

Use of Motivational Strategies in EFL Classrooms by Sudanese Teachers

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Abstract

The present study discusses the use of motivational strategies in EFL classroom by Sudanese Teachers; The study uses a questionnaire to collect the data from the participants (20 Language Teachers, 15 males and 5 females). The study found that majority of teachers use motivational strategies in the class. Out of 21 motivational strategies presented before the participants, only 4 received highest percentages (ranged from 80% to 95%), and around 6 motivational strategies are least used by teachers received lowest percentages (ranged from 25 % to 45%). The study also finds that the pre-and in-service training has significant impact in the teacher's performance in the class, especially in using the motivational strategies.

Keywords: Motivation, Motivational, strategies, Sudanese Teachers, EFL classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite a long tradition of research on human motivation and the myriad contributions which have been made to it from various perspectives over the course of several centuries, it was only thirty years ago that this concept began to be systematically investigated from psychological and educational viewpoints. Nevertheless, it is still a complex area to approach/tackle. (cf. Brown, 1987 and Burstall, 1975).

Statement of the problem

Despite the fact that there are many studies which investigated the use of motivational strategies in L2 contexts but, as far as my knowledge, there are few that asked whether Sudanese teachers use any of motivational strategies that all well-document in L2 motivations studies? Or do they use different kind of strategies? Or they do not use at all. Therefore, this study aims to contribute and fill this gap.

Background of the study

The major reasons that make me to choose this particular topic is that, as an language teacher and academic manager for a language school for more than 15 years, I have observed that the majority of learners who come to study at my school have two things in common:

1-They have strong motivations to study English
 2-They have very bad learning experience';

most of them complain about their teachers either in high school or university.

Another reason as Teachers trainer, I have come close to hundreds and hundreds of teachers of English over the 15 years, the majority of them either they got into the profession after they have lost hope in finding a job in their specialization or they consider this (the course or the workshop are attending) is their first in-service training. So this keeps my asking:

Is it that learners hate English at different educational stages because of teachers give no reasons for them to study English i.e teachers do not use any motivational strategies ?. So I tried in this study to explore the reasons behind the problem so as to find some answers and hopefully offer some recommendations in this regard.

Status of English in Sudan

Sudan, officially, is an Arabic speaking country. Therefore, the language of education is Arabic. But this is not has been the case always. English used to be the official language of education until the late 1980s. The status of English has been changing throughout the history of Sudan.

English was the language of instructions in the early education which was given at Gordon Memorial College in 1902– Khartoum University now) as a primary school and later developed into secondary school. So by imposing this strategy, English became a

passport for gaining official post in the government office. Mastering the language was a good means for financial security and social prestige. The teachers who did the job were almost British, with some Syrian and Egyptian who taught other academic subjects in English (Jumma 2011).

Researchers and educators in Sudan education gave different and varied reasons behind the deterioration of language education and language performance–English in particular -in the country.

Arabization of education in using Arabic as language of instruction in state of English was the main reasons in the deterioration of English language in Sudan. This claim of belonging to Arab ethnicity (blue blood) led to the adoption of Arabization in the country culminated after the coup d'état of Basheer Islamist Regime, which took government in 1989 and issued Islamic rules and called for the Arabization of government and Education(Juma 2011).Other reasons for this deterioration of English in Sudan –as mentioned by Nur(2012) as indirect reason; the migration of well trained teachers to Gulf countries during the 70s and 80s and up to now, and reduction of English language Hours at schools from 9 periods to only 5.

According to Nur (Nur 2012). The deterioration of English in tertiary level was even increased by the disruption of the educational ladder many times in 1969 and 1996. During the last change of the educational system one year was cut off the educational ladder thus resulting in 11 years instead of 12 years which are known to be the minimum amount of education needed before admission to university. Other indirect reasons for the deterioration of English are: -Migration of well trained teachers to the Gulf countries during the 70s and 80s and up to now. -The reduction of English language teaching hours at schools from nine periods to five. -Deletion of extensive reading (literature) and - Poor curriculum. These reasons combining together played a great role in the deterioration of the English language standards at pre-tertiary level.(Nur 2012).

Literature Review

Motivations are simply as seen the reasons of success or failure in foreign language learning. As stated by Doreney“Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement” or as it summarized by Good & Broby ‘You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink’ (1994: 209).

In the 1990s the study of L2 motivations attracted number of researchers who tried to redefine the scope of the field so as to shed new light on the subjects(subject (e.g. Brown, 1990, 1994; Clément *et*

al., 1994; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994a 1994b; Julkunen, 1989; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Skehan, 1989, 1991). The reason behind this shift was to adopt more pragmatic education-centered approach to motivation research, which would be consistent with the perceptions of practicing teachers and, thus, be more directly relevant to classroom application.

Motivational strategies

According to Dorney, that Motivational strategies refer to (a) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation and (b) self- regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their own motivation.(1994). Needless to say that Motivational strategies received huge attention in the L2 literature in the 1990s, when a major shift in L2 motivation research highlighted the importance of the learning environment in shaping situated aspects of the learners’ motivational disposition(Dorny 1994). There are several recommended lists of motivational strategies published by many (e.g., Alison, 1993; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997) which give tips and directions of how teachers can use these motivational strategies in their classrooms to motivate their students.

However, the study of teachers motivations has not received the same attention that was paid to learners’ motivations, “even though the transformation of a classroom into a motivating learning environment has to begin with the teachers, because they are the people in the key position to shape classroom life” Dorney as in the words of Good and Brophy s, ‘motivation [in the classroom] did not receive much scholarly attention until recently, so that teachers were forced to rely on unsystematic “bag-of-tricks” approaches or on advice coming from questionable theorizing’ (1994: 212).

Dörnyei (2001). Proposed a system for motivations strategies with following dimensions (2001). Creating basic motivational conditions by establishing a good teacher- student rapport, creating a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and generating a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

1. Generating initial motivation, that is, “whetting the students’ appetite” by using strategies designed to (a) increase the learners’ expectancy of success and (b) develop positive attitudes toward the language course and language learning in general.
2. Maintaining and protecting motivation by promoting situation-specific task motivation (e.g., through the use of stimulating, enjoyable, and relevant tasks), providing learners with experiences of success, allowing them to maintain a positive social image even during the often face-threatening task of having to communicate with a severely

limited language code, and promoting learner autonomy.

3. Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation by promoting adaptive attributions, providing effective and encouraging feedback, increasing learner satisfaction, and offering grades in a motivational manner.

THE METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants teachers were both male & females (20 participants) working at different educational institutions ranging from Primary school to university as can be seen in the table(1) below. Many teachers/participants teaching in more than one institution (primary and secondary school, or Secondary school and university) Table2.

Instruments

The study used the questionnaire as a mean to collect the data. The selection of motivational strategies to be included in the questionnaires was based on Dörnyei (1994a). The questionnaires contained 21 motivational strategies (see Table 3 for a complete list) and a few personal questions eliciting background information about the teachers.

DATA COLLECTIONS

After the questionnaire was validated, and amendments were made accordingly, the researcher contacted some of his fellow teachers about his

intention of collecting data regarding their experiences in teaching English. The researcher distributed 25 questionnaires, and only 20 were valid. (3 did not return the questionnaire and two were invalid). Then the questionnaire was processed using the SPSS program to for analysis and interpretation for data.

The questionnaire has to sections. Section 1 asks participants about their basic information (gender, place of work, specialization, length in teaching English and whether they have received any training? The result showed that 75% are males and 25% are females. And the majored of of participants majored in English at the university (70%). All the participants received training (100%) according to their responses to the questionnaire. The following tables provides more information.

Table-1: Distribution of participants by their gender

Sex	Frequency	Percent
male	15	75.0
female	5	25.0
Total	20	100.0

Table-2: Participants specialization

Major	Frequency	Percent
English	17	85.0
accounting	2	10.0
economic	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Table-3: Duration of teaching English

	N	Minimum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Duration of teaching English	20	2.00	15.5000	2.38140
Valid N (listwise)	20			

The mean duration teaching English was 15.5 ± 2.38 years

Table -4: Receiving of training in teaching English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	20	100.0	100.0

Section 2 in the questionnaire contains the motivational strategies under study. The following tables show the result of the questionnaire: the categorization based on the ranking of the (1) most used

strategies by teachers, (2) strategies that received same attention by teachers and(3) least used strategies by teachers.

Table-1: Top Motivational Strategies used by Teachers

Rank		Frequency	Percent
1- Design tasks that are within the learners' ability so that they get to experience success regularly	Sometimes	2	10.0
	Usually	11	55.0
	Always	7	35.0
	Total	20	100.0
2 -Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of English is beneficial if their future (e.g. getting a better job or pursuing further studies abroad)	Sometimes	4	20.0
	Usually	5	25.0
	Always	11	55.0
	Total	20	100.0
3-Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the English	Sometimes	1	5.0
	Often	2	10.0
	Usually	9	45.0
	Always	8	40.0
	Total	20	100.0
4-Learning goals for themselves (e.g. learning 5 words every day).	Sometimes	2	10.0
	Often	1	5.0
	Usually	12	60.0
	Always	5	25.0
	Total	20	100.0

Table-2: Motivational strategies that received same attention by Teachers:

Rank		Frequency	Percent
Show students that you respect, accept and care about each of them	Often	4	20.0
	Usually	4	20.0
	Always	12	60.0
	Total	20	100.0
-Create opportunities so that students can mix and get to know each	Rarely	1	5.0
	Sometimes	2	10.0
	Often	1	5.0
	Usually	6	30.0
	Always	10	50.0
Encourage students to select specific, realistic and short-term learning goals for themselves (e.g. learning 5 words every day).	Sometimes	3	15.0
	Often	1	5.0
	Usually	10	50.0
	Always	6	30.0
	Total	20	100.0
Make sure grades reflect not only the students' achievement but also the effort they have put into the task.	Sometimes	1	5.0
	Often	3	15.0
	Usually	9	45.0
	Always	7	35.0
	Total	20	100.0
Show your enthusiasm for teaching English by being committed and motivating yourself.	Rarely	1	5.0
	Sometimes	2	10.0
	Often	1	5.0
	Usually	4	20.0
	Always	12	60.0
	Total	20	100.0

Table-3: Show the least used strategies by Teachers

Strategy	Rank	Frequency	Percent
Bring in and encourage humor and laughter frequently in your class 1	Rarely	2	10.0
	Sometimes	9	45.0
	Often	4	20.0
	Usually	3	15.0
	Always	2	10.0
-Invite senior students who are enthusiastic about learning English to talk to your class about their positive English learning experiences/successes	Rarely	8	40.0
	Often	6	30.0
	Usually	2	10.0
	Always	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
Invite some English-speaking foreigners as guest speakers to the class.	Rarely	10	50.0
	Often	3	15.0
	Usually	3	15.0
	Always	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
Ask learners to think of any classroom rules that they would like to recommend because they think those will be useful for their learning	Sometimes	8	40.0
	Often	3	15.0
	Usually	5	25.0
	Always	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
Monitor students' accomplishments, and take time to celebrate any success or victory	Rarely	2	10.0
	Sometimes	2	10.0
	Often	4	20.0
	Usually	8	40.0
	Always	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0

DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

As shown in table (2), of the most used motivational strategies, we find that 4 motivational strategies received highest percentages ranged from 90% to 85%. These strategies are:

1. Design tasks that are within the learners' ability so that they get to experience success regularly
2. -Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of English is beneficial if their future (e.g. getting a better job or pursuing further studies abroad)
3. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the English
4. Learning goals for themselves (e.g. learning 5 words every day).

We believe that these motivational strategies are very significant for the students' progress. We interpret this due to teachers majoring in English (more than 75% of participants specialized in English at University) and to their training (all the participants receive training according to the questionnaire results).

Whereas, about 5 motivational strategies ranked as least used by teachers in the class. These strategies are:

1. Bring in and encourage humor and laughter frequently in your class

2. Invite senior students who are enthusiastic about learning English to talk to your class about their positive English learning experiences/successes
3. Invite some English-speaking foreigners as guest speakers to the class.
4. Ask learners to think of any classroom rules that they would like to recommend because they think those will be useful for their learning
5. Monitor students' accomplishments, and take time to celebrate any success or victory

Regarding the least motivational strategies used by teachers, the percentages ranged from 25% as the lowest in responding to whether or not they (Bring in and encourage humor and laughter in the class), and the highest percentages was 45% in responding to whether or not they (Monitor students' accomplishments, and take time to celebrate any success or victory). We believe these Motivational strategies that teachers rarely use in the class are very important in the learning process. Creating better learning environment to learners will strengthen their relation with the subject. Moreover, inviting from to time, native speakers or senior students to talk about their experiences and share tips on how to learning the language, will foster and fasten their progress.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The study main question was whether Sudanese teachers use any motivational strategies?. 21 motivational strategies were presented to teachers; the study reached to the following results

1. The majority of teachers use motivational strategies in their classes.
2. Out of 21, Motivational strategies presented in the questionnaire, only 4 received highest percentages ranged from 80% to 95%.
3. Out of 21, motivational strategies presented before the participants, about 5 received least attention by teachers ranged from 25% to 45%.
4. The training and specialization played significant role in using motivational strategies.

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