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## **Investigating Motivational Teaching Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Primary School Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

Motivation is one of the most important factors that influence students learning and has a great effect on their success and achievement. For this reason, in this paper, the researcher is going to investigate the motivational teaching strategies used by EFL Iraqi school teachers. To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher adapted a questionnaire with some changes and modification's. This questionnaire with five point scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never). To achieve face validity, the questionnaire items are given to a jury of experts. Alpha Cronbach formula is used to achieve the questionnaire reliability. After that, the questionnaire was applied on a sample of 38 teachers during the academic year 2019-2020. Then, the questionnaire items were analyzed using weighted mean score and percentages. At the end, recommendations, suggestions for further studies are presented.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Teaching Strategies, Motivational Strategies. EFL Primary School Teachers

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استقصاء استراتيجيات التدريس التحفيزية المستخدمة من قبل المعلمين العراقيين للغة  
الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدرس الابتدائية

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**المخلص:** الحافز هو أحد أهم العوامل التي تؤثر على تعلم الطلاب وله تأثير كبير على نجاحهم وإنجازهم. لهذا السبب ، في هذه البحث ، ستقوم الباحثة باستقصاء استراتيجيات التدريس التحفيزية المستخدمة من قبل المعلمين العراقيين للغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية (EFL) في المدارس الابتدائية. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة قامت الباحثة بتبني استبانة مع بعض التغييرات والتعديلات. هذه الاستبانة بمقياس من خمس نقاط (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never). لتحقيق صلاحية الاستبيان الظاهرية ، تم تقديم فقرات الاستبيان إلى الخبراء. وتم استخدام صيغة ألفا كرونباخ لتحقيق مصداقية الاستبيان. بعد ذلك تم تطبيق الاستبانة على عينة من 38 معلماً خلال العام الدراسي 2019-2020 . ثم تم تحليل عناصر الاستبيان باستخدام متوسط الدرجات والنسب المئوية. وفي النهاية ، تم تقديم التوصيات والاقتراحات لمزيد من الدراسات.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الحافز ، تدريس الاستراتيجيات ، الاستراتيجيات التحفيزية ، معلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في المدارس الابتدائية.

## Section One: Introduction

### 1.1 The problem of the Study

*Motivational strategies are defined as “the motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect” (Mohammad & Alqahtani, 2016, p. 633). Motivational strategies did not receive enough attention until the early 1990s, and there has not been a significant amount of empirical work on them. Accordingly, many Scholars designed and summarized motivational techniques for classroom application, for example Alison & Halliwell (2002), Brown, (2001), Dörnyei (2001), Chambers (1999), Williams & Burden (1997) (Mohammad & Alqahtani, 2016.).*

One of the main problems EFL students face is the lack of motivation to learn English language because of the lack of confidence, self-esteem and their negative attitude towards English language (Elashhab, 2020).

Teachers' responsibility is that to try to find strategies and adopt and use them in the classroom. Dörnyei (2001) states that, there would be one among many strategies that will be effective in any case. Factors such as teachers' behavior, rapport with students, classroom environment and course materials can play a significant role along with the teachers' motivational strategies (Koran, 2015).

Dörnyei (2001) adds that the most dominant factors affecting learners' motivation is teacher's behavior, teacher's personality, feedback, appraisals and materials. *Adopting motivational strategies in foreign language classes is a challenging task for teachers, i.e., implementing motivational strategies that accommodate students learning styles can facilitate the language learning process and make it more productive and enjoyable* ((Elashhab, 2020)

### **1.2 The Aim of the study**

*This study aims at investigating the motivational teaching strategies used by EFL Iraqi school teachers.*

### **1.3 Limits of the study**

It is limited to primary public-school teachers (Males and Females) at Al-Rusafa area, because the researcher used to *teach and lecture primary teachers' voluntary courses in methods of teaching, those teachers who are trainees in the General Directorate for Educational Al-Rusafa First –Preparation and Training Department, during the academic year (2019-2020).*

### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

It is important to dragonize the motivational strategies used by Iraqi EFL primary school teachers that enhance learners' for better language learning and may have a great and positive effect on their success and achievement.

### **1.5 Definition of the Key Term**

#### **A. Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategy is defined as a “generalized plan for a lesson which includes structure, instructional objectives and an outline of planned tactics, necessary to implement the strategies (Saputra & Abdul Aziz , 2014).

Miswar (2020, p.5) defines teaching strategies as *a “teacher’s plan in teaching and learning process to achieve a purpose which have planned. In other word, teaching strategies were approaches to teaching students”*. *This indicates that the teacher has to apply teaching strategies that balance between the method and the way used by the teacher in teaching the material* (Miswar ,2020).

#### **Motivational Strategies**

Motivational strategies are defined as the “deliberate interventions used by teachers to initiate and maintain students' motivation and protect it from distractions” (Dörnyei Z. and Ushioda Z., 2011 as cited in Koran, 2015, p. 46).

Motivational strategies are also defined as “techniques that promote the individual's goal-related behaviour. Because human behaviour is rather complex, there are many diverse ways of promoting it – in fact, almost any influence a person is exposed to might potentially affect his/her behavior” ( Dörnyei, 2001).

#### **B. Motivational Teaching Strategies**

Motivational Teaching Strategies are seen by Hornstra et.al (2015) as all teaching strategies aimed at encouraging students' learning. Also, it may refer to those strategies that “motivate students by pressuring them”, i.e., such strategies related to students' controlled motivation rather than students' intrinsic or autonomous motivation.

According to Soraya (2019), motivational teaching strategies or motivational teaching practices are those strategies used by teachers with different gender, in which teachers have different ways to carry out these strategies in their classrooms. Motivational strategies include how to establish enjoyment in the classroom and in the process of teaching, how to show their care towards the students, how to praise the students, how to provide various modes of resources and media, and also how to show the importance of English today (Soraya, 2019).

### **C. EFL Primary School Teachers**

*Primary school teachers are typically responsible for “teaching children from first through fifth grades” (Onlinecollege.org, 2022). EFL Primary School Teachers play an important role in developing a child's intellect and work habits, as primary school is the first time most children are in a strictly educational environment (Onlinecollege.org, 2022).*

#### **Section Two: Theoretical Background**

##### **2.1 Motivational Teaching Strategies**

Chastain (1988 as cited in Khatib, 2012) asserts that teachers should recognize different variables for motivation strategies called cognitive, affective, and social. Some students are motivated by a *desire to know* (cognitive drive), i.e., students seek to understand and acquire new information simply because it is there. Other students are motivated as a means of *enhancing their self-concepts* (ego enhancement), i.e., they strive to do well. Other students are motivated by *social factors* (social affiliation), to please their parents (ibid). They are responding to peer-group standards important to their social standing in the class, or they are working to attain a certain power status in the group. Students with different types of academic motivation respond in predictable ways to classes and teachers with different orientations. (Khatib, 2012)

*Three studies have been empirically conducted on the effectiveness of motivational strategies. These studies were Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) in Hungary, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) in Taiwan, and Alrabai (2010) in Saudi Arabia (Mohammad & Alqahtani, 2016).*

*In addition, other studies have been conducted such as Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) in Korea., in which they found out that the motivational strategies had successfully increased their students' motivation. A similar study was also conducted in Iran (Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2011), its' result shows similar finding that teachers' motivational practice did relate to students' motivated learning behavior (Soraya, Setiawan & Kurnia , 2017).*

*Generally, most researches dealing with motivational strategies have been conducted in other countries such as Taiwan, Oman, Iran and Colorado. These studies tried to find out the motivational strategies implemented by teachers with large numbers of participants in which questionnaire is the primary technique to obtain the data (Soraya, Setiawan & Kurnia , 2017).*

##### **2.2 Creating a Motivating Classroom Environment**

*Experienced teachers have a motivational influence on students. Therefore, EFL teachers have the ability to create the basic motivational conditions for EFL learning. Rahmalia (2019) asserts that there are three motivational conditions presented as follows:*

- 1) appropriate lecturer behaviours and a good relationship with the students,
- 2) a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere,
- 3) a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

Dornyei (2001, pp.33-49) presents different strategies for creating motivational class environment:

1. Demonstrate and talk about ones enthusiasm for the course material and how it affects students personally, i.e., teachers share their own personal interest in English with their students.
2. Take students' learning very seriously, i.e., teachers show that how much they care about students' academic progress.
3. Develop a personal relationship with the students, i.e., accept and care about them and pay attention and listen to each one of them.

4. Create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, i.e., to bring in and encourage humour in teaching the English language so that students feel happy to learn the language.

5. Promote the development of group cohesiveness, i.e., to use small-group tasks where students can mix and work together.

6. Formulate group norms explicitly, and have them discussed and accepted by students, i.e., to include a specific group rules, explaining the importance of the norms and how they enhance learning. Then, students put the group rules on display.

7. Have the group norms consistently observed, i.e., to make sure that students observe the established norms consistently, and never let any violations go unnoticed.

### **Section Three: Procedures**

#### **3.1 Population and Sample**

The population of the study is primary public-school teachers (Males and Females) at Al- Rusafa area, they are 58 trainee teachers participated *in the training courses held by the General Directorate for Educational Al-Rusafa First –Preparation and Training Department*, during the academic year (2019-2020).

The sample of the study includes 38 trainee teachers, (twelve) males and (twenty six) females are chosen randomly from the population mentioned above as a sample of the study.

#### **3.2 Main Instrument**

A Questionnaire was used to achieve the aim of the study, this questionnaire was adapted by the researcher from Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) as cited in (Jonsson, 2017). The researcher was chosen the most suitable items for her study with some changes and modifications especially for the scale. After this, the questionnaire was applied on 38 trainee teachers, in different dates according to the researcher' lecture there on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019, and 14<sup>th</sup>.January 2020 respectively. The questionnaire consists of 17 items with five point scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never).

#### **3.3 Description of the questionnaire**

The adapted questionnaire of the present study consists of 17 items deals with motivational strategies used by primary school teachers. Five point scales is used (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never).

Teachers responses arranged from 5-1, this means five points are given to the highest (fifth level always), four points are given to (fourth level often), three points are given to (third level sometimes), two points are given to (second level rarely) and finally one point is given to the lowest (first level never).

Twenty trainee teachers in Al- Rusafa area, who teach at primary public schools, are chosen randomly as the pilot sample, they were (13) females and (7) males. Those teachers are excluded from the main sample. The questionnaire is given to the teachers in face to face classroom, it is noticed that the items were clear to them but the time they took between 15 to 45 minutes to answer the whole items.

For achieving face validity, the questionnaire items are given to a jury of experts; the jurors kindly read, changed and modified the questionnaire items as well as its scale.

Alpha- Cronbach formula is used to verify the reliability of the questionnaire; it is found out that the questionnaire reliability is 0.82.

### **Section Three: Results**

#### **3.1 Presentation of Results**

Results of the current study have been achieved by calculating the weighted mean scores and percentages of each item as presented in table 1.

**Table (1) Items Weighted Mean Scores and Percentages**

<b>Item Rank</b>	<b>Item No. According to the highest mean</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Always 5</b>	<b>Often 4</b>	<b>Sometimes 3</b>	<b>Rarely 2</b>	<b>Never 1</b>	<b>Weighting Mean</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
17	1	Try to be yourself in front of students without putting on an artificial 'mask', and share with them your hobbies, likes and dislikes	32	4	2	0	0	4.79	95.8
7	2	Establish a good relationship with your students	30	6	1	1		4.71	94.2
2	3	Show students that you respect, accept and care about each of them.	30	4	4	0	0	4.68	93.6
5	4	Explain the importance of the 'class rules' that you regard as important (e.g. let's not make fun of each other's mistakes) and how these rules enhance learning, and then ask for the students' agreement.	27	7	1	1	2	4.47	89.4
16	5	Show students that their effort and achievement are being recognized by you.	24	7	6	1	0	4.42	88.4

9	6	Encourage learners to try harder by making it clear that you believe that they can do the tasks	22	10	3	1	2	4.29	85.8
3	7	Create opportunities so that students can mix and get to know each other better (e.g. group work, game-like competition).	17	12	5	3	1	4.08	81.6
1	8	Bring in and encourage humour and laughter frequently in your class	17	9	9	3	0	4.05	81
4	9	Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the English language.	15	11	10	1	1	4.00	80
15	10	Enrich the channel of communication by presenting various auditory and visual aids such as pictures, relia, tapes and films.	19	6	6	6	1	3.95	79
14	11	Encourage learners to see that the main reason for most failure is that they did not make sufficient effort rather than their poor abilities.	13	14	5	2	4	3.79	75.8
10	12	Create a supportive and pleasant	13	11	8	4	2	3.76	75.2

		classroom climate where students are free from embarrassment and ridicule.							
12	13	Adopt the role of a ‘facilitator’ (i.e. Your role would be to help and lead your students to think and learn in their own way, instead of solely giving knowledge to them).	13	9	11	2	3	3.71	74.2
6	14	Use short and interesting opening activities to start each class (e.g. fun games).	10	10	14	2	2	3.63	72.6
8	15	Allow students to create products that they can display or perform (e.g. a poster, an information brochure or a radio program).	8	1	15	2	2	3.60	72
11	16	Bring various authentic cultural products (e.g. magazines, newspapers or song lyrics) to class as supplementary materials”.	9	9	12	5	3	3.42	68.4
13	17	Compare your students with each other in public (i.e. verbally praising one student more than the other students or	12	1	4	3	18	2.61	52.2



		by listing their grades in public).							
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From the table above, the researcher is going to analyze the first top five items and the four bottom items with the reference to their weighted mean score and percentage.

- The first top five items are presented as follows:

**Item (17)** is ranked first and gained (4.79) with 95.8%. It states **“try to be yourself in front of students without putting on an artificial ‘mask’, and share with them your hobbies, likes and dislikes”**. This is supported by Qadir (2014) who states that teachers should have eagerness in teaching EFL and rapport with his/her learners’ by being friendly not too formal.

**Item (7)** is gained (4.71) with (94.2%) that states **“establish a good relationship with your students”**. It is supported by Langley (2019, p.1) who states that students’ success at school is related to the strong and supportive relationships between teachers and students, “Students will be more engaged in tasks, academically and behaviorally, and are more likely to learn”.

**Item (2)** is gained (4.68) with (93.6%) which indicates **“show students that you respect, accept and care about each of them”**. This is supported by (Kratzer, 1997, p.22) who stated that “caring is a natural result of respect, and respect is a natural precursor to caring”. The relationship between caring and respect clarified by Nel Noddings (1992, p.xi) as “we need to be cared for in the sense that we need to be understood, received, respected, recognized”. Therefore in school setting, there should be teacher to student acceptance, caring and respect for each of them.

**Item (5)** is gained (4.47) with (89.4%) that stated **“explain the importance of the ‘class rules’ that you regard as important (e.g. let’s not make fun of each other’s mistakes) and how these rules enhance learning, and then ask for the students’ agreement”**. *Guney, Eroglu and Akalin (2012) stated that classroom rules support individual learning and they assumed* in a particular classroom setting, striking a fine balance between award and punishment is critical for establishment of efficient incentive mechanisms in educational institutions. Oliver (2017) added that class rules can enhance students learning, i.e., students earn rewards for their behavior and this reward is helpful in developing their EFL skills.

- The bottom four items are presented as follows

**Item (6)** is gained 3.63 and (72.6%); it indicates **“use short and interesting opening activities to start each class (e.g. fun games)”**. Kupečková (2010) supported this by saying teacher can use the game for example as a warm up activity or revision of the previous lesson at the beginning of the lesson or as a summary of the skills at the end. Because of the limited time of our lessons that lasts for 30-45 Mins, our Iraqi school teachers less use or don’t use “fun games” in the warm up activity that it gained the mentioned above weighted mean score and percentage.

**Item (8)** is gained 3.60 and (72%) that stated **“allow students to create products that they can display or perform (e.g. a poster, an information brochure or a radio**

program)”. In our Iraqi schools, to create a poster by EFL learners is mostly used with the help of the teacher but displaying or performing a brochure or a radio program is less used or unused by our learners as supported by AMC (1994, p.28) who stated that “Designing effective visual material is a complex task”.

**Item (11)** is gained 3.42 and (68.4%) that stated “**bring various authentic cultural products (e.g. magazines, newspapers or song lyrics) to class as supplementary materials**”. This item is very limited in our Iraqi school teachers’ classrooms because our teachers are often “confused and do not know which aspects of culture to teach, what materials to use and what teaching techniques to use with the aim of developing intercultural communicative competences of their learners” (Reid, 2007).

**Item (13)** is gained 2.61 and (52.2%) that stated “**compare your students with each other in public (i.e. verbally praising one student more than the other students or by listing their grades in public)**”. In this item, it is believed that students’ achievements are influenced by these factors “achievement, academic standards, and motivation of students’ friends” (Lubbers et.al., 2007, p.52). If the teacher compares students with one another in grades in public, this motivates them for learning EFL, but unfortunately this item is less used or unused by Iraqi school teachers because of large number of students that reach to 70 in public schools.

## **Section Four: Conclusions, Recommendations & Suggestions for Further Studies**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

Conclusions of this study are based on the results above stated as follows:

1. It is proved that all the chosen items for the present study are used with different weighted mean scores and percentages by primary public school teachers, these items are (17,7,2,5,16, 9,3,1,4, 15, 14, 10,12, 6 and 8), whereas the last two items (11 and 13), they are less used by the teachers according to their weighted mean scores and percentages.
2. According to table (1), it is clearly noticed that in items (17,7,2,5,16, 9,3,1,4, 15, 10, and 12), all the teachers have chosen *always* to get the higher responses , whereas item no. (14), fourteen of the teachers have chosen *often* while thirteen of them have chosen *always* to get the higher responses. Items no. (6, 8, and 11), fourteen, fifteen and twelve of the teachers have chosen *sometimes* to get the higher responses. Finally, Item no. (13), eighteen of the teachers have chosen *never* to get the higher responses, whereas twelve of them have chosen always to get the lower responses for this strategy.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

The researcher recommendations can be summed up as follows:

1. Iraqi EFL teachers are recommended to use motivational strategies that are enthusiastic to our learners, encouraging them and providing them with interesting, enjoyable and active classes.
2. EFL teachers are recommended to create a pleasant and stimulating classroom atmosphere that motivates students to use various interesting activities and using visual and auditory materials.
3. FFL teachers’ are recommended to generate strategies to keep students motivated towards learning the foreign language.

4. Iraqi curriculum school designers are recommended to implement motivated exercises and activities within textbook syllabuses based on Iraqi learners' needs and interests.

#### **4.3 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Suggestions for further studies can be summed up as follows:

1. A similar study is conducted among intermediate and secondary school teachers (males & females).
2. Another study can also be conducted with the college instructors (males & females).
3. Comparison can be made between EFL teachers' motivational strategies in Baghdad (Al-Karah) and Baghdad (Al- Rusafa).
4. A similar study is conducted with public school teachers in all Iraqi governorates.

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