was attributed to the intervention. The students in the interventional groups received the intervention related to TSMD based on Turner et al.'s framework (2002). However, students in the control group did not receive TSMD. Both groups had the same hours of instruction and were taught by the first author. Post-intervention data measured students' improvement in achievement.

Data Analysis

We used SPSS version 23 to analyze descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data consisted of interviews and stimulated recalls and were analyzed using content analysis.

We used a one-way ANCOVA to examine the difference among the means of the intervention group (MAV and PAV) and control groups on the post-test of English achievement while the effect of the pretest was controlled.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To answer the first question, we carried out one-way ANCOVA which assumes the normality of the data, homogeneity of variances of groups, linearity, and homogeneity of regression slopes. Table 2 shows the ratios of skewedness and kurtosis to standard errors. These values are lower than +/- 1.96 (Field, 2018). The other assumptions related to one-way ANCOVA were also retained.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics; Testing Normality Assumption

Group		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Mastery Avoidance	Pretest	34	.243	.403	0.60	-.932	.788	-1.18
	Posttest	34	-.047	.403	-0.12	-1.284	.788	-1.63
Performance Avoidance	Pretest	34	-.071	.403	-0.18	-1.170	.788	-1.48
	Posttest	34	-.323	.403	-0.80	-1.005	.788	-1.28
Control	Pretest	31	-.484	.421	-1.15	-.328	.821	-0.40
	Posttest	31	-.471	.421	-1.12	.028	.821	0.03

Table 3 shows the data on the posttest of English achievement. As shown in the table, the MAV group (M = 22.94, SE =.253) has the highest mean on the posttest of English achievement. Similarly, the mean for PAV (M = 22.40, SE =.253) was higher than the mean of the control group (M = 19.87, SE =.265). Analysis shows that after controlling the effect of the pretest, based on one-way ANCOVA ($F(2, 95) = 39.41$, $p < .05$, $p\eta^2 = .454$ representing a large effect size), differences between the MAV, PAV, and control groups' means on the post-test of English achievement is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and One-way ANCOVA Results; Posttest of English Achievement by Groups with Pretest

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		F(1,95)	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Mastery Avoidance	22.947[a]	.253	22.445	23.449	39.41	.000	.454
Performance Avoidance	22.400[a]	.253	21.898	22.902			
Control	19.877[a]	.265	19.352	20.403			
a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 18.92.							

To answer the second question, we transcribed our qualitative data and manually coded them. In carrying out the analysis, we followed Hsieh and Shannon (2005)'s instructions. Our approach to data analysis was inductive. We examined every single sentence and started coding them. We discarded irrelevant segments and organized codes with similar features under bigger subcategories and then under categories. In this process, we continuously

compared the codes across the data and moved through the categories by referring to literature and the theoretical framework. The analysis of our data indicated that TSMD enhanced EAP students' achievement not directly but by increasing their autonomy and willingness to communicate (WTC).

TSMD Enhances Learners' WTC

Over two-thirds of MAV and PAV students admitted that the teacher's enthusiasm, flexibility, and responsiveness, as well as diversity in eliciting answers, were among the important factors that helped them engage in initiating communication, participating in learning activities, and interacting with their teachers effectively.

> *About this episode that you are showing I can say that I often prefer to be quiet in the classroom but when I see my teacher use different ways to engage students in the class activities or when I see that she pays attention to her students' problems, I will get motivated to raise my hand and say something or answer the teacher's questions in the best way.*

Over two-thirds of PAV ones reported that their teacher ensured that every student would benefit from participation.

> *I guess what makes this class different from the others is that the class is not just dominated by a small group of students, the ones who are good. By good, I mean the ones who are proficient. The teacher in one way or another tries to engage all students, using humor, and emotional triggers.*

Almost all agreed that their willingness to communicate was related to changes observed in the teaching method from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one.

> *Based on my own experience, I guess we would like to participate and communicate when the teacher is not the only one who talks, when we do not have to repeat and memorize what she says, we are free to share ideas in the classroom with our friends.*

Though performance-oriented students seemed to have a favorable attitude towards participation, some were concerned about their self-image in the class. Over half of the performance-oriented students reported that the dilemma between participating and not participating in the classroom activities was associated with the predictability of positive teachers' behavior which encouraged them to seek help.

> *I have always been worried about making a mistake but even I am more worried if the teacher says something bad and I lose face. I am worried that my classmates think I am stupid or weak. In this class, I know if I make a mistake I won't lose my face because the teacher does not make a fuss to draw everyone's attention to it.*

> *I used to hide my lack of understanding from the teacher and very often used to nod my head. Then I realized that there is no risk of having a negative reaction from the teacher if I make a stupid mistake. In other words, I know that the teacher would not get angry at me or shout at me.*

However, this group added that the teacher could have increased their WTC if they had given them chances to choose the task and be sure that they had been ready.

> *You know she would better ask if we are ready to answer her or ask which of the exercises we are ready to do because sometimes we have no idea to share and this makes us withdraw from communication.*

TSMD Enhances Learners' Autonomy

For most MAV students, teacher strategies kept them in control of learning. They often highlighted that the teacher's avoidance of providing learners with ready-made answers encouraged them to feel more responsible for learning and be less dependent on the teacher.

> *The teacher says you are doing it, not me, go ahead. Em in my case, I have learned that teachers need to challenge their students by encouraging them to find the answer rather than motivating them to expect the answer from their teacher. This way, students come to the point that they would be the only ones doing everything.*

However, almost half of the participants stated that developing self-directed ability was reinforced through guided instructions.

> *It is not like the teacher wants you to be independent and then you will be. Guided instructions, I can say push me to be more independent and to see how I am close or far from the goals. Imagine I am completing a task or answering a question. If I cannot do that, I will keep working on it. For example, if I cannot answer a specific grammatical question, I realize this is an area I am weak at and I need to work on it.*

For over two-thirds of PAV students, the teacher's sustainable feedback on their efforts seemed to make them more autonomous since the focus was on the process of learning.

> *Perhaps, the reason, I liked this class, was the teacher's feedback. Her feedback on my efforts than the right answer encourages me to work hard to get the right answer.*

Almost all mastery-avoidant students also reported that the teacher's assistance and support for their learning through teachers' constructive feedback encouraged them to take a risk, employ new approaches to learning, and ask for educational support.

> *If you see here, I easily take a risk and answer my teacher's question. I feel the reason that I am doing that is related to her feedback. Have you realized that she appreciates our efforts and guides us to come to the answer? We know at the end of this story, we feel the success is ours because we have worked for it.*

Collaborative tasks were reported to make up over half of the mastery and PAV students feel responsible for learning. Sharing ideas with the class, assessing their peers, and providing them with feedback maximized students' ability to decide and be independent.

We are responsible for the results of the group. For this reason, we need to work together to help the group. In this group work, we are in the position of evaluating our group members or we need to make a decision.

For most MAV students, maintaining persistence to improve their English was facilitated by developing their ability to self-assess their answers and move towards their learning goals over which they had control and this seemed to strengthen their belief in their competence.

I value the feedback of the teacher, she helps me, I mean, us to learn how to evaluate our performance step by step. This smooth progress encourages me to continue studying my English lessons well to gain the goals I have for myself.

Discussion

As noted earlier, this study is the first interventional study that investigates if the language achievement of MAV and PAV students at EAP courses can be improved through the TSMD intervention. Aligned with accomplishment goal theory, MAV and PAV students are assumed to avoid being involved in activities in which there is a chance of being unsuccessful (Lee, & Bong, 2019). PAV students were predicted to be less worried about losing face in taking part in classroom activities. In contrast, in classes where supportive motivational discourse was absent, both MAV and PAV students were expected to avoid an undesirable outcome and leave the tasks uncompleted since participation requires taking risks and making mistakes (Kaplan et al., 2002; Turner et al., 2002; Urdan et al., 2002).

In line with our prediction, the result shows that the achievement of mastery and performance-avoidant students improved considerably after the intervention regardless of their personal achievement goals. This result supports the earlier studies showing that achievement is influenced by teacher motivational strategies (Alrabai, 2016). This also supports the finding of Poondej and Lerdpornkulrat (2016) who also provided evidence for the positive effects of the classroom where students' needs are taken into consideration and involvement in class discussion and cooperation are encouraged.

Though previous studies show that the perception of motivational practice encourages performance-oriented students to change their personal goals (Malik et al., 2013), we cannot claim that such a slight difference has been due to changes in our students' personal goals; however, our qualitative data suggest that TSMD may play a key role in enhancing students' WTC and autonomy. The results are in line with those of previous studies that show that students participate in class activities when TSMD is being employed (Turner et al., 2002) because learners turn into better risk-takers, and manage difficult tasks (Turner & Meyer, 2004). However, our mixed-method study provides a more realistic and holistic understanding of the causal effect of teacher motivational discourse and provides more concrete guidelines in dealing with MAV and PAV students. Interestingly, teachers' enthusiasm and responsiveness were important features of instructional characteristics that enhanced both groups' WTC. Almost all agreed that their willingness to communicate was related to changes observed in the teaching method from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one. This is in contrast

with the idea that Iranians are teacher-oriented (Ghodrati et al., 2014). Walshaw and Anthony (2008) argue that if teachers manage to enthusiastically engage their students in classroom instructional discourse, students can be involved in sustained learning experiences.

Performance-avoidant students added that the predictability of positive teachers' behavior increased their WTC because they were not worried about their self-image. However, they suggested that they should be given a chance to select the tasks. This could be related to the classroom culture of Iran. According to Turner et al. (2021), when culture puts pressure on students to have a great performance, students fret about the negative outcome of low performance. This is in contrast with the result of Sideridis (2008)'s study which found that mastery-avoidant students are more likely to be emotionally hurt compared to their performance-avoid counterparts. More interestingly, in contrast to Mauludin (2021), EAP students appreciated autonomy but highlighted that their self-directed ability was reinforced through guided instructions and the cognitive scaffold provided by the teacher and pairs through sustainable feedback. This result is interesting because by and large Iranian EAP students have been reported to be less autonomous (Ghodrati et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Examining the results of this study, we can come to the conclusion that the association between mastery and performance goals, and achievement is more complex, and the interaction between students' achievement goals and the motivational discourse being practiced needs to be considered. Moreover, teacher motivational discourse was shown to influence achievement through WTC and autonomy. The uncertainty caused by the teachers is perceived to be a powerful source of stress and decreases EAP students' WTC. Autonomy requires scaffolding transfer of responsibility which is considered an autonomy-supportive instructional move. This shows that instead of simply employing motivational strategies, language teachers need to address the concerns of their students. So, teachers can enhance WTC in the following ways: (1) by showing enthusiasm, flexibility, and responsiveness, (2) by being sure every student would benefit from participation, and (3) by adopting a learner-centered approach. To increase WTC of performance-avoidant students, teachers need to avoid face-threatening acts by being sure that their students are ready to participate and ensuring them nothing will happen if they make a mistake (e.g., a teacher does not get angry). Teachers should yield autonomy to their students, but this does not mean leaving them on their own. However, teachers need to provide the students with feedback. This study suggests that EAP curriculum designers connect the contents of the book with students' needs, interests, and experiences and encourage cooperation and group work. The learning tasks should be flexible and within the students' limits of the ability to reduce their fear of failure and raise their confidence in their ability to complete these tasks successfully.

In carrying out this study, we had some limitations. To have a large number of participants for the quantitative phase of the study, we recruited learners through convenience sampling and then we chose them based on the purposive sampling technique. Second, we could not control some factors such as students' personalities, students' needs, classroom-associated (e.g., sizes, assessments), and institutional-associated factors. Third, the intervention was

restricted to 10 weeks since long-term access to students was not feasible. Fourth, this study's data was gathered from a gender-segregated college. Thus, future projects to corroborate the present study need to address the identified limitations.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Rotated Factor Matrix of Language Achievement

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Q11	.565	.318	
Q18	.547		
Q19	.546	.321	
Q14	.507		
Q15	.502		
Q13	.496		
Q8	.473		
Q21	.463		
Q12	.458		
Q16	.408		
Q1		.402	
Q4		.389	
Q9		.372	
Q26		.370	
Q17		.361	
Q20		.359	
Q6		.348	
Q7		.328	
Q3		.318	
Q2		.314	
Q22			.431
Q25			.491
Q30			.483
Q28			.481
Q27			.446
Q29			.441
Q10			.420
Q5			.398
Q23			.388
Q24			.374