

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345181827>

Motivational Strategies among English Language Teachers: An Examination in Higher Education Institutions in the Malaysian Context

Article in Arab World English Journal · September 2020

DOI: 10.24093/awej/vol11no3.10

CITATIONS

0

READS

30

4 authors, including:



Suhaida Omar

University of Malaysia, Kelantan

13 PUBLICATIONS 3 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Nik Ahmad Farhan Nik Azim

University of Malaysia, Kelantan

8 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Noor Syamimie Mohd Nawi

University of Malaysia, Kelantan

7 PUBLICATIONS 2 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Read & Write (ME) QR Code in Reading and Writing Module [View project](#)



Crisis Management: Collaborative Teaching and Learning beyond the Pandemic [View project](#)

Motivational Strategies among English Language Teachers: An Examination in Higher Education Institutions in the Malaysian Context

Suhaida Omar

**English Language Department, Centre of Language Studies and Generic Development,
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Bachok, Malaysia**

Nik Ahmad Farhan bin Azim @ Nik Azim

**English Language Department, Centre of Language Studies and Generic Development,
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Bachok, Malaysia**

Noor Syamimie Mohd Nawi

**English Language Department, Centre of Language Studies and Generic Development,
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Bachok, Malaysia**

Noraini Zaini

**English Language Department, Centre of Language Studies and Generic Development,
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Bachok, Malaysia**

Abstract

Little attention was given to explore and understand motivational strategies among English language (EL) teachers, particularly at higher education institutions (HEIs), despite the on-going interest on this matter. Identifying which strategies are adaptive and maladaptive could help them to promote student motivation in return. This study aims to identify the degree of importance and implementation of motivational strategies among EL teachers and explore to what extent they implement the strategies that they perceived as important. The online questionnaires were distributed to 49 teachers at 11 public universities in Malaysia, and ten of them were interviewed. The findings of this study suggested the implementation of motivational strategies heavily depended on teachers' perceived motivation in teaching. The highest-rated strategy was Proper Teacher Behavior, and the least preferred was Promote Learner Autonomy, indicating that teacher behavior as an important element in ensuring effective language learning. Next, despite the findings that most students are not ready for learner autonomy, the teachers appeared to have a more positive outlook on the inclusion of learner autonomy, and this contradicts findings of previous studies in the Asian contexts. It also indicates that motivational strategies are neither cultural nor context-specific. However, some strategies are still regarded as very practical, while some are less practical in different learning situations. Future research may include private universities to contribute to the knowledge gap on the lack of information on this topic and eventually enable academics to engage in motivational strategies research across all HEIs in Malaysia.
Keywords: English Language teachers, Malaysian Higher Education, motivational strategies

Cite as: Omar, S., Azim, N. A.F., Nawi, N.S.M., & Zaini, N. (2020). Motivational Strategies among English Language Teachers: An Examination in Higher Education Institutions in the Malaysian Context. *Arab World English Journal*, 11 (3) 170 183.
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no3.10>

Introduction

The English language (EL) is accepted as the global language of communication and is widely used through various dimensions like education, technology, sciences, business and trade, entertainment, and even religion. After Malaysia gained its independence in 1957, the EL was accorded as the nation's second official language. This shows that English has played a significant role in the nation's quest towards becoming a developed nation; thus, being proficient in the language is undeniably important. However, the English proficiency level of Malaysian students is far from satisfactory as it ranged from weak to intermediate. To improve the teaching of EL in educational institutions, The Ministry of Education is producing the Malaysian Education Blueprint and the English Language Roadmap (2015 – 2025) to enhance the various aspect of the curriculum like pedagogy and assessment from different levels. However, even with the best construction of the curriculum, the teaching and learning of English will still fail if there is no motivation in learning the language.

Motivation plays an essential role in the success of teaching and learning a second language as it is the driving force to maintain these processes. It should be considered in the process of second language learning because it has been used to explain the success or failure of a learner and several studies associated motivation as the key to learning (Watt & Richardson, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2001). In some cases, the students will not be motivated to learn the language if they fail to see the relevance of learning English, but students' motivation is not the only factor influencing the teaching and learning of the language. For instance, although the students are already driven by the motivation in learning the language, it is the task of the teachers to maintain students' interest to learn.

As stated earlier, in the case of English as the second official language in Malaysia, it has not been widely used in students' daily lives outside of the classrooms, and it has also been stated in the English Language Roadmap (2015 – 2025) that, "...many Malaysians spend a lot of time learning English without quite knowing why they are doing it" (p.13) and as such, it is not a surprise that students are not motivated to learn this language. The Roadmap also reported the significance of the teachers' motivation as one of the influencing factors to successful second language learning. In fact, according to Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

...teachers act as key social figures who significantly affect the motivational quality of the learning process in positive or negative ways. Indeed, almost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students, which makes teacher behavior a powerful 'motivational tool. (p.109)

Next, a number of research studies have raised the concern on the possibilities of motivational strategies being context and cultural specific (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010) due to the teaching of English as first, second or foreign language. Both studies by Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) and Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) found that some motivational strategies are feasible across contexts and cultures, while some are not. This incongruity influenced this research to investigate the motivational strategy that teachers perceive as essential and which strategies have been implemented in their EL classes in various higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia. It also aims to identify any similarity between

the Malaysian context and others, and if there are differences, what would they be and to what extent would they differ. Hence, the three research questions are:

1. Which motivational strategies do the teachers perceive as most and least important?
2. Which motivational strategies do the teachers implement in their classes?
3. How are these similarities and differences reflected in teachers' motivational perceptions and implementation in Malaysia compared to other teaching contexts?

This study extends the previous research on motivational strategies among language teachers from the specific context of HIEs in Malaysia. More importantly, this study intends to discover whether the motivational strategies are globally or locally bound. Findings from this study can also be used to create awareness among teachers of the different types of motivational strategies, and inform their importance and the possible positive effects on students' motivation.

Literature Review

Motivational Strategies

Motivation is regarded as one of the major factors in language learning as reported in many studies that motivation plays an important role in the success of students' language learning (Guilloteaux, 2013; Sali, 2013; Visser-Wijnveen, Stes & Van Petegem, 2012; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Walker, 2011; Yau, 2010; Bernaus, Wilson & Gardner, 2009). A more recent study conducted by Jones (2019) in Cuba involved 18 students completing the motivation questionnaire also revealed; "strong positive correlations between student motivation and all aspects of the teacher's motivational practice" (p.15).

Over the years, the scopes of motivation have expanded from the viewpoints of first language learning to second and foreign language learning, and from learner motivation to teacher motivation. Teacher motivation in this study refers to the motivational strategies that they perceive as essential and practice in their EL classes. As mentioned earlier, most research focused on learner motivation, and this has overshadowed teacher motivation, which could be one of the influencing factors to student language learning.

Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) conducted one of the earliest studies conducted on teachers' perception and motivational strategies in foreign language learning. The study involved 200 Hungarian English as a Foreign language (EFL) teachers from multi-level education institutions, from schools and universities. The teachers were asked to rank 51 motivational strategies according to its importance and usage. The result of this study revealed the top ten most critical motivational plans rated by the teachers, which later used as the main ground for the 'ten commandments' in motivating students.

Table 1: Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners

1. Set a personal example with your own behavior.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.

6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

Note 1. Adapted from Dörnyei & Csizér (1998, p. 215)

This appeared to be a general list, but Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) argued that the motivational strategies might be context-specific and culturally bound to Hungarian students as well as European setting, and therefore might not be valid in different contexts.

The 'ten commandments' also indicated that the strategies are compartmentalized, or in other words, they are separated from one another. As motivation shifts from product-oriented to process-oriented, Dörnyei (2001) has constructed the framework of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom that reflects the definition of motivation as a process. Figure 1 shows the four stages of the framework, which are (i) Creating the basic motivational conditions, (ii) Generating initial motivation, (iii) Maintaining and protecting motivation, and (iv) Encouraging positive self-evaluation. Each stage consists of several motivational strategies, and it would be interesting to look at the perspectives of teachers in this study in response to this framework within their teaching context.

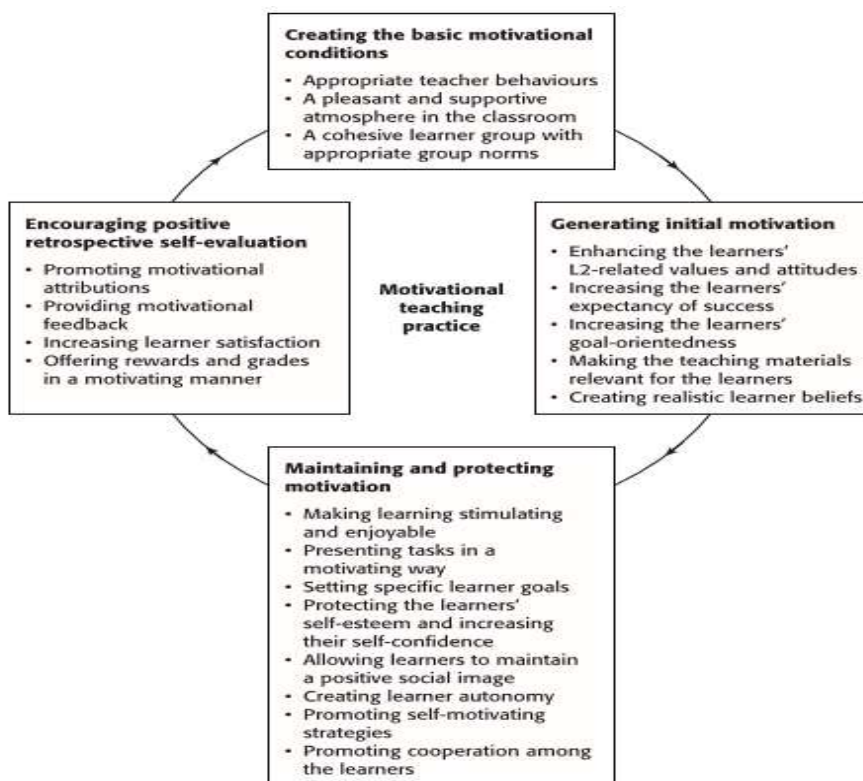


Figure 1: The framework of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom

Next, to identify the motivational strategies perceived in the Asian setting, Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) replicated the above study in Taiwan. Their main instrument was a questionnaire, which has been revised in accordance with the motivational teaching practice framework (Figure 1). The study involved 387 EFL teachers from multi-level education institutions ranging from schools to universities. The results showed similarity with the Hungarian context in terms of the strategies that rose to the top five ranks. However, there were some differences of views from the Taiwanese teachers. Taiwanese teachers ranked 'Recognizing students' efforts' as second place in terms of importance, while this strategy did not even feature in the top ten rankings by Hungarian teachers. Another difference was that in the Taiwan context, 'Promoting learner autonomy' ranked as the least important motivational strategy meanwhile in Hungarian context 'Familiarize learners with the target language culture' was listed as the least motivational strategies. This showed that some strategies may be more universal and work across cultural/countries context while "certain strategies are rather culture-specific in their educational relevance and impact" (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007: p.169)

The practicality of Cheng' & Dörnyei's (2007) motivational strategies has given rise to many studies adopting similar strategies in their contexts. Sugita & Takeuchi (2008) conducted similar research among EL teachers and their students to explore the practicality of these strategies in Japan and to identify the relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation. The results revealed that only a few strategies correlated with student motivation and among the top Clusters viewed as important were 'promoting learners' 'self-confidence' and 'creating a pleasant classroom climate'. Hence these findings did not support Cheng' & Dörnyei's (2007) findings even though both studies have been conducted in the Asian context.

In addition, Lee & Lin (2019) researched the motivational strategies based on the 102 strategies adopted from Dörnyei (2001). The study involved 22 Cantonese Chinese-speaking teachers in Hong Kong who taught EFL, and they found out that teachers "generally accorded with the framework, hence supporting the applicability of Dörnyei's framework to Hong Kong EFL classrooms" (Lee & Lin, 2019: p.465). Nonetheless, the researchers also stressed the importance of other factors that affect the implementation of these strategies in the classrooms for future research.

Apart from that, there was another study on the use of motivational strategies by the EFL teachers in Oman (Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012). The results were analyzed within three spectrums; the importance and frequency of motivational strategies, and the relationship between those two. Regarding the relationship between the importance and the frequency of motivational strategies applied by the teachers, a positive correlation has been recorded as very strong. Besides that, Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan and Asante's (2012) analysis mentioned the interference of cultural issues has contributed to some of the lowest micro strategies' rankings. For instance, it appeared that since learner autonomy was ranked low in both aspects, EFL classes in Oman are perceived as less student-centered and the students are more dependent on the teachers compared to the Hungarian context.

Alqahtani (2016) also conducted a study on motivational strategies in Saudi Arabia, which is in the Middle East like Oman, and the respondents were 117 male and female EFL teachers. The

findings confirmed that some of the top macro strategies were in line with studies conducted in Hungary by Dörnyei & Csizér (1998), and Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) in Taiwan such as ‘Proper teacher behavior’, ‘Promote learners’ self-confidence’ and ‘Increase learners’ satisfaction’. It also showed that ‘Promote learners’ autonomy’ was among the most preferred macro strategies, and according to Alqahtani (2016), “... [It] shows that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia favor the use of this macro strategy and think that it is an important motivational technique in the classroom for enhancing learners’ motivation” (p. 668). It appeared that this contradicted Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan and Asante’s (2012) findings, although both studies were conducted in the same context, i.e., the Middle East.

Other than the Asian and Middle East contexts, Sucuoglu’s (2017) research on teacher motivation was conducted among 96 EL male and female teachers in some selected secondary schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. She reported that in general, teachers responded positively to the four components, including towards learner autonomy, which was not favored among teachers in previously cited studies. However, unlike other reviews, this one did not highlight the influence of culture on teachers’ preference for motivational strategies.

As stated earlier, the cited studies indicate that motivation is a significant factor in facilitating successful language teaching and learning across the world. Nonetheless, it is vital to research further the cultural values mentioned by Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) that there were some similar motivational strategies between the European and Asian teachers and some different ones. Cultural values are parts of the contextual factors that could influence one’s motivation (Ushioda, 2009 in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010).

This cultural barrier issue has not been highlighted in other studies, but it does not mean that it is not significant since culture may influence why and how the teachers implement the motivational strategies in their teaching context. The previously cited studies involved three Asian countries, namely Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong, produced different results. Hence, it can be hypothesized that more research could clarify the issue of whether there are universal motivational teaching strategies, or if they are more culturally attached. Studies in Oman and Saudi Arabia produced contradictory findings though they were in the same context. Therefore, would there be more similarities or differences if another study was carried out in Malaysia, which is another Asian country like Taiwan, Japan and Korea, and if so, what are they?

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts the quantitative approach in which the data was collected through questionnaires on the participants’ perceptions of the importance as well as the frequency of the implementation of the motivational strategies that they used in their EL classes. There were two methods used, (i) questionnaire was distributed to the participants via their email through a link connected to an online survey using Google Form platform, and (ii) face-to-face questionnaire in which the respondents had ample time to answer it. Next, the researchers asked semi-structured interview questions to explore the participants’ thoughts and personal experiences about motivational strategies.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. It was adapted from the study by Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) which consisted 10 Clusters and 48 motivational strategies. In this study, the questionnaire was divided into two constructs. The first construct (Construct I) was on the importance of the motivational strategies, while the second one (Constructs II) was on the frequency of implementing motivational strategies in EL classes. Each construct featured the same 10 Clusters and 48 motivational strategies used in Cheng & Dörnyei's (2007) study. The questionnaire applied four point Likert scale from one to four where the levels for Construct I range from one as 'Not Important' to four as 'Very Important', and for Construct II, they range from one as 'Not At All' to four as 'Very Often'.

Besides, 10 respondents were interviewed individually based on the Clusters of motivational strategies of the questionnaire that they might (or might not) employ in their English classes. There were 10 Clusters in the questionnaire, but only four were selected for the interview purpose based on the top four in the reliability index. This method could provide in-depth information as to what were the factors that influenced their choices of motivational strategies, and how they implemented them.

Data Collection and Analysis

In selecting the participants for this study, purposive sampling was used since the crucial criteria are that they must be EL teachers who are currently teaching general proficiency English courses that are compulsory in the undergraduate programs in all faculties. However, the selection of participants did not include those who teach specific English courses like Morphology, Syntax, Second Language Acquisition or Discourse Analysis. Based on the recommendations of the Head of the EL department of the respective universities, the online survey was sent to participants. Some of the participants asked for a paper-based questionnaire and volunteered for the interviews. The total number of respondents was 49 ESL teachers from 11 public universities in Malaysia, and their teaching experiences ranged from five to 28 years.

Data gathered from the questionnaire in the first part were used to determine the participants' perceptions of how important they perceive the 48 motivational strategies, while in the second part of the data was used to find out how frequently the participants practice the 48 motivational strategies in their EL lessons. The data were then calculated for means scores to analyze the importance and frequency of the motivational strategies' usage. The criteria for the interpretation of the mean values are illustrated in the following table.

Table 2. *Criteria for the interpretation of the mean values*

Mean value	Level of Importance	Frequency of Implementation
4.21-5.00	Very important	Always
3.41-4.20	Fairly important	Frequently
2.61-3.40	Important	Sometimes
1.81-2.60	Slightly important	Seldom
1.00-1.80	Not important	Never

Finally, data of one-to-one interviews were transcribed, categorized according to the two Clusters that achieved the highest and the cluster with the lowest means and analyzed. These data were supplementary to questionnaires as they were used to clarify the participants' responses in the survey.

Results and discussion

This research aimed to enhance to the understanding of the degree of importance and implementation of motivational strategies among the teachers in HEIs by addressing the following questions: (1) Which motivational strategies do the teachers perceive as most and least important; (2) Which motivational strategies do the teachers implement in their classes; and (3) How are these similarities and differences reflected in teachers' motivational perceptions and implementation in Malaysia compared to other teaching contexts?

Firstly, in general, the teachers in this study responded positively to several strategies in the four stages of the framework of motivation in L2. As previously stated, this framework regards motivation as a process-based orientation in which one component entails another and that it is cyclical. Nonetheless, there is no evidence in this study that pointed to motivation as a process since the respondents appeared to be selective in implementing them even when they regarded these strategies as necessary.

The following tables present scores of means across the questionnaire, and they are arranged based on the research questions.

Research Question 1: Which motivational strategies do the teachers perceive as most and least important?

The findings of this study reported that the four highest-rated Clusters on the importance of motivational strategies are:

- (i) Proper teacher behavior ($\mu=3.6$),
- (ii) Present tasks properly ($\mu=3.44$),
- (iii) Promote learners' self-confidence ($\mu=3.43$), and
- (iv) Recognize students' effort ($\mu=3.37$).

On the other hand, 'Promote learner autonomy' is the least essential strategy in EL classes with the only $\mu=3.06$.

Research Question 2: Which motivational strategies do the teachers implement in their classes?

The findings also stated the four highest-rated Clusters of the implementation of motivational strategies are:

- (i) Proper teacher behavior ($\mu=3.57$),
- (ii) Present tasks properly ($\mu=3.36$),
- (iii) Promote learners' self-confidence ($\mu=3.29$), and
- (iv) Recognize students' effort ($\mu=3.26$).

The teachers also rated 'Promote learner autonomy' is the least essential strategy with the only $\mu=2.79$.

Research question 3: How are these similarities and differences reflected in teachers' motivational perceptions and implementation in Malaysia compared to other teaching contexts?

Proper Teacher Behavior

This data is consistent with cited research (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Alqahtani, 2016) that most of the teachers ranked 'Proper teacher behavior' as the most critical construct. During the interview, the teachers also stated that it is necessary to always be professional, caring and proficient so that the students respect them as the authority in the class and as the role models. Other good examples include showing a positive attitude when entering the class so that the students will not be affected by any negative vibes and being punctual.

Next, most of them reported that they showed their enthusiasm for teaching, such as customizing the lesson plan to accommodate the students, giving authentic materials for language learning, making jokes in classes, and providing a safe learning environment. Such actions helped the students to feel more secure or comfortable. They also believe these acts could help to motivate the students, and when the students performed well in the lessons, this made them felt a sense of achievement as well. One of the respondents also stated that by sharing her learning experiences with the students, she believed that they would also be able to overcome their lack of self-confidence in learning English which, "is obviously not our mother tongue, not our first language" (Respondent 9).

Nevertheless, the teachers also set up the boundary between the students and them. For example, one respondent mentioned that as a lecturer, one needs to be authoritative and, at the same time, has "the passion in teaching them, ...in sharing knowledge" (Respondent 9). This opinion was also mentioned by another respondent that one should be friendly to the students. Still, teachers need to remember that they are the authority or else the students might "get too comfortable in conducting the relationship with the teachers" (Respondent 10). This situation could be related to the local culture that indicates the social power distance between the teachers and the learners.

In general, the respondents have a high awareness of the importance of proper conduct in front of the students. However, it also appears that there is a limit in terms of their "friendly" relationship with the students.

Present Tasks Properly

Within this cluster, the teachers should demonstrate what they expect the students to do during the EL classes and explain the significance of the activity. Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) commented that, "...no matter how capable a teacher is, it is unreasonable to anticipate that student motivation will be aroused if the teaching lacks instructional clarity" (p. 162). This action was also considered an essential strategy because it reflected the teachers' responsibilities as role models to their students. It was quite clear that they take their job seriously since the majority of the teachers in this study agreed with these statements.

Promote Learners' Self-confidence

Next, the teachers agreed that they gave positive feedback to their students and set up activities that were appropriate with the students' proficiency levels, while hoping that these could motivate the students. Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) also reported that Taiwanese teachers made efforts to encourage their students to be more confident and this was similar to Jones' (2019) findings that, "Teacher motivational practice correlates strongly with student motivation in the classrooms observed, suggesting that teacher motivational strategies do matter" (p.31)

In this study, the teachers listed some ways of constructive feedback, such as giving positive verbal or written feedback to the students. They also mentioned that they pointed out the students' strengths and suggested ways to overcome the weaknesses so that the students would feel better. Also, during the interview, the majority stated that they were more concerned about the students' communicative abilities rather than having correct grammar but failed to convey the message, and they also believe that correcting the students' grammar would intimidate the students further.

Recognize Students' Effort

This cluster ranked the fourth among the 10 Clusters, and it is closely related to the previous cluster, which is 'Promote learners' self-confidence'. It appears that the teachers believe that acknowledging students who are hardworking and diligent will increase their confidence. Since they teach the undergraduates, these teachers usually compliment the students verbally rather than rewarding them with gifts like chocolates or other material items. For example, Respondent 1 mentioned that, "...I will definitely praise her...she herself would feel more energize to do better in the future", and Respondent 9 stated that, "They want to be praised...As simple as that. One of them have even confronted me saying that she has never been praised before". Concerning this cluster, Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) suggested that Taiwanese teachers also "...placed such a high value on promoting effort attributions in Taiwan, where an ability-driven and achievement-based educational tradition is pervasive" (p. 162).

Promote Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy could be defined as the learner's control over their learning process, such as the learning objectives, materials, strategies, and assessment (Benson, 2016). This motivational cluster is rated as the least important and least frequently practiced in the EL classes, which could be associated with the conservative Asian cultural tradition that teachers know better. Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) reported the same finding and concluded that "...English teachers in Taiwan are not ready to take off the 'authoritarian' mask and let learners govern their own learning process" (p. 164). Moreover, it is interesting to discover that though teachers in Lee' & Lin' (2019) study conformed to most of teacher motivational strategies, none of the strategy was related to learner autonomy. Thus, it could be concluded that these respective Taiwan and Hong Kong teachers were not interested in promoting learner autonomy.

During the interview, the participants of this study agreed that learner autonomy is an excellent motivational strategy, but it should only be implemented within specific parameters. A number of them would like the opportunity to discuss with the students on the topic selections and learning activities but not on designing the course syllabus because basically, their students were

not mentally prepared for such responsibility. For example, Respondent 8 said that his students “don’t have that initiative so if I get their input on designing on the curriculum what should they learn, I don’t think they even know what they need to learn”. Furthermore, they strongly expressed that students should not be involved in deciding the assessment or designing the test for several reasons. For instance, Respondent 1 stated that, “Strictly, I won’t because I think that is a teacher’s job. We shouldn’t allow a student to have a right to decide when they need to be assessed or how they need to be assessed”, and Respondent 10 mentioned similar opinion that, “Normally, no. The assessment and everything are all decided by committee preparing the subject beforehand before even the semester starts. So, the students have no choice on that”. These responses showed that, the stance of the teachers was almost similar to the previously cited research, that their students were not ready for learner autonomy.

However, they also stated that the lack of learner autonomy was due to the mainstream education system that is more teacher-centered than learner-centered in most universities in Malaysia. This situation is quite true since the EL syllabus in most Malaysian universities are prescribed in advance by the EL department. Also, the students are not involved in this matter or any decision-making related to learning outcomes and assessment.

Generally, the findings of this study support previous research studies that most teachers perceived the importance of motivational strategies, but the degree of their implementation varies in accordance with their teaching contexts such as the students’ attitudes, learning style preferences, and peer influence. These refer to the feasibility issues in teacher motivation, as reported by Lee & Lin (2019), Guilloteaux (2013), and Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) in their studies. Moreover, the lukewarm reception of some motivational strategies is mostly due to the curriculum constraint and the traditional belief that teachers are knowledge providers, and they know better. It will be a long process to revolutionize this matter. Still, as for now, it is good news that some of the Malaysian EL teachers appeared to have a more positive outlook of the inclusion of learner autonomy in their EL classes in the future. This optimistic view contradicts their fellow EL teachers in the cited studies in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. In other words, this finding indicates that motivational strategies are neither cultural nor context-specific, but some are regarded as very practical while some are less practical in different learning situations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the context of HIEs in Malaysia, it can be concluded that the EL teachers perceived all motivational strategies and ranged them from very important to essential. They agreed that some were always implemented in their EL classes such as ‘Proper Teacher Behavior’, and ‘Present Tasks Properly’ whereas some were occasionally applied such as ‘Increase Learners’ Goal-orientedness’, and ‘Promote Learner Autonomy’. Also, as stated earlier, the findings showed that the strategies are universal. Also, their implementation depends on the EL teachers who decide on the effectiveness of these strategies on their students’ language learning. Nonetheless, there are some limitations to this study, such as the lack of respondents from private education institutions. They could provide more data to this type of research since most of them have more diverse courses and up-to-date facilities as compared to public universities. Besides that, the data for this study was collected only using questionnaire and interview questions, and it would be better to include other methods such as document analysis or observation. Finally, despite various

significant findings on these motivational strategies alone, there are still related elements yet to be discovered. These include the degree of the teacher behaviors; whether they are spontaneous or calculated, and how these behaviors promote students' language learning or vice versa.

Acknowledgment

This study was conducted under the following research grant;

R/SGJP/A04.00/01380A/001/2018/000511 (Universiti Malaysia Kelantan)

The researchers would like to express our appreciation to the university for the financial support provided.

About the authors

Suhaida Omar is the Head of English Department at the Centre of Language Studies and Generic Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia. Graduated from the University of Warwick, UK in EdD (Applied Linguistics and ELT), and her research interests include Reading in SL/FL, Sociolinguistics, Eye-tracking, and CLIL.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0026-3367>

Nik Ahmad Farhan bin Azim @ Nik Azim As a CELTA certified teacher, he spent 3 years in a secondary school in Malaysia and currently teaching at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. His experiences include curriculum and assessment design for secondary education in state and national level. His current interests include educational linguistics and remedial instructions.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9455-632X>

Noor Syamimie Mohd Nawli teaches at Universiti Malaysia of Kelantan (UMK) in the Centre for Language Studies and Generic Development. She completed her MA in English Linguistics from University of Malaya. As an educator, she has special interest in TESL, Discourse Analysis, and Sociology.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4164-5134>

Noraini Zaini is an English Language teacher with over 4 years' experience teaching undergraduate students. She currently serves at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, teaching General English and English Communication subjects. She holds a bachelor's degree in English for Professional Communication and master's degree in Mass Communication, both from Universiti Teknologi MARA.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9912-9431>

References

- Al-Mahrooqi, R., Abrar-ul-Hassan, S., & Asante, C. (2012). Analyzing the Use of Motivational Strategies by EFL Teachers in Oman. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 8(1), 36-76.
- Al-Tamimi, A., & Munir, S. (2009). Motivation and attitudes towards learning English: a study of petroleum engineering undergraduates at Hadhramout University of sciences and technology. *GEMA Online: Journal of Language Studies*, 9(2), 29-55.

- Alqahtani, S. M. A. (2016). Motivational strategies and EFL teachers' perceptions: a Saudi survey. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(4), 663-674. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0604.02>
- Benson, P. (2016). Language learner autonomy: exploring teachers' perspectives on theory and practice. *Language learner autonomy: Teachers' beliefs and practices in Asian contexts*, xxxiii-xliii. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/LA_Asia
- Bernaus, M., Wilson, A., & Gardner, R.C. (2009). Teachers' Motivation, Classroom Strategy Use, Students' Motivation and Second Language Achievement. *Porta Linguarum*, 12(12), 25-36. ISSN 1697-7467
- Chen, J.F., Warden, C. A., & Chang, H-T. (2005). Motivators that do not motivate: The case of Chinese EFL learners and the influence of culture on motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 609-633. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588524>
- Cheng, H.F. & Dörnyei, Z. (2007). The Use of Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 153-174. DOI: 10.2167/illt048.0
- Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 31(3), 117-35. DOI:10.1017/S026144480001315X
- Dörnyei, Z. (ed.). (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Csizer, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research*. 2(3), 203-229. 1362-1688(98)LR029.OA.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. NY: Oxford University Press. English Language Education Roadmap. (2015). Ministry of Education, Malaysia.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.
- Guilloteaux, M.-J. (2013). Motivational strategies for the language classroom: Perceptions of Korean secondary school English teachers. *System*, 41(1), 3-14. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2012.12.002>
- Jones, M. (2019). The impact of EFL teacher motivational strategies on student motivation to learn English in Costa Rica. *UGA Working Papers in Linguistics*, 4(2), 15-33. The Linguistics Society at UGA: Athens, GA.
- Ruesch, A. (2009). Student and Teacher Perceptions of Motivational Strategies in the Foreign Language Classroom. (Unpublished Master Thesis). Brigham Young University.
- 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.
- Salih, P. (2013). Understanding Motivations to Become Teachers of English: ELT Trainees' Perceptions. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, 1418-1422. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.055>
- Skinner, E., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effect of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85 (4), 571-581. DOI:10.1037/0022-0663.85.4.571.

- Sucuoglu, E. (2017). Analysis of motivational strategies used by English language teachers teaching at secondary schools. *Procedia computer science*, 120, 189-195. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2017.11.228>
- Sugita, M. & Takeuchi, O. (2010). What can teachers do to motivate their students? A classroom research on motivational strategy use in the Japanese EFL context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(1), 21-35. DOI: 10.1080/17501220802450470
- The Star. (2017, January 21). English proficiency still a big problem for many M'sian grads. The Star. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/01/21/english-proficiency-still-a-big-problem-for-many-msian-grads/#V4wAqHDdb3lbOcQU.99>
- Tim S. O. Lee & Shu Yang Lin. (2019). English teachers' uses of motivational strategies beyond an established framework. *Educational Research*, 61(4), 451-468. DOI: 10.1080/00131881.2019.1677170
- Visser-Wijnveen, G. J., Stes, A., & Van Petegem, P. (2014). Clustering teachers' motivations for teaching. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 19(6), 644-656. DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2014.901953
- Walker, C. (2011). Managing Student Motivation through Teaching Performance. (Unpublished assignment). University of Birmingham.
- Watt, H.M.G., & Richardson, P.W. (2015). Teacher motivation. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., 64-71. San Francisco: Elsevier. DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.26082-0
- Yau, H. Y. (2010). Language teacher motivation: A study of teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in New Zealand language schools. (Unpublished Master Thesis). New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.