

The Impact of the Bologna Process on Motivating University Level EFL Learners: Students' Perspectives

Gashbin Sidiq Abdalla¹, Jamal Ali Omar²

¹Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of Koya, Kurdistan Region – F.R. Iraq

²Department of English, College of Basic Education, University of Raparin, Kurdistan Region – F.R. Iraq

Abstract— This study investigates the impact of Bologna Process on motivating university level EFL learners from the perspectives of students in three public universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Mixed method approach used to collect data from 273 EFL third year students through the use of structured questionnaire and semi structured interview at the universities of Sulaimani Koya and Raparin. According to the quantitative data, the Bologna Process had a moderately positive effect on motivation ($M = 3.197$, $SD = 0.482$), clear course structure, credits, and technology use (such as smartboards, $M = 3.443$) all increased students' motivation. However, difficulties like language anxiety ($M = 2.986$), lack of practice time, instructors' inconsistent use of BP techniques, and focus on grades were noted as obstacles to motivation. Qualitative results demonstrated that a heavy workload and exam-focused practices decreased motivation, interactive activities, varied assessments, and student-centered approaches increased engagement. In conclusion the Bologna Process offers a framework for enhancing transparency, and student-centered learning, its capacity to motivate is mostly dependent on successful pedagogical implementation and institutional supports. The results provide guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers who seek to maximize the motivational advantages of the BP in EFL higher education settings.

Index Terms— Bologna Process, English Language, Motivation, Student centered learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most crucial factors in learning a foreign language successfully. It eventually shapes learners' proficiency results by determining their perseverance, method utilization, and readiness to take on problems (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2010). Since university students are expected to assume more responsibility for their own learning and apply language skills in both academic and professional contexts, motivation plays a fundamental role in higher education settings. On the other hand, a lack of motivation frequently

leads to decreased achievement, language anxiety, and involvement.

The Bologna Process (BP), since it was launched in 1999, has aimed to transform higher education by standardizing degree formats, encouraging mobility, and introducing outcome-based and student-centered learning throughout Europe and beyond (Adam, 2006; Teichler, 2012). To modernize universities, increase their quality, and update their curricula into alignment with worldwide standards, the Ministry of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq adopted the Bologna Process and implemented it in many universities. The impact of these reforms on the motivation of EFL learners is yet unknown, despite the fact that they have brought about structural benefits, including clearer learning outcomes and transparency through the credit system. By increasing the instrumental value of English Language, providing chances for mobility, and making academic goals more visible, Bologna Process may increase motivation for a large number of students (İşleyen, 2024). However, issues including greater workloads, grade-focused assessment, and inconsistent application across colleges might decrease students' natural enthusiasm and involvement. The issue draws attention to a crucial knowledge gap: inadequate information is known about how students view the Bologna Process's motivational effects in their education. In order to fill this gap, this study looks at the opinions of EFL students at three public universities in the Kurdistan Region that have adopted the Bologna Process. In particular, the following questions serve as a guide for the research:

1. How does the Bologna Process influence the motivation of university-level EFL learners from the perspective of students?
2. What are the effects of the Bologna Process on EFL students' motivation and learning outcomes?
3. What difficulties do students identify in maintaining motivation within the framework of the Bologna Process?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction to the Bologna Process

One of the most significant reforms in higher education was the Bologna Process (BP), which aimed to standardize and unite the European educational system. This process was started with the Bologna Declaration in 1999 with the goal of improving degree comparability, academic mobility, and overall quality of education across European countries (Klemenčič, 2006). Higher education systems in Europe were extremely fragmented before BP, with each nation adhering to its own degree structures, evaluation standards, and credit-accumulation schemes. Academic collaboration across universities, degree recognition, and student mobility were all severely restricted by this lack of uniformity (Teichler, 2012). The idea of a single European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was being developed, according to the History and Evolution of the Bologna Process, which led to the formal signature of the Bologna Declaration.

The Bologna Process was established in 1999, during which 29 European nations reached a consensus on important educational changes aimed at enhancing graduate employability, mobility, and transparency (Teichler, 2012). With 49 countries now involved, BP has grown over time to become one of the world's greatest transnational educational reform initiatives (European Higher Education Area, 2025). In order to modernize higher education system, update curricula into alignment with international standards, and strengthen relations with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the Ministry of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) made the decision to implement the Bologna Process (BP). Improving quality and internationalizing universities were the primary objectives. With MOHE's approval, BP implementation started and progressively implemented in universities: Zakho University (2017), Garmian, Soran, Duhok, Sulaimani Universities, and Halabja University (2018), Charimo University (2018–2019), Erbil's Salahaddin University (2019). Projects like TIGRIS (2017–2020), which aimed to modernize universities, increase international cooperation, and bring KRI higher education closer to European standards and requirements, provided support for these reforms. The Bologna Declaration highlighted BP's primary goals, which included:

- Adopting a three-cycle degree system (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate) to ensure degree comparability.
- To promote student mobility, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was put into place.
- The improvement of lifelong learning opportunities to support professional and personal growth outside of formal education.
- The promotion of quality assurance methods to raise educational standards across institutions (Adam, 2006).

The Bologna Process has been highly beneficial for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). English has become a crucial academic and professional language as a result of the implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in many European universities, which has increased student motivation to advance their language proficiency for global employment (Dörnyei, 2005).

1) Bologna Process as a Shift of Paradigm

The Bologna Process (BP) is a comprehensive reform program for higher education that aims to ensure degree equivalence throughout Europe, increase student mobility, and standardize academic structures. With the Bologna Declaration of 1999, BP aimed to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that would allow students and educational qualifications to freely travel between countries and universities (Klemenčič, 2006). Most of the Universities in Kurdistan region in Iraq implemented this process and they took a part of this shift.

2) Bologna Process and Outcome-Based Learning

Higher education in Europe has seen a significant transformation due to the Bologna Process, which replaced input-based learning—where learning is evaluated by the length of time spent in the classroom—with outcome-based learning (OBL) (Adam, 2006). Instead of just gaining theoretical knowledge, this change guarantees that students develop practical competencies. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), outcome-based learning is an educational method that places more focus on the skills, knowledge, and abilities that students acquire at the end of a learning process than on the material they are exposed to. By standardizing learning outcomes, credentials, and evaluations to produce a more open and comparable educational system, the Bologna Process has been essential in implementing OBL throughout European universities (Teichler, 2012).

3) Bologna Process and Student-Centered Learning

Higher education has modified dramatically as a result of the Bologna Process, which replaced traditional teacher-centered instruction with student-centered learning (SCL). With an emphasis on learner autonomy, active engagement, and competency-based education, this movement has fundamentally changed the roles of both educators and students (Attard et al., 2010). Several European colleges used lecture-based learning earlier than BP, when students were supposed to passively take in information from instructors. Critical thinking, problem-solving, and autonomous learning were not given much attention, and assessments mostly depended on rote memorization (Biggs & Tang, 2011). But BP brought about a paradigm shift in education, requiring students to take charge of their education, master self-regulation techniques, and participate in practical, interactive learning activities (Adam, 2006).

4) Bologna Process and EFL Learners

A major influence on the development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Europe has been through the Bologna Process. Student mobility, multilingual proficiency, and competency-based learning are highlighted by BP, a framework created to standardize higher education systems throughout Europe (Teichler, 2012). Due to the growing globalization of institutions and the global job market, acquiring a language—especially English—has become essential to higher education. In order to ensure that students gain the practical language skills required for academic performance, employability, and cross-cultural communication, BP has redesigned its language education policies (Attard et al., 2010).

B. The Role of Motivation in EFL Learning

1) Motivation and Language Learning

We often hear about motivation, and it is a well-known concept, but it is not easy to define or have a proper description of it. Motivation plays a role in different ways in the process of learning languages. Motivation, according to Rost (2006), is the key to teaching forgotten languages. The basic idea is that students may greatly influence their learning results if they are motivated. There will not be any progress in the class if the students lack motivation. Another definition of motivation is student orientation or augmentation concerning the learning objectives of the subject, particularly second language acquisition (Holt, 2001).

a) Intrinsic Motivation

Motivational variables that are intrinsic motivation, according to Santrock (2004), is the force to do a task that comes from an internal interest or emotion. For instance, someone could start taking up English because they enjoy learning the language. When a task captures their attention or presents a challenge, intrinsically motivated learners take on it without thinking about the result or possible rewards. Therefore, intrinsic motivation refers to acting because one finds the activity enjoyable. Students who have true motivation are not afraid to make mistakes, learn from them, and like taking on difficult tasks, according to Walker et al, Greene, and Mansell (2006). Since behaviour is a result of desires and interests, intrinsic motivation is additionally vital to successful learning Rahma & Setiyana (2019).

b) Extrinsic Motivation

The term "extrinsic motivation" describes a behaviour that is performed for reasons other than its own intrinsic fulfilment, such as obtaining a reward or avoiding punishment, such as achieving an excellent grade to pass Ryan & Deci (2000). Arnold (2000) focused on extrinsic motivation, which is connected with the desire to eliminate punishment and obtain rewards. External factors can be used to influence students to complete learning tasks like homework, attend classes, or take action to influence professors. Extrinsic motivation, according to (Penny, 1996, p. 277), is different from the desire to complete tasks or the desire to learn for its own reason.

c) Bologna Process as the Driving Force for EFL Learners' Motivation

The Bologna Process (BP), which established a unified and globally recognized academic framework emphasizing competency-based learning, multilingualism, and students' mobility, has been vital in revolutionizing higher education across Europe (Adam, 2006). In this setting, acquiring knowledge especially English as a foreign language (EFL) has been given a lot of importance. Strong incentives for learners to improve their second language (L2) abilities have been established by BP through the promotion of student-centered pedagogies, academic mobility, and outcome-based learning. This motivation derives from the recognition that being able to communicate in English is crucial for international employment, academic exchange, and active engagement in the global knowledge economy (Klemenčić, 2006). Therefore, in

addition to standardizing educational frameworks, BP actively encourages EFL students to strive for greater linguistic proficiency as a means of obtaining access to broader academic and career opportunities.

C. Previous Related Studies

The Bologna Process has received more and more attention in Kurdistan region of Iraq, up to date, most studies have focused on this process and the studies relevant to the subject of the current research are limited in number. These are reviewed below.

1. A study conducted by Sharif (2022) entitled "The Applicability of the Bologna Process at the Departments of English in Iraqi Kurdistan Region Universities: Challenges And Solutions" employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the possibility of applying the Bologna Process (BP) in English departments in four different universities in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Quantitatively, the study used stratified random sample, consisted of 245 sixth –semester EFL students in the Universities of Sulaimani, Halabja, Soran, and Charmo. A 31-item written questionnaire was used (on five-point Likert scale; pre-piloted and validated by expert jurors) with pilot testing followed by administration. Interviews were qualitatively undertaken using purposive stratified sampling of nine academics. The study concluded that the Bologna Process could be an instrument to improve higher education, but the successful implementation agency of the Bologna Process would need better government support, acknowledgement of European conventions, a higher adoption rate of quality standards, and curricular changes aligned with outcomes and employability. These would enhance the transparency, mobility and recognition aspects internationally of Kurdistan higher education.
2. Another study conducted by Rajab (2023) entitled "A Survey Study on the Academics' Views towards the Implementation of the Bologna Process at Duhok Polytechnic University" gathered data in a cross-sectional study using a descriptive design. The participants are containing 50 male and female academics using the Bologna Process for the academic year 2021–2022. Results were quantitatively encoded using a five-point Likert scale for global attitudes. The findings showed that academics had positive perceptions of the Bologna Process where the most common perceptions focused on the fact that Bologna Process could increase the quality of higher education, student mobility, and curricula harmonization with European requirements. It was concluded that while the Bologna Process has a high degree of academic support at DPU, its successful implementation requires continuous staff training, enhancing of infrastructure and external support from countries with more developed Bologna experience.
3. Another study by İşleyen (2024) entitled "The Influence of Bologna Process on Promoting Learners' Scientific Level.: A Sample of Soran University" employed a mixed-methods approach. A quantitative survey design was adopted, using a semi-structured questionnaire Forms to 204 first-year students across four faculties: Arts,

Science, Engineering, and Law. study concluded that the Bologna Process significantly enhanced learners' scientific and academic levels at Soran University, though further reforms—particularly improving infrastructure, laboratories, and curriculum alignment—are required to maximize its impact. Even though the Bologna Process has received more and more attention in Kurdistan, to date, most studies (Sharif 2022; Rajab 2023; İşleyen 2024) have focused on the challenges of its implementation, the structural impediments, or students' and scholars' general perceptions. These also draw attention to concerns around inadequate facilities, excessive workload, teacher training differences and curriculum matching, but they seldom get deeper into the problems. They have not, however, directly addressed how the Bologna framework affects student motivation with regards to learning English, nor whether Bologna reforms are experienced by teachers or students in their daily practice. The present study fills in the gap by conducting a two-step mixed-method research design involving questionnaires and in-depth interviews across many universities. Its comparative analysis of perspectives exposes convergencies and divergence as to how the motivation impact of Bologna is being perceived. It also emphasizes parameters of under-researched identity issues (e.g., language anxiety, universities variation (Sulaimani vs. Koya vs. Raparin), technology and teacher strategies) that have not received sufficient attention in previous studies.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

To give an extensive understanding of how the Bologna Process affects university-level EFL learners' motivation, this study uses a mixed-methods research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods. The combination of these two methods can provide reliable results and a deeper understanding of students' experiences. In the quantitative phase, third-year undergraduate students from the English departments of the University of Sulaimani, Koya University, and University of Raparin were selected, structured, closed-ended questionnaires are provided for them. Students answer by ticking on a Likert scale format that represents their opinion. The questionnaire consists of fifteen items to assess student' level of motivation, their opinion, perspectives, participation in activities and their perspective beneath the Bologna Process. Each item rated on a five-point Likert scale ranged from 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. The quantitative data will be examined by using SPSS statistical software, to get the correlations, and interactions between variables like participant motivation and classroom participation the students' questionnaire is located in Appendix A. The qualitative phase will use semi-structured interviews to collect in-depth viewpoints in order to support the quantitative findings. Students will be asked six open-ended questions on their experiences with the Bologna Process, the challenges they face in maintaining motivation to learn, and recommendations for

improvement and doing better. Through thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from these interviews, frequent themes and insights that are not possible to capture with numerical data alone become obvious.

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative tools to address the research questions. The primary motivation for employing mixed-methods research was comprehensiveness; The researchers aimed to answer more issues than could be addressed by quantitative approaches alone Murphy, O'Cathain, and Nicholl (2007). The main instruments for this study were a Likert scale questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions. These tools were carefully developed and designed to align and support the research aims and questions, the tools and the interview questions of this study inspired by key elements from Gardner's AMTB motivational theory, and also supported by research findings from İşleyen (2024).

B. Piloting the study

Pilot studies can identify earlier possible areas of failure in a study, whether a research instrument does not follow research questions and aims or whether the suggested methods or instruments are unsuitable for the participants. A paper-based questionnaire is piloted 21 students from the English Department in the College of Basic Education at the University of Sulaimani. The researcher clarified the BP and its action lines for the implementation as a first step for the students to become familiar with the BP. Although it was expected that the students would ask questions about the items and implementation of the BP, all the students responded to the questionnaire. However, at some points they asked for clarification, and they faced difficulty selecting the proper answer that expressed their opinions. As a result of this pilot study, some of the items of the study have been changed based on the results, which indicate that some of the students did not understand the questionnaire items and they were not obvious for them.

C. Validity

The validity and reliability of the measures are important determinants of a measuring instrument's quality. The reduction of measurement error is a major goal of the instrument development and validation process (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). The researcher achieves face validity by consulting with experts and incorporating their judgment and feedback to strengthen the validity. The research questionnaire and interview were revised by ten jurors from the University of Sulaimani, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Koya University, Charmo University, and the University of Duhok. (Appendix 1) Their feedback and comments include adding, modifying, deleting, or altering anything that seems inappropriate for the study.

D. Reliability

The degree to which a phenomenon's measurement provides a consistent and stable outcome is known as reliability (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Reliability testing is crucial since it measures the consistency of a measuring instrument's parts (Huck, 2007). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is the internal consistency measure that is most frequently utilized.

When utilizing Likert scales, it is thought to be the most suitable reliability metric. Although there are no specific guidelines for internal consistency, most experts agree that a minimum internal consistency coefficient of .70 is appropriate (Whitley, 2002; Robinson, 2010). The reliability Cronbach alpha score for the students' questionnaire is 0.723.

E. The Participants

Third-year undergraduate students from the English departments of the University of Sulaimani, Koya University, and University of Raparin participated in this study. For the purpose of including those participants from third-year who were directly involved and experienced this Process. In all, 273 students from the three universities answered the student questionnaire, and 9 students (3 from each university) participated in semi-structured face-to-face interviews for the qualitative phase. This combination of instruments offered depth (interview data) and breadth (questionnaire data). In terms of student involvement, Koya University and the University of Sulaimani featured both morning and evening students. However, because evening students at University of Raparin do not follow the Bologna Process, only morning students were included. All participants received assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, and participation was entirely voluntary. They were additionally informed of the study's purpose.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics for the demographic characteristics of the participants. The information includes age distribution, gender, and university affiliation, which provide an overview of the sample composition are presented below. These details are important as they establish the context of the study by outlining the participants' background and ensuring transparency regarding the representativeness of the data.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Characteristics

		N	%
Age	19-21	150	51.55%
	22-24	123	42.27%
	25+	18	6.19%
	(Mean $\pm$ Standard deviation)	(22 $\pm$ 2.447)	
Gender	Male	99	34.02%
	Female	192	65.98%
University	University of Sulaimani	139	47.77%
	University of Raparin	73	25.09%
	University of Koya	79	27.15%

Table 4.1 Shows the descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics including age, gender, and university. Most of the students are aged between 19 and 21 years (51.55%) followed by 22-24 years (42.27%), and more than 24 years (6.19%) respectively while the average of age is 22 years and standard deviation is 2.447. the percentage of female (65.98%) is higher than the percentage of male (34.02%). Most of the students are studying at Sulaimani University (47.77%)

followed by Koya University (27.15%), and University of Raparin (25.09%) respectively.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics about the Influence of the Bologna Process on Student Motivation

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Somewhat		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
The Bologna Process helps to set clearer goals for language learning	32	11.0%	51	17.5%	90	30.9%	96	33.0%	22	7.6%	3.086	1.115
The well-organized course framework has increased my motivation to learn English	15	5.2%	57	19.6%	106	36.4%	98	33.7%	15	5.2%	3.141	0.964
Bologna's credits and academic preparation encourage me to be more serious about my education.	17	5.8%	51	17.5%	93	32.0%	102	35.1%	28	9.6%	3.251	1.042
Knowing how classes affect my degree motivates me to work harder in English classes	16	5.5%	51	17.5%	85	29.2%	101	34.7%	38	13.1%	3.323	1.079

I feel supported by the instructor when I face difficulties with tasks	Bologna courses are connected to real-life communication skills	English lessons become exciting with the use of smartboards and other resources	Teachers encourage me to learn English language by using interesting exercises and resources	The Bologna shifts help me to track my achievements and growth better and easier
18	20	18	25	19
6.2%	6.9%	6.2%	8.6%	6.5%
60	49	36	52	51
20.6%	16.8%	12.4%	17.9%	17.5%
103	109	86	70	98
35.4%	37.5%	29.6%	24.1%	33.7%
89	95	101	91	95
30.6%	32.6%	34.7%	31.3%	32.6%
21	18	50	53	28
7.2%	6.2%	17.2%	18.2%	9.6%
3.120	3.144	3.443	3.326	3.213
1.018	1.000	1.101	1.209	1.052

There isn't always enough time for practice or the classes feel hurried	Despite the new techniques, speaking in English still makes me nervous	Not all teachers use the strategies of Bologna process in the classroom	I occasionally think Bologna overemphasizes grades in the classroom	The classroom atmosphere is positive that encourages and helps me to learn
25	33	27	18	22
8.6%	11.3%	9.3%	6.2%	7.6%
62	58	56	41	50
21.3%	19.9%	19.2%	14.1%	17.2%
76	101	82	99	85
26.1%	34.7%	28.2%	34.0%	29.2%
87	78	81	85	102
29.9%	26.8%	27.8%	29.2%	35.1%
41	21	45	48	32
14.1%	7.2%	15.5%	16.5%	11.0%
3.196	2.986	3.210	3.357	3.247
1.177	1.102	1.192	1.103	1.099

I'm not really sure how the Bologna Process is meant to help me	37	12.7%	76	26.1%	82	28.2%	67	23.0%	29	10.0%	2,914	1.182
Overall											3,197	0.482

Table 4.2 shows the students opinion on how the Bologna Process influences their motivation to learn English. The overall mean score (3.197) suggests a moderate level of agreement that the Bologna system has a positive impact.

Most of the items in this study received scores higher than 3 (13 out of 15), suggesting that students largely view the Bologna Process as positively impacting their motivation including English lessons become exciting with the use of smartboards and other resources (3.443), Teachers encourage me to learn English language by using interesting exercises and resources (3.326), Knowing how classes affect my degree motivates me to work harder in English classes (3.323), I occasionally think Bologna overemphasizes grades in the classroom (3.357), Bologna's credits and academic preparation encourage me to be more serious about my education (3.251), The classroom atmosphere is positive and encouraging (3.247), The Bologna shifts help me to track my achievements and growth better and easier (3.213), Not all teachers use the strategies of Bologna process in the classroom (3.210), There isn't always enough time for practice or the classes feel hurried (3.196), Bologna courses are connected to real-life communication skills (3.144), The well-organized course framework has increased my motivation to learn English (M = 3.141), I feel supported by the instructor when I face difficulties with tasks (3.120), The Bologna Process helps to set clearer goals for language learning (3.086) respectively. Students value the Bologna system's structure, especially tech use and teacher support, though concerns about grades, teaching consistency, and fast pace remain. The average of two items are below 3, indicating aspects of the Bologna Process where students feel less confident or hold more negative views including Despite the new techniques, speaking in English still makes me nervous (2.986) and I am not really sure how the Bologna Process is meant to help me (2.914). The items reveal student struggles with language anxiety and unclear goals, pointing to a need for better support and communication.

DISCUSSION

a) *The Analysis of the questionnaire*

The balance in the student questionnaire findings on the impact of the Bologna Process on motivation to learn English are to be found in the both positive and negative effects. The mean value of 3.197 indicates an average attitude of students

with respect to how the system motivates them (the result not so beneficial). This impression is also validated by a spread of answers embodying a large group of responses which picked the "somehow", with smaller proportions firmly agreeing or totally disagreeing. This pattern suggests that while students perceive concrete advantages, their exposure to Bologna is ambivalent and determined by enabling and constraining elements in practice. This finding is consistent with Kelo and Iucu (2025), who claimed that although the Bologna Process has marked a major cultural change towards student-centered learning, the impact is usually slow and incomplete; it is hindered by difficulties in the institution-wide application and faculty's development. One of the main results is the high support of integration and teacher's motivation. "English lessons become exciting with the use of smartboards and other resources" (M = 3.443) and "Teachers encourage me to learn English language by using interesting exercises and resources" (M = 3.326) scored above the total mean and proven to have statistically difference in the motivational process, which will improve the learning environment as well. Students obviously appreciate the use of modern tools and interactive techniques and lessons being livelier and fun. It also seems that the motivational factor is fostered as well by the clear structure by Bologna. Students recognized that understanding the relevance of classes for degree progress motivated them to study harder (M = 3.323) and that the system of credits and organized preparation made them take education more seriously (M = 3.251). These findings seem to mirror one of Bologna's desired effects: introducing more transparency and structure in academic pathways, providing students with feelings of meaningfulness and personal responsibility towards their studies. Meanwhile, the results identify concerning areas of fear that the findings point to both affective and cognitive constraints. Even though advanced technologies have not been applied, learners are suffering from language anxiety, which will reduce their participation willingness and hinder the oral ability development. This reflects findings by Eurydice (2015), who argued that many students perceive Bologna as an administrative reform that is poorly communicated to learners, thereby reducing its motivational impact. Other items also found problems to moderately answer on the overall good impression. Students reported that Bologna sometimes puts too much emphasis on grades (M = 3.357), that some teachers don't use Bologna's strategies all the time (M = 3.210), and that they sometimes feel rushed during class/like they need more time to practice (M = 3.196). Although these values are above that of the Somehow value of three, the consequences are substantial. This echoes Biggs and Tang's (2011) criticism that outcome-based frameworks can inadvertently narrow learning to grade attainment rather than deep engagement. These findings taken together, all point to Bologna as working better at the structural level than at pedagogical. The clarity of objectives, the modular structure and the technological novelty are all welcomed by students who feel they give them direction and a choice in what they study. But having a framework doesn't remove anxiety, doesn't promote continuity, doesn't ensure quantity to practice. The motivations because of that are closely related to the teachers' influence for implementation of the principles in their teaching practices and how the institutions provide learners with emotional and practical support. Absence in considering

such a dimension, the Bologna process may appear an administrative reform leaving pedagogical practices intact. This resonates with the warning raised by Witte (2006) that the impact of Bologna reforms should not be measured by structural adjustment, but rather by how they are translated into daily pedagogic praxis. To conclude, the analysis of questionnaire results shows that the Bologna Process is perceived by students to have a positive moderate effect on their motivation to learn the English language, with the most significant being the use of technology, teacher support, and clear academic structure. At the same time, unsolved problems, concerning language anxiety, ill-defined goals, and assessment pressure, together with uneven teaching practices, counteract its effectiveness. Differences of institutional detail also demonstrate that the success of Bologna does not rely on its design alone, but on its implementation at national level. By tackling these issues and capitalizing on the positives that exist, universities can ensure that Bologna is more than a structural reform, but an environment which is truly conducive to and encouraging of the learning of languages.

b) *The Analysis of Students' Interview*

A series of semi-structured interviews was conducted with EFL students to explore their experiences of learning under the Bologna Process. The aim of these interviews was to capture students' views on how the framework influences their motivation, perceptions of course design, and challenges in maintaining engagement. Most students reported that the Bologna Process had a positive impact on their desire to study English, mainly because of the variety of activities it introduces. Students 5, and 6 highlighted presentations, group projects, and interactive tasks as important motivators, making English learning more engaging and reducing boredom. The responses indicate that Bologna generally promotes motivation through interactive activities, international opportunities, and student responsibility, but individual differences remain. For some students, personal goals and intrinsic interest are stronger drivers than structural reforms. Most students observed that the Bologna Process has shifted course content and assessment toward a more practical, skills-based focus. Students 4, 5, and 8 emphasized that the curriculum now gives more attention to listening, speaking, reading, and writing, moving beyond grammar and vocabulary drills. This reflects Bologna's aim of aligning course design with communicative competence, which students generally perceived as more engaging and useful. Another major theme was the diversification of assessment. Students 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 noted that exams are no longer the sole measure of achievement. Instead, they are assessed through presentations, projects, oral tests, and reports. This variety was seen as motivating, because it provides regular feedback and opportunities to demonstrate progress in different ways. The responses suggest that Bologna has introduced clearer learning outcomes, diversified assessment, and a stronger emphasis on skills and student-centered activities. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), constructive alignment in higher education requires shifting from rote memorization to skill-based, outcome-driven learning, a key principle reflected in students' emphasis on communicative competence and structured units. The responses show that group projects and technology-based

instruction are seen as the most motivating techniques, combining social interaction with digital tools to enhance learning. These findings suggest that when Bologna's student-centered principles are applied through collaboration and technology, learners feel more engaged and motivated. Yet the variation in responses also reflects that structural changes alone cannot guarantee motivation, as individual preferences and self-driven learning continue to play a significant role. Most students agreed that the Bologna Process has made their educational goals clearer and more achievable. Students 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 all described how the framework clarifies expectations and outcomes, helping them identify step-by-step what they need to accomplish. Student 5, for instance, explained that knowing the specific lesson goal, such as learning writing strategies, makes it easier to focus on achieving it. Similarly, Student 4 emphasized that Bologna's clear learning outcomes and ECTS structure provide transparency in marks and opportunities for study abroad, which guide students in setting and reaching goals. In summary, the responses suggest for the most part that Bologna helps in understanding by defining learning outcome and organizing tasks; supports future linkages with studying. During the Bologna Process, the students expressed various obstacles they consider responsible for discouraging them in their English classes. Some of them were about presentations and shyness. Both students 1 and 9 found it challenging to speak in front of their classmates, but they were also aware that this is a skill they would need for the future specifically in teaching. These answers demonstrate how the engagement-based curricular orientation that the Bologna implements, provokes anxieties, but at the same time practices and provides feedback on the road to personal development. Workload and lack of time was another theme that came up in most responses. Some students felt that the focus on exams and academic content served as a barrier. For example, student 7 stated "One of the struggles for me is that sometimes the lesson focuses on exams rather than on creative learning", which means that the system is rigid to guidelines, while Student 8 said more theoretical classes were disconnected from real life and hence less engaging. This interpretation can be seen to rely on Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory which illustrates that anxiety, as well as external control, may disrupt intrinsic motivation when not accompanied by positive-feedback. Many of the students also spoke to their need for real-world connection and hands-on work. Students 5, 7, 8 and 9 suggested relating lessons to real-life experiences, integrating role plays, group work and engaging activities as well as utilizing videos and songs to deliver more interactive classes. The fourth student commented that flexible assessments, for example, broadcasts and acting could incentivize students, as it would open new avenues to show what they know. They show a need for creative, authentic learning of English rather than traditional paper-based methods. Overall, the responses converge on the idea that motivation can be enhanced through supportive teaching, real-life connections, interactive methods, and systemic improvements. Students emphasized that when Bologna-based courses are creative, relevant, and responsive to their needs, they are more likely to stay motivated and engaged in learning English.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the Bologna Process in the sampled universities show its strengths as well as weaknesses in influencing students' motivation to learn English Language. While the Bologna process has established an organized, outcome-based framework that promotes international standards and student-centered learning, its actual impact depends on how it is applied and implemented in different educational environments.

1. The findings demonstrate a significant impact of the Bologna Process on students' English learning efficacy. Among the students there is appreciation for the structure of the education in learning goals, points, course design and continuous testing but there is ambivalence in the responses between clarity and vagueness. It means that although Bologna encourages learning which is organized it also maintains questioning, anxiety and workload. There are both advantages and disadvantages to motivating language learners in the universities that are sampled.

2. Another important finding is that organizational variation influences the student-experience of Bologna. The findings showed that students in Koya University feel more motivated than Raparin and Sulaimani University which means that regional factors, resources and teaching approaches affect the findings. This difference stresses that the effects of Bologna are not just a question of their pattern's conditionality but also of their implementation. This commitment in the institutions and the context sensitivity in its implementation are thus important to ensure fairness in the motivational impact upon universities.

3. There was agreement among students and teachers that stress from overload and time pressure weakens the potential of the Bologna reforms. Rushing, insufficient time for practice, and overwork were the most commonly reported challenges from the students, while class size issues and administrative obligations acted as setbacks to the motivational teaching for the teachers. These results suggest that if workload and timetable are not rescheduled, positive aspects of Bologna process could be nullified by stress and tiredness, and that lack of engagement and depth may appear.

4. It finally finds that the key strength of Bologna and its main added value is linked to the push for transparency, student-centered learning processes and formative assessment. For students, it was important to know how tasks are related to degree progress whereas teachers emphasized having the freedom to apply different pedagogical approaches. However, it is only moderately successful due to limited resources, uneven application, and lingering student fear. To that end, Bologna offers a strong motivational framework, but paired with convergent institutional support, teacher education and learner-centered development to fully realize its transformative ends.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Universities should commit extra investment on technological resources to realize access equality for there is the advantage of on English learning using the digital tools to be maximized.

2. Teacher-training courses need to be adapted to enhance understanding of Bologna principles and to include student-centred approaches, anxiety coping skills and new methods of evaluation.

3. Institutions must restructure class size, workload and availability of practice opportunities by modifying scheduling and task delegation to ensure that efficiency is balanced with student health.

4. Policy makers and managers should localize the implementation of Bologna to local institutional contexts, be flexible in designing policy and resources in order that universities are able to implement a framework that is suited to their needs.

APPENDIX 1

Member name	Certificate	Academic title	Major	University
Rasool Mohammed Kheder	PHD	Lecturer	Applied Linguistics	University of Sulaimani
Arazoo Rashid Othman	PHD	Asst. Prof	Linguistics	Koya University
Chalak Ali Mohamed Ameen	PHD	Asst. Prof	Applied Linguistics	Charmo University
Muhammad Qadir Saeed	PHD	Asst. Prof	Linguistics	Salahadin University
Dilgash Mohammed Salih	PHD	Lecturer	Applied Linguistics	Duhok University
Abbas Mustafa Abbas	PHD	Prof. Dr	Linguistics	University of Sulaimani
Bikhtiyar Omar Fattah	PHD	Asst. Prof	Linguistics	Koya University
Paiman Zorab Aziz	PHD	Asst. Prof	Applied Linguistics	Koya University
Tahsin Hussein Rasul	PHD	Asst. Prof	Applied Linguistics	Salahadin University
Jamal Anwar Taha	PHD	Lecturer	Applied Linguistics	University of Sulaimani

REFERENCES

- Adam, S. (2006). An introduction to learning outcomes. *United Kingdom Bologna Seminar*, 1–24.
- Arnold, J. (2000). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Attard, A., Di Iorio, E., Geven, K., & Santa, R. (2010). Student-centred learning: An insight into theory and practice (pp. 15–33). *European Students' Union*.
- Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Carmines, E. G. (1979). *Reliability and validity assessment*. Sage.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- European Higher Education Area. (2025). *Members of the Bologna Process*. <https://ehea.info/page-members>
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.

- Işleyen, Ş. (2024). The influence of Bologna Process on promoting learners' scientific level: A sample of Soran University. *Nasaq Journal*, 41(1), 1205–1235.
- Kelo, M., & Iucu, R. (2025). Learning and teaching and the student-centred approach: New perspectives on the oldest Bologna Process priority. In *European higher education area: Developments and challenges* (pp. 671–684). Springer.
- Kimberlin, C. L., & Winterstein, A. G. (2008). Validity and reliability of measurement instruments used in research. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, 65(23), 2276–2284. <https://doi.org/10.2146/ajhp070364>
- Klemenčič, M. (2006). The Bologna Process and student expectations. *Bologna Handbook – 1st Supplement*.
- Norris-Holt, J. (2001). Motivation as a contributing factor in second language acquisition. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 7(6), 1–8.
- O'Cathain, A., Murphy, E., & Nicholl, J. (2007). Why, and how, mixed methods research is undertaken in health services research in England: A mixed methods study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 7(1), 85. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-7-85>
- Penny, A. J., Harley, K. L., & Jessop, T. S. (1996). Towards a language of possibility: Critical reflection and mentorship in initial teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching*, 2(1), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354060960020105>
- Rahma, E. A., & Setiyana, R. (2019). Students' perception toward the effectiveness of teaching English at Universitas Teuku Umar. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 6(2), 102–116. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v6i2.3289>
- Rajab, F. M. (2023). A survey study on the academics' views towards the implementation of the Bologna Process at Duhok Polytechnic University. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, 14(3), 86–92. <https://jett.labosfor.com/index.php/jett/article/view/1740>
- Robinson, J. (2010). Triandis' theory of interpersonal behaviour in understanding software piracy behaviour in the South African context (Doctoral dissertation). University of the Witwatersrand. <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/8377>
- Rost, M. (2006). Generating student motivation. *WorldView*, 1–4.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Santrock, J. (2004). *Educational psychology* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Sharif, L. T. (2022). The applicability of the Bologna Process at the departments of English in Iraqi Kurdistan Region universities: Challenges and solutions (Master's thesis). University of Sulaimani.
- Teichler, U. (2012). International student mobility in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 2(1), 1–13.
- Walker, G. A. (2006). Identification with academics: Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Whitley, B. E. (2002). *Principles of research and behavioural science*. McGraw-Hill.
- Witte, J. K. (2006). Change of degrees and degrees of change: Comparing adaptations of European higher education systems in the context of the Bologna Process. *CHEPS/UT*.

Appendix A students' questionnaire:

- ☐ Age: ____ years
- ☐ Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
- ☐ Department : ☐ Stage ____
- ☐ University ____ ☐ Year of Study: ____

Instructions: Please tick the box that best represents your opinion.

No. of the items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Bologna Process helps me understand what I need to get in language learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The well-organized course framework has increased my motivation to learn English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Bologna's credits and academic preparation encourage me to be more serious about my education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Knowing how classes affect my degree motivates me to work harder in English classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The Bologna process helps me to track my achievements, and growth better and easier.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Teachers encourage me to learn English language by using interesting exercises and resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. English lessons become exciting with the use of smartboards and other resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Bologna courses are connected to real-life communication skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I feel supported by the instructor when I face difficulties with the tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The classroom atmosphere is positive that encourages and helps me to learn better with the teacher's feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Bologna overemphasizes on grades in the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Not all teachers use the strategies of the Bologna process in the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Despite the new techniques of BP, speaking in English still makes me nervous.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. There is not always enough time for practice and the classes feel hurried.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I don't much on how the Bologna Process works.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐