Achievement Goal Theory: A Perspective on Foreign-Language-Learners' Motivation

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It has long been recognized that varying achievement goals elicit varying motivational patterns with varying behavioral consequences. Several sets of contrasting goal orientations have been proposed to explain differences in language students' achievement behaviors. A total of 135 third-year (n=54 male; n=81 female) students in a preservice English teacher education program participated in this study of goal orientation. The proposed goal orientations were measured by adapting the Goal Orientation Scale developed by Skaalvik (1997) for the L2 learning domain, and students' language achievement was measured by a TOEFL test. Results indicated that students placed most emphasis on task mastery goals and that this was related to language achievement. Task mastery goals are negatively correlated with work-avoidance. Self-defeating ego orientation is positively correlated with both work-avoidance and self-enhancing ego orientation. The analysis also suggested that male students had a stronger tendency to avoid work.

Il est reconnu depuis longtemps que divers buts quant aux réalisations déclenchent diverses structures motivationnelles, entraînant diverses conséquences sur le comportement. L'on a proposé plusieurs modèles d'orientation vers un but pour expliquer les différences dans le rendement de ceux qui étudient les langues. Cette étude a porté sur l'orientation vers un but et a impliqué 135 (n=54 hommes; n=81 femmes) étudiants en troisième année d'un diplôme en pédagogie. L'échelle de Skaalvik (1997) a été adaptée pour mesurer les orientations vers un but dans un contexte d'apprentissage d'une langue seconde et le TOEFL a servi dans l'évaluation du rendement linguistique des étudiants. Les résultats indiquent que les étudiants se penchent surtout sur des buts impliquant la maîtrise de tâches et que ce comportement était lié au rendement. Les buts impliquant la maîtrise de tâches et l'évitement du travail sont anticorrélés. Une orientation autodestructrice du moi et l'évitement du travail sont corrélés positivement, tout comme une orientation autodestructrice du moi et une orientation du moi méliorative. L'analyse a également révélé que chez les hommes, la tendance à éviter le travail était plus forte que chez les femmes.

The study of second-language (L2) motivation, which has been defined by Gardner as a "combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language," has been influenced for many years by the work of

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972). Gardner and Lambert suggested that students' L2 motivation is sustained both by students' attitudes toward the L2 community and their goals or orientations. They proposed two forms of orientation, integrative and instrumental. Integrative orientation refers to a desire to learn the L2 in order to have contact with the L2 speech community. Instrumental orientation refers to a desire to learn the L2 to achieve some practical goal such as job advancement or a course credit. Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that individuals with an integrative orientation would demonstrate greater motivational effort in learning an L2, and thus would achieve greater L2 competence.

Recently, however, there has been renewed discussion about the nature of language-learning motivation. It has been frequently asserted that there is a need to explore other models of motivation developed by educational and social psychologists who are not directly involved in L2 research (Dörnyei 1994a, 1994b; Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a, 1994b).

Scholars have sought alternative motivational theories to expand the integrative-instrumental distinction for two reasons. First, it has been proposed that a narrow perspective on motivation has restricted research on L2 learning (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels 1994; Crooks & Schmidt 1991). Second, not all studies support the Gardner and Lambert model regarding the relative importance of integrative and instrumental motivation. Consequently, several scholars have tried to reformulate our understanding of L2 motivation.

The empirical research that directly examines the relationship between motivational goals and language-learning success is relatively scarce and suffers from some important limitations. The current research addresses this gap by investigating four achievement goals and their relationship to success. In particular, the purpose of the present study is to consider how one current conceptualization of goal orientation, achievement goal theory, might inform understanding of L2 learning.

Achievement Goal Theory

Achievement goal theory (AGT) is one of a number of social-cognitive theories of motivation, which explicates goals as cognitive representations of the various purposes students may adapt in achievement situations (Ford & Nicholls, 1991; Urdan & Maehr, 1995). It is based on the assumption that individuals who have specific and difficult goals will outperform individuals who have nonspecific and easy goals.

Several sets of contrasting goals have been proposed to explain differences in students' achievement behavior, including *task* versus *ego* goals (Maehr & Nicholls 1980); *learning* versus *performance* goals (Dweck & Elliot,

1983), and *mastery* versus *performance* goals (Ames & Archer, 1988). Recent studies also include a third category: *work-avoidance* goals.

Task-Oriented Goals

Individuals who pursue task-oriented goals seek primarily to improve their level of competence or understanding (Ames & Archer, 1988). Learning is valued for its own sake, and success is defined by improved competence and understanding. Research has shown that individuals who focus on task goals are more likely to prefer and choose challenging tasks (Elliot & Dweck, 1988), persist at difficult tasks (Schunk, 1996), seek forms of help that promote independent problem-solving (Butler & Neuman, 1995; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997), and use cognitive strategies that enhance their conceptual understanding of information (Anderman & Young, 1994).

Ego-Oriented Goals

In contrast, individuals who pursue ego-oriented goals (Nicholls, 1984) seek to demonstrate high ability or to gain favorable judgments of their abilities in relation to the efforts and performance of others.

Recent studies have distinguished between two forms of ego-oriented goals. Skaalvik (1997) claims that some students want to be the best or to demonstrate superior ability, whereas others try not to be the poorest, to avoid looking stupid, or to avoid negative reactions from others. He called these two independent but related dimensions *self-enhancing* and *self-defeating* ego goal orientation respectively. Skaalvik notes that the self-enhancing orientation represents the typical or commonsense understanding of the concept: most researchers of goal orientation define performance orientation in terms of self-enhancing ego orientation. For example, "I feel most successful if I do the work better than other students" is an item that has been commonly used to describe this orientation in research (Nicholls, 1992). Self-defeating ego orientation resembles a performance-avoidance goal (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Individuals who pursue self-defeating goal orientation avoid negative reactions from others. For example, "The worst thing about making mistakes is that other students may notice" is a sentence reflecting a self-defeating ego goal.

Work-Avoidance Goals

Work-avoidant students have been described as those who consistently avoid making an effort to do well, do only the minimum necessary to get by, and avoid challenging tasks. In contrast to the inconsistent pattern of results of performance orientation, the pattern of findings for students' work-avoidant goals is fairly consistent across studies. Recent studies (Elliot, 1997; Elliot & Church, 1997) suggest that avoidance goals may be related to poor outcomes like reduced interest and lower performance.

Links to Gender Differences

Few studies have examined differences in goal orientation by gender (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). However, Middleton and Midgley (1997) found that when gender differences emerged, boys endorsed a performance approach goals more often than girls did, whereas girls wished to achieve task goals more often than boys. Middleton and Midgley note that gender differences in motivational patterns for higher-achieving students exist; girls exhibit a lower preference for challenge, more frequent attributions of failure to ability, and greater deterioration when they experience failure than boys. Some researchers have suggested that girls are less likely than boys to develop a set of motivational characteristics that facilitate achievement in mathematics and science, especially at the upper grade levels (Dweck, 1986).

Relevance of the AGT for Language-Learning

The concept of goal orientation in achievement goal theory has the potential to make a much-needed contribution to explaining individual differences in learning a foreign language. Goal orientation theory, which evolved from research on achievement motivation, was developed primarily to explain learning and performance on academic tasks. AGT can explain why in a classroom that seems to offer similar learning opportunities, some language-learners make more progress than others. Furthermore, AGT focuses on students' immediate orientations toward the learning process rather than on more distant objectives (travel, jobs, etc.) and could, therefore, in principle be modified given well-adapted curriculum and pedagogy.

AGT is also potentially significant for investigating the education of foreign-language teachers. Preservice teachers often begin their foreign-language teaching experiences with relatively well-developed goals, which shape their patterns of cognition, affect, and behavior. These provide a framework within which novice teachers as individuals react to events. Understanding how preservice teachers think about themselves, their tasks, and their performance may affect their immediate and future success, thus affecting their students' language-learning for decades. A comprehensive review of related research indicates that little or no information has been documented about preservice teachers' achievement goals while they are engaged in learning a foreign language. Thus I hope the present research will contribute to a better understanding of the goals of this group, as well as assessing the usefulness of the AGT in studying language-learners' motivation more generally.

Research Questions

The study reported here is exploratory and adapts procedures developed by achievement goal researchers. This research was conducted with students in the preservice English Teacher Education Program at Atatürk University,

Turkey. Because subjects were not chosen randomly, caution is needed in making generalizations from the results to any wider population.

The research objectives were:

- to describe the relative strength of various goal orientations among advanced foreign-language-learners,
- to examine the relationships between goal orientations to understand whether these orientations develop separately or are dependent on each other,
- to explore how different goal orientations relate to sex/gender differences, and
- to examine the implications of various goal profiles for students' foreign-language-learning achievement.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of all 135 (n=54 male; n=81 female) students in the third year of a preservice English Teacher Education Program at Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey. This is a four-year, full-time preservice EFL teacher education program for those who wish to teach English in secondary schools. It has a yearly intake of approximately 200 students ranging in age from 18 to 20 years, the mean age being 19.5 years. All the participants were native speakers of Turkish; English was their second language.

Admission to higher education in Turkey is centralized and based on nationwide examinations administered every year by the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM). The entrance examination for foreign languages is carried out in two stages. Those with a minimum score of 120 qualify for the second stage of the examination, which is a foreign-language test. There is no formal correspondence with internationally known tests, but the test can be viewed as demanding the equivalent of upper-intermediate language ability.

Procedures

Data were collected in November 2000. A student questionnaire and a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) were group-administered by the trained research assistants. Although the researchers administered the questionnaire and the English-language test during a scheduled class period, the students filled out the instruments without a time limit. Students were assured of anonymity and confidentiality in completing the questionnaire and the test.

Measures

Achievement goals. In this study, the proposed goal orientations were measured by adapting the Goal Orientation Scale developed by Skaalvik

(1997) for the L2 learning domain. The scale used by Skaalvik had items reflecting the students' general concerns in school without reference to any particular subject. In this study, the scale was adapted to refer to EFL study of Turkish preservice teachers at the university level. Therefore, all items that included the words *at school* were modified to *at the department*. In addition, three items of the Task Orientation Scale were reformulated: the word *language* was inserted in the second question. On items 3 and 4 the phrase *to solve problems* was replaced by *difficult constructs in the foreign language* and *accomplishing difficult exercises in the foreign language* respectively. The other scales were not adapted.

Skaalvik's (1997) studies were conducted with grades 6 and 8 Norwegian students: one study for schoolwork in general and the other for mathematics. One aspect of this study was to explore the usefulness of Skaalvik's framework for a different, adult student population to see whether the scale that had yielded robust and meaningful patterns with the younger age group would also do so with this older and more focused student group in a different subject area.

The scale had 22 items in total (task orientation 6; self-enhancing ego orientation 7; self-defeating ego orientation 5; avoidance orientation 4), which reflected the students' concerns when studying English as a foreign language. Examples of statements are as follows. "It is important for me to learn something new" (task-orientation); "I always try to do better than other students in my class" (self-enhancing ego-orientation); "When I am writing on the blackboard I am concerned about what classmates think about me" (self-defeating ego-orientation); "I try to get away with doing as little as possible" (avoidance orientation). Response categories were: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

There is still much discussion about the nature of the cognitive representation of goals and how to measure these representations accurately. Therefore, scholars are conscious of the need to develop, refine, and validate the scales used to assess students' achievement goal orientations. Most published studies provide evidence of the internal consistency, as well as the convergent, construct, and discriminant validity of the scales used.

Skaalvik (1997) notes that both factor analysis of the 22 items designed to measure four potential dimensions of goal orientation and the correlations between the scales appear to confirm the existence of two independent dimensions of ego-orientation and that these dimensions can be separated from task orientation and avoidance orientation. Furthermore, the scale yields similar results to those produced by other measures like those of Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996). The internal consistency reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha for the four goal scales used in this study was: for task-orientation .69; self-enhancing-ego orientation .80; self-defeating ego orientation .81; and work-avoidance orientation .75. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and

Black (1998) suggested that the acceptable value of alpha is at least .70. Therefore, we can assume that values of in this study are acceptable.

English achievement. English language achievement was measured by using a selection from a TOEFL test that comprised 100 short grammar questions. The TOEFL was selected because (a) no questions are duplicated across products, (b) it is a well-developed and reliable test with international currency, and (c) it is suitable in difficulty level for this student group. The grammar topics fell into two broad categories, Simple Sentences and Complex Sentences. The internal consistency reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha for the test was alpha .81. Therefore, research instrument reliability estimated by Chronbach's alpha in this study is good.

Data Analysis

The participants' responses were analyzed quantitatively using several methods often used in studies of this type. First, descriptive analysis was used to describe the mean levels of the various goal orientations (research question 1) and to understand the relative strength of each goal orientation. Second, a nonparametric two-independent-samples Mann Whitney U Test was used to explore how the various goal orientations relate to sex differences (research question 3). Third, bivariate correlations were used to examine the relations between goal orientations and to understand whether these orientations develop separately or are dependent on each other (research question 2) and to explore the implications of different goal profiles for students' foreign-language-learning achievement (research question 4).

Results and Discussion

All results are presented and discussed in this section. The areas of interest on which the goals for this study and the ensuing research questions are based frame the discussion. These are: (a) students' differing goals in learning a foreign language, (b) relations among goal orientations, (c) sex differences, and (d) links to English achievement. Comparisons are drawn with the Skaalvik (1997) study and with other major studies where relevant.

Students' Differing Goals in Learning a Foreign Language

Because prior research has not examined Turkish students' goals for learning a foreign language, the first objective was simply to describe the relative strength of various goal orientations for learning EFL in the third year of this preservice English teacher education program. Therefore, the means for students' four achievement goals were calculated to see which scale the students endorsed most and least.

Table 1 reports students' tendencies concerning the four goal orientations. The most striking feature is that students in this sample reported strong task-mastery orientation. It seems that most students focus strongly

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations

Scale	*M*	*SD*
Task-oriented goals	4.17	0.54
Self-enhancing ego goal orientation	2.73	0.79
Self-defeating ego goal orientation	2.82	0.85
Work-avoidance goals	2.82	0.93

on learning the foreign language and are likely to be mainly concerned with their own progress and to choose challenging tasks. This is a positive finding, as the results of many studies (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Butler & Neuman, 1995; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997) have typically demonstrated that having a task goal orientation has motivational and performance benefits.

The means for the other three goal types are (just) negative in value and not very different from each other. However, as in Skaalvik's (1997) study, the means descend as follows: task-mastery, self-defeating, work-avoidance, and self-enhancing. Self-defeating ego orientation has the least negative mean score, which means that participants seem to be motivated (to some extent) to work in order to avoid being negatively judged by others, to avoid looking stupid, and to avoid appearing unable.

Self-defeating ego-orientation is followed by work-avoidance, which implies that students have a tendency to feel successful when the work is easy. As a group, the students expressed only a slightly negative view of work-avoidance in learning a foreign language. The work-avoidance tendency may lead students to use surface-level cognitive processes and thus have a negative influence on standardized test scores. Another potential risk is that a work-avoidance tendency may be a predictor of cheating.

The figure for self-enhancing ego orientation is lower than the other figures, indicating that students have the most negative view of trying to demonstrate superior abilities. This result may also be due to age-related changes in students' conceptions of achievement goals at the university level of study. As the students advance from one level to another, they may gradually become less ego-oriented.

The rank order of the scales confirmed the results of Skaalvik (1997). Moreover, in both Skaalvik and the current study, although task orientation is high, ego orientations and work avoidance are not completely rejected. Skaalvik does not provide an explanation for the existence of differing goal orientations at the same time. However, in related litrature it has been demonstrated that individuals are likely to pursue more than one goal in any given situation and that they may have multiple goals.

Relationships Among Goal Orientations

The study next examined the relationships between goal orientations to understand whether these orientations develop separately or are dependent on each other. Table 2 describes the relationsips among goal orientations.

As Table 2 illustrates, first, task orientation is found to be negatively related to avoidance orientation at the $p<.01$ level of significance, confirming the results in Skaalvik (1997). It seems that these two motivational goals will naturally be characterized by contrasting affective and behavioral patterns. Whereas task-oriented students persist at difficult tasks and aim to understand learning material, work-avoidant students avoid doing the learning task altogether or will do it with minimum effort, prefering surface-level learning strategies.

Second, the study identified a positive correlation between self-enhancing and self-defeating ego orientations ($p<.01$). In Skaalvik's (1997) study, self-enhancing and self-defeating ego orientation showed a low but positive correlation. Therefore, in both studies, self-enhancing ego orientation and self-defeating ego orientation predict each other.

Third, a positive relationship between work-avoidance and self-defeating ego orientation at the .01 level of significance was identified.

Fourth, this study failed to find a significant correlation between self-enhancing ego orientation and avoidance orientation. Nor could Skaalvik (1997) find any significant relation between self-enhancing ego orientation and avoidance; Skaalvik interpreted this to mean that self-enhancing ego orientation may have different outcomes for different students.

Earlier empirical results from correlational studies with survey data have found that mastery and performance goals may be negatively related, unrelated, or even positively related (Pintrich, 2000). Although not significant, the

Table 2
Correlations

Scale	*Statistics*	*Task-oriented*	*Self-enhancing*	*Self-defeating*	*Work-avoidance*
Self-enhancing	r	0.09			
	P	0.29			
Self-defeating	r	–0.07	0.29		
	P	0.42	0.00**		
Work-avoidance	r	–0.39	0.06	0.27	
	P	0.00**	0.48	0.00**	

**$p<.01$. *$p<.05$.

relation between task orientation and self-defeating ego orientation shows a negative tendency.

Gender Differences

Gender differences in academic motivation indexes are routinely reported (Middleton & Midgley, 1997). Generally, these differences depend on how the academic discipline in question is perceived by students of different sexes. In this study, analyses also tested for sex differences in students' goal orientation, with the expectation that men and women would differ in their approach to language-learning activities. To analyze the data, a non-parametric two-independent-samples Mann Whitney U test was used (see Table 3).

In the current study, no sex differences emerged as a main effect for task and ego orientations. Although the trends were not very strong, female students reported a stronger task orientation (female M=4.220, SD=.548; M= 4.096, SD=.512). They also reported more self-enhancing ego orientation (female, M=2.748, SD=.733; male, M=2.707, SD=.884) and self-defeating ego orientation (female, M=2.924, SD=.922; male, M=2.661, SD=.710). Consistent with earlier studies (Meece & Jones, 1996; Meece & Miller, 1999), the findings of this study indicated significant sex differences in avoidance motivation (p<.05), with men (M=3.023, SD=1.057) reporting stronger work-avoidant goals than women (M=2.679, SD=0.816).

As noted above, many studies (Nicholls, Patashnick, & Nolen, 1985) have suggested that more attention should be paid to work-avoidance. Some students see themselves as capable of doing the work, but see no reason for doing it. Consequently, they put forth little effort, perhaps because they are striving simply to graduate rather than to learn or to get good grades. Alternatively, male students' work-avoidance behavior may perhaps be explained by the students' belief that foreign-language teaching is a female

Table 3
Nonparametric Two Independent Samples for Gender Differences

Scale	*Gender*	*M*	*SD*	*MR*	*SR*	*U*	*P*
Task-oriented	Male	4.10	0.51	61.70	3.332.00	1.847.00	0.12
	Female	4.22	0.55	72.20	5.848.00		
Self-enhancing	Male	2.71	0.88	66.96	3.616.00	2.131.00	0.80
	Female	2.75	0.73	68.69	5.564.00		
Self-defeating	Male	2.66	0.71	60.88	3.287.50	1.802.50	0.08
	Female	2.92	0.92	72.75	5.892.50		
Work-avoidance	Male	3.02	1.06	75.93	4.100.00	1.759.00	0.05
	Female	2.68	0.82	62.72	5.080.00		

activity. According to the 1998 figures, 55.9% female and 33.1% male students are currently studying languages in Turkish universities. It is reported that fewer male students enroll in foreign-language teaching classes. Researchers (Eccles 1987; Meece & Courtney, 1992) have reported that gender differences in students' achievement-related perception can be influenced by the stereotypes they hold about the gender appropriateness of the particular academic discipline.

Links to English Achievement

Overall, the lowest score was 40 and the highest was 87 out of 100 on the grammar test. The average score was 62.53 (see Figure 1). A nonparametric two-independent-samples Mann Whitney U test provides evidence for non-significant sex difference in students' achievement (Table 4). The male students scored M=63.31, SD=9.54; the female students scored M=62.0, SD=19.86 average (Table 4). Although the male students are significantly more work-avoidant, which presumably means they prefer to study less and do as little work as possible, no significant difference between men and women in terms of English language achievement was found in this study.

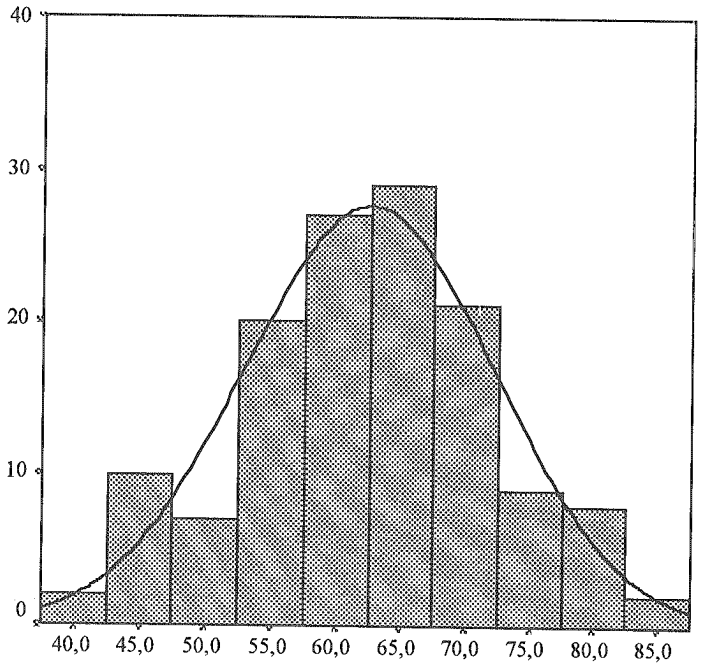

Figure 1. Histogram for achievement.

Table 4
Nonparametric Two Independent Samples for Gender Differences in Achievement

Scale	*Sex*	*M*	*SD*	*MR*	*SR*	*U*	*P*
Achievement	Male	63.31	9.54	71.13	3.841.00	2.018.00	0.45
	Female	62.01	9.86	65.91	5.339.00		

This finding requires some explanation. One possible explanation may be that most male students work in tourism during the summer and so have time to practice their English with native speakers outside class. For cultural reasons, women do not have this contact, so they need to study harder to be as successful as males. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to confirm this interpretation.

Correlations of students' reports of their achievement goals with their English achievement scores are presented in Table 5. The correlation aimed to examine the implications of varying goal profiles for students' foreign-language-learning achievement.

In the analysis, task orientation related significantly positively to achievement in line with many earlier studies. Midgley et al. (1998) note that the relationship between a task orientation and adaptive patterns of learning is remarkably consistent across studies. Skaalvik (1997) notes that both self-enhancing and self-defeating ego orientation might lead students to focus more on how well they are doing in relation to others, either of which might lead to higher achievement. Table 5 displays no such correlation. No significant correlation between achievement and either self-enhancing ego orientation, or self-defeating ego orientation was found in this study. Although as might be expected, students' avoidance goal orientation is negatively related to standardized test scores in other studies, in this study English achievement was not significantly influenced by avoidance orientation. This may be explained by the varying experiences and orientations of men and women in the study, as discussed above, or it may be explained by the educational level of the participants (e.g., tertiary rather than secondary-level education).

Table 5
Correlations

Scale	*Statistics*	*Task-oriented*	*Self-enhancing*	*Self-defeating*	*Work-avoidance*
Achievement	*r*	0.17	0.02	–0.03	–0.08
	p	0.05*	0.81	0.72	0.35

*$p<.05$.

Conclusion

In this exploratory study, AGT has turned out to be useful in explaining the ongoing motivation of this student group in several respects. Confirming both commonsense and major research results, the examination of the relative strength of different goal orientations among advanced foreign-language-learners revealed that these students are primarily task-oriented; they find meaning in learning itself. However, the other types of goal orientations have not been eliminated as factors, which indicates that even relatively advanced students seem to have multiple goals; they may enjoy both learning and doing better than others. They may pursue a set of personal goals across a variety of situations and have multiple reasons for trying to achieve. Their identification of different goals in different situations is likely to be determined by how they believe they will achieve success and by their view of what defines success. If students believe that they can achieve their goals by working less, they may exhibit reduced effort in some situations. In order to understand language-learners' performance fully, the foreign-language education field must consider (a) how students coordinate these multiple goals, and (b) the significance of pursuing multiple goals.

How relations between differing goals develop, and how to promote a student preference for those goals that lead to developing and improving ability, learning, and active engagement, as compared with those that lead to avoiding work or getting tasks done with minimal effort, is a subject that needs further research. For example, in this study, students' self-defeating ego orientation was found to be relatively high (M=2.819, SD=0.851) and was related to work-avoidance. Earlier research suggested that self-defeating ego orientation may lead students to increased effort in an attempt to avoid being the poorest. To the contrary, in this study, self-defeating ego orientation was related to reduced effort. Assuming that reduced effort leads to reduced learning, research is needed to demonstrate the factors (e.g., the nature of tasks, evaluation, rewards, teachers' comments) that may have created a psychological environment that produces this goal orientation.

An important outcome of the study was the finding that male students were relatively more work-avoidant than female students. Research is needed to understand better the source of this work-avoidance goal, as well as how to reduce this tendency if it affects language-learning negatively.

This study is important for teachers because students' achievement goal orientations can contribute to a deeper understanding of academic achievement. In this study, task orientation related positively to achievement, in line with many earlier studies, which confirms a direct association between achievement goals and academic outcomes. Obviously, task goals may explain student behavior and achievement, which in turn will enable educators

to develop a fuller understanding of achievement and the means to improve and maintain student engagement and success.

To conclude, it is important to continue to explore goal orientation and other motivational constructs in foreign-language-learning in connection with differential success in the development of students' foreign-language-learning skills. As Jacobs and Newstead (2000) point out, surprisingly little is known about what motivates university students: why they embark on their studies in the first place, what changes take place during the course of their studies, and what factors influence their motivation. By developing a better understanding of students' goal orientation, researchers and practitioners can work to foster students' continued engagement and perhaps reduce the variability in ultimate success.

Note

Due to space constraints the instruments used for data collection could not be included in this article. To obtain a copy, please contact Dr. Leyla Tercanlioglu, Atatürk University, at Leyla@atauni.edu.tr

Acknowledgments

The author is grateful to Professor Rosamond Mitchell, University of Southampton, whose comments improved the article immensely. The author also appreciates the contribution of Professor Ayse Akyel, Bogazici University, Turkey who provided invaluable suggestions. This research was funded by a grant from the British Council in Ankara awarded to the author; special thanks are extended to Dr. Sangeeta Ahuja for her support.

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