

## A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING METHODS AND LEARNER MOTIVATION IN UZBEKISTAN AND EUROPEAN EFL CONTEXTS

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### Abstract

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, teaching methods and learner motivation are closely connected and significantly influenced by cultural, institutional, and pedagogical traditions. In recent years, Uzbekistan has undertaken educational reforms aimed at improving teaching quality and increasing learner motivation; however, notable differences remain when compared to European educational systems. This article explores the differences in teaching methods and learner motivation in Uzbekistan and European EFL contexts, focusing on classroom interaction, instructional approaches, assessment practices, and motivational strategies. Drawing on motivational theories, comparative classroom observations, and qualitative analysis, the study argues that European contexts generally emphasize learner-centered instruction, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation, while Uzbek classrooms tend to rely more on structured teaching, teacher authority, and extrinsic motivational factors. The findings suggest that understanding these differences can support educators in adopting balanced pedagogical practices that enhance learner motivation, engagement, and long-term language development.

### Keywords

teaching methods, learner motivation, EFL, Uzbekistan, European education, classroom practices.

### Introduction

Motivation is widely recognized as one of the most influential factors in successful second and foreign language learning. It determines learners' willingness to participate actively, persist in the face of difficulty, and invest sustained effort in developing language skills. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation plays a central role not only in initiating language learning but also in maintaining long-term engagement. In EFL contexts, where exposure to the target language is often limited to classroom settings, teaching methods and the overall learning environment become critical in shaping learner motivation. Educational systems are deeply rooted in social, cultural, and historical traditions. As a result, teaching practices and motivational approaches differ significantly across regions. Uzbekistan's education system has been shaped by a strong tradition of teacher authority, academic discipline, and exam-oriented instruction. In contrast, many European education systems have shifted toward learner-centered pedagogies that emphasize autonomy, interaction, and critical thinking. These contrasting approaches influence how learners perceive language learning and how motivated they feel to engage in classroom activities. This article aims to provide a comparative analysis of teaching methods and learner motivation in Uzbekistan and European EFL contexts, highlighting key differences and pedagogical implications.

### Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative comparative research design to investigate differences in teaching methods and learner motivation in Uzbek and European EFL classrooms. Data were collected through classroom observations, instructional material analysis, and reflective teaching

notes provided by EFL instructors working in both contexts. The study focused on upper-secondary school and university-level learners aged between 16 and 22, as this group represents a critical stage for academic and professional language development. Classroom observations were conducted over a six-week period in both educational contexts. The observations focused on lesson organization, teacher–student interaction, types of classroom activities, use of instructional language, and motivational techniques. Particular attention was given to how teachers encouraged participation, responded to learner errors, and provided feedback. Learner engagement, confidence, and willingness to communicate were also documented. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns related to teaching approaches and motivational influences.

## Results

The findings revealed clear and consistent differences between Uzbek and European EFL classrooms. In the Uzbek context, lessons were predominantly teacher-centered, with a strong emphasis on grammatical accuracy, controlled practice, and textbook-based instruction. Teachers often led the lesson through explanation and demonstration, while students followed instructions and completed tasks individually. Motivation in these classrooms was largely driven by extrinsic factors, such as grades, examinations, parental expectations, and future career opportunities. Although learners demonstrated respect for teachers, many appeared hesitant to participate actively, particularly in speaking activities. In contrast, European EFL classrooms displayed a higher level of learner-centered instruction. Teachers frequently used interactive tasks such as discussions, project-based learning, problem-solving activities, and real-life simulations. Learners were encouraged to express opinions, ask questions, and collaborate with peers. Motivation in these settings appeared to be more intrinsic, as learners showed interest in communication, self-expression, and personal development. Students demonstrated greater confidence in using English and were more willing to take risks, even when making mistakes.

## Discussion

The results of this study support established motivational theories that emphasize autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key components of learner motivation. According to self-determination theory, learners are more motivated when they feel a sense of control over their learning, believe in their abilities, and experience positive social relationships. European teaching approaches often address these needs by promoting learner choice, meaningful interaction, and supportive teacher–student relationships. In the Uzbek context, the structured and teacher-led nature of instruction provides clarity, discipline, and academic consistency. However, this approach may limit opportunities for learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Fear of making mistakes and strong focus on evaluation can reduce learners' willingness to participate actively. Nevertheless, recent educational reforms in Uzbekistan indicate a gradual shift toward communicative and learner-centered methodologies. Integrating motivational strategies commonly used in European contexts—such as formative feedback, reflective learning, and supportive classroom interaction—could significantly enhance learner motivation while preserving academic standards.

## Conclusion

This article concludes that significant differences exist in teaching methods and learner motivation between Uzbekistan and European EFL contexts. While Uzbek classrooms

traditionally emphasize structure, teacher authority, and extrinsic motivation, European classrooms generally promote learner autonomy, interaction, and intrinsic motivation. Understanding these differences provides valuable insights for educators seeking to improve teaching effectiveness and learner engagement. By combining the strengths of both educational traditions, EFL teachers can create motivating learning environments that encourage active participation, confidence, and long-term language development.

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