

## The Employment of Motivation Strategies by ESL Teachers in Language Teaching in the Philippines

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper aims to identify the motivation strategies employed by high school English Language teachers in conducting their lessons in English language teaching. It also aims to examine the relationship between the motivation strategies employed by English Language Teachers and the parts of the lesson in which the strategies are used.

**Approach/Methodology/Design:** Descriptive Correlational Design was employed in this study. Purposive sampling was utilized in the study which comprised of eight English teachers of Pag-asa National High School, Philippines. Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Pearson-r were used for the interpretation of data.

**Findings:** The results of the study showed that out of forty eight listed motivation strategies only eighteen motivational strategies are performed by the English teachers. Also, motivation strategies directed to promoting learners' confidence are mostly utilized by the teachers and the different parts of the lesson are associated with the motivational strategies. The study is limited only to identifying the motivational strategies used by the teachers and how these motivational strategies are related to teaching English in Pag-asa National High School.

**Practical Implications:** This study may aid the teachers in understanding whether they employ enough motivational strategies in their classes.

**Originality/value:** The results of this study may be used as a basis in conducting Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions among English teachers in terms of managing English classes and using of motivation strategies.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past years, motivation has been the focus of a number of studies in language education. Motivation may be described in various ways depending on the context. Dornyei (2001) pointed out that "motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity" (p.7). On the other hand, Gardner (1985) opted to explain motivation by using the question, "Why does an organism behave as it does?" and that motivation involves four aspects which are goal, effortful behaviour, desire to attain the goal, and favourable attitudes toward the activity (p.50).

Learning occurs not just inside the classroom. It happens when a person starts to give realization and interpretation to an idea that is unfamiliar to them. Ornstein (1990) defines

learning as a reflective process whereby the learner either develops new insights and understanding on changes or restructures his or her mental processes. Desire to learn is one of the signs that a person is curious to explore the answers to every unfamiliar experience to achieve maturation.

According to Lardizabal (1991), learning is an integrated, ongoing process occurring within the individual enabling him to meet specific aims, fulfil his needs and interest, and cope with the learning process. People are all capable of learning things, but the challenge that teachers face is on how to make learners possess the inner drive to satisfy their curiosity. Franken (1994) states that motivation is the arousal, direction, and persistence of behaviour. All these ideas about motivational strategies put much pressure on teachers to adopt and adapt certain motivational strategies that correspond to their contexts and students' needs. Hence, this study is an attempt to examine the motivational strategies employed by the teachers at Pag-asa National High School in the Philippines.

## **2. Literature Review**

One thing to note in motivation particularly on second language motivation is that according to Dornyei (1994) "we can foresee in future L2 motivation research a dynamic interplay of established motivational concepts grounded in a social psychological approach and constructs rooted in other psychological fields and approaches" (p.522). In addition, Dornyei (1998) emphasized the importance of motivation as a factor in the success of learning of the students and the skills of the teachers. In terms of employing motivation, it should also be considered in relation to the effectiveness of teaching.

These studies had been a powerful means to understand and analyze teaching and learning process in relation to second/foreign language or language acquisition. For example, motivation in the language classroom may have a difference depending on the disposition of either male or female students. Dornyei and Clement (2001) found out that boys and girls have differences in their dispositions toward different languages having the girls to get high scores on motivation and attitude measures. While some students are having difficulty in learning English as a language, Kitjaroonchai (2013) has found out that the motivation of the students to learn English is considerably high in relation to the idea that learning English will help the students in their future. In addition to this, students who excelled academically have a slightly higher motivation than the other students.

The previous studies looked into the effect of motivation to student; however it is also important to look on the side of the teachers when it comes to motivation particularly on the motivation strategies they have been employing in the classroom. Dornyei (2001) emphasized motivation strategies as "techniques that promote the individual's goal-related behaviour [...] Motivational strategies refer to those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect" (p.28).

Dornyei (2001) underscored the motivational strategies including those that were proven to be reliable should not be considered as golden rules to be followed but rather suggestions that may

help the teachers and may work better on a certain day but not necessarily the next day. This only shows that the array of motivation strategies should be seen as a guide to what strategy is best for a certain activity. Appropriateness of the strategy to be employed is still the primary factor to be considered. In addition to this, a study conducted by Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) on the motivation, strategy use, and pedagogical references in foreign language learning have strengthened the notion that motivation affects learning. Their study had shown that aspects of motivation do not equally affect strategy use and that not all strategies are affected equally by factors concerning motivation. This may show that motivation strategies may be something that transcends but may be limited to certain context or culture.

Motivation strategies in ELT are factors in encouraging the learners to engage themselves in the learning process. It also makes language learning more enjoyable through the arousal of the learners' interest. According to Cheng and Dornyei (2007), the motivation of the learners is a key variable in making language learning effective which is anchored from the definition of motivation, teaching perception, and learning the study about the motivation strategies employed by high school teachers in ELT.

A study conducted by Cheng and Dornyei (2007) on the use of motivation strategies in EFL (English as Foreign Language) teaching in Taiwan has provided that some motivation strategies may transfer across cultures and ethno linguistic contexts. Thus motivation strategies used in a certain class may be similar to other classes or contexts. Skinner and Belmont (1993) also emphasized in their study that the behaviour of the teacher and the engagement of the students in the classroom have a reciprocal relationship. This shows that motivation of the students is related to the teachers' actions in class underscoring that motivation being employed by the teachers may have a direct effect to the students.

Lastly, Kassing (2011) had found out in her study that some EFL lecturers were not aware of the effect of the strategies they use to the students' motivation in relation to teaching-learning English. This is very vital since success in learning English is the main goal in the teaching and learning process. Motivation strategies employed is the focal point as to the extent of how the teachers know its nature.

### **3. Methodology and Procedures**

#### **Sampling**

The respondents of the study were the eight (8) High School English Language Teachers from Pag-asa National High School (PgNHS) who are in a Regular Permanent type of appointment status as approved by the Department of Education and the Civil Service Commission. The teachers are working in the above-mentioned school located at Victoria Reyes, City of Dasmarinas, Cavite, Philippines. Selecting the respondents was based on the use of purposive sampling intended for the limited number of teachers and the objectives designed for this paper.

#### **Data Collection**

The researcher used a descriptive research form through a descriptive correlation research. The instrument used in the study is a modified questionnaire form of the strategy scales and constituent strategies by Cheng and Dornyei (2007) based on the systematic overview of motivational techniques by Dornyei (2001).

The questionnaire was used by Cheng and Dornyei (2007) in their study of the use of motivational strategies in language instruction focusing on the English as Foreign Language (EFL) Teaching in Taiwan. The study of Cheng and Dornyei (2007) focused on (1) how important the participating teachers perceived certain motivational strategies and (2) how frequently they actually made use of these strategies in their teaching practice. Also, Dornyei and Cheng (2007) emphasized validity and reliability of the questionnaire stating that “the internal consistency of these scales was tested by means of a reliability analysis to determine whether the theoretical clustering was borne out in practice” (p.160).

The questionnaire was constructed, validated, and administrated. It consisted of 48 possible motivation strategies being employed by teachers divided into 10 clusters based on the content and similarities of such motivation strategies. Also, the modified questionnaire includes relevant information such as the length of the teacher’s service and the parts of the lesson where the teacher employs such motivation strategies.

The researcher made sure that each respondent’s answers are confidential and anonymous by highlighting the cover letter and the instructions in the survey questionnaire. In addition, the researcher sent a letter of request to conduct a study to the principal and the head of the English Department of Pag-asa National High School. By the time the principal and the head agreed to permit the researcher, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

A day was given to the respondents to answer the questionnaire. Afterwards, the questionnaires were then collected for data analysis and interpretation. The data gathered were encoded and computed using Microsoft Excel 2010 through SPSS software. The data were analyzed and interpreted from which the results and discussion were drawn.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Research Question 1

Table 1: Motivation strategies utilized by English Language Teachers (ELT) of Pag-asa National High School

Motivational Strategy	Mean	SD	Statistical Range
Bring in and encourage humour	3.75	.463	Often Performed
Show students you care about them	5.75	.463	Always Performed
Allow students to get to know each other	3.63	.518	Often Performed
Familiarize students with the cultural background of the target language	1.00	.000	Never Performed
Explain the importance of the class rules	5.25	.463	Very often Performed
Give clear instructions by modelling	5.13	.354	Very Often Performed

Invite senior students to share their English learning experiences	1.00	.000	Never Performed
Monitor students' progress and celebrate their victory	3.63	.518	Often Performed
Remind students of the benefits of mastering English	3.25	.463	Sometimes Performed
Encourage students to set learning goals	5.63	.518	Always Performed
Design tasks that are within students' ability	5.50	.535	Always Performed
Introduce various interesting topics	3.75	.463	Often Performed
Make tasks challenging	3.75	.463	Often Performed
Teach self-motivating strategies	3.75	.463	Often Performed
Make sure grades reflect students' effort and hard work	6.00	.000	Always Performed
Let students suggest class rules	1.00	.000	Never Performed
Show your enthusiasm for teaching	5.63	.518	Always Performed
Break the routine by varying the presentation format	3.25	.463	Sometimes Performed
Invite English-speaking foreigners to class	1.00	.000	Never Performed
Help students develop realistic beliefs about English learning	3.00	.000	Sometimes Performed
Use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class	5.75	.463	Always Performed
Involve the students in designing and running the English course	2.00	.535	Rarely Performed
Establish good rapport with the students	5.38	.518	Very Often Performed
Encourage peer teaching and group presentation	5.25	.463	Very Often Performed
Give good reasons to students as to why a particular task is meaningful	4.25	.463	Often Performed
Find out students' needs and build them into curriculum	3.00	.000	Sometimes Performed
Encourage students to create products	5.38	.518	Very Often Performed
Encourage students to try harder	6.00	.000	Always Performed
Give students choices in deciding how and when they will be assessed	3.38	.518	Sometimes Performed
Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk taking	5.88	.354	Always Performed
Display the class goal in a wall chart and review it regularly	3.38	.518	Sometimes Performed
Introduce authentic cultural materials	4.00	.000	Often Performed
Make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct	6.00	.000	Always Performed
Provide students with positive feedback	6.00	.000	Always Performed
Ask students to work toward the same goal	6.00	.000	Always Performed
Teach students learning techniques	3.50	.535	Often Performed
Adopt the role of a facilitator	4.50	.535	Very Often Performed
Encourage students to use English outside the classroom	3.63	.518	Often Performed
Increase the amount of English in your class	5.88	.354	Always Performed
Share with the students that you value English as a meaningful experience	5.88	.354	Always Performed

Avoid social comparison	5.50	.535	Always Performed
Promote effort attributions	5.63	.518	Always Performed
Make tasks attractive by including novel and fantasy element	5.88	.354	Always Performed
Encourage students to share personal experiences and thoughts	3.88	.354	Often Performed
Present various auditory and visual teaching aids	5.75	.463	Always Performed
Recognize students' effort and achievements	5.75	.463	Always Performed
Be yourself in front of students	4.00	.000	Often Performed
Allow students to assess themselves	4.63	.518	Very Often Performed

*Source: Author*

Table 1 shows that among the 48 listed motivation strategies based on the questionnaire by Cheng and Dornyei (2007), 18 motivation strategies were found to be prevalently used out of 48 motivational strategies by the English teachers of Pag-asa National High School. If variety should be considered, the 18 prevalently used motivation strategies would only comprise 37% of the listed motivational strategies. This may impact the motivation to learn the language since the ESL teachers may tend to repeat the same motivation strategies when they teach in class. As Cheng and Dornyei (2007) stated, the motivation of the learners is a key variable in making language learning effective which is anchored from the definition of motivation, teaching perception, and learning the study about the motivation strategies employed by high school teachers in ELT.

Such list of motivation strategies were identified using the following arbitrary statistical ranges:

Table 2: Arbitrary Statistical Ranges for Motivational Strategies

5:50-6:00	Always Performed
4:50-5.49	Very Often Performed
3.50-4.49	Often Performed
2.50-3.49	Sometimes Performed
1.50-2.49	Rarely Performed
1.00-1.49	Never Performed

*Source: Author*

Table 2 shows the arbitrary statistical ranges used to identify the motivation strategies utilized by the teachers.

## Research Question 2

Table 3: Parts of the Lesson Where Motivational Strategies are Utilized

Parts of the Lesson	Mean (X)	SD
Proper teacher behaviour	5.33	.15
Recognize students' effort	5.25	.30
Promote learners' self-confidence	5.40	.19
Creating a pleasant classroom climate	5.22	.34
Present tasks properly	4.69	.26

Increase learners' goal-orientedness	3.75	.23
Make learning tasks stimulating	4.63	.33
Familiarize learners with L2-related values	2.82	.12
Promote group cohesiveness and group norms	3.95	.09
Promote learner autonomy	3.92	.21

*Source: Author*

Table 3 shows the ten parts of the lesson wherein motivation strategies are employed. It is shown that motivation strategies directed to promoting learners' confidence with a mean of 5.40 are mostly utilized and motivation strategies directed to familiarization of learners with L2-related values with a mean of 2.82 are least utilized.

This result may imply that most of the focus of the ESL teachers is on building the confidence of the students as to fluency in using the English language, however, fluency alone may not be enough since accuracy in using the language is also needed. Moreover, the data also shows that motivation strategies directed to familiarization of learners with L2-related values with a mean of 2.82 are least utilized. This result may impact the reflection and self-management of the learners in using the second language since most of the motivation strategies employed by the ESL teachers underscored building the confidence, creating pleasant classroom climate and managing tasks. Such discussion agrees to Kassing (2011) which found out in her study that some EFL lecturers were not aware of the effect of the strategies they use to the students' motivation in relation to teaching-learning English. This is very vital since success in learning English is the main goal in the teaching and learning process. Motivation strategies employed is the focal point as to the extent of how the teachers know its nature.

### Research Question 3

Table 4: Significant Relationship Between The Parts Of The Lesson And Motivational Strategies

Part of the lesson	Motivational Strategies	Pearson r-Value	Sig-value	Interpretation
Proper teacher behaviour	Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking	0.882	0.004	Significant
	Increase the amount of English you use in class	0.882	0.004	Significant
	Make tasks attractive by including novel and fantasy element	0.882	0.004	Significant
Recognize students' effort	Design tasks that are within students' ability	0.866	0.005	Significant
	Increase the amount of English you use in class	0.857	0.007	Significant

Creating a pleasant classroom climate	Share students that you value English as a meaningful experience	0.857	0.007	Significant
	Make tasks effective by including novels and fantasy element	0.857	0.007	Significant
Present tasks properly	Show students that you care about them	0.745	0.34	Significant
Make learning tasks stimulating	Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking	0.764	0.027	Significant
	Increase the amount of English in your class	0.764	0.027	Significant
	Share students that you value English as a meaningful experience	0.764	0.027	Significant
Promote group cohesiveness and group norms	Show students that you care about them	1.00	0.000	Significant

*Source: Author*

Table 4 shows the relationship of the parts of the lesson and the motivational strategies employed by the English teachers. It showed that proper teacher behaviour has a significant relationship with the following motivational strategies: creating a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking, increasing the amount of English you use in class, and making tasks attractive by including novel and fantasy element. Furthermore, recognizing students' effort has a significant relationship with designing tasks that are within students' ability. Creating a pleasant classroom climate also has a significant relationship with increasing the amount of English you use in class, sharing to students that you value English as a meaningful experience, making tasks effective by including novels and fantasy element. Moreover, presenting tasks properly has a significant relationship with showing students that you care about them. Making learning tasks stimulating has significant relationship with creating a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking, increasing the amount of English in your class, and sharing to students that you value English as a meaningful experience. Lastly, promoting group cohesiveness and group norms has a significant relationship with showing students that you care about them.

The results on table 4 comprehensively show a strong relationship between the various motivation strategies and the parts of the lesson in which these motivation strategies have a significant impact. This implies that ESL teachers may have been using the motivation strategies in the parts of the lesson but may not be aware that there are multiple motivation strategies on a specific part of the lesson which they can use in teaching. This would help the learners more in being successful in learning thus agrees to Kitjaroonchai (2013) which has found out that the motivation of the students to learn English is considerably high in relation



to the idea that learning English will help the students in their future. In addition to this, students who excelled academically have a slightly higher motivation than the other students.

## **5. Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that out of 48 listed motivation strategies by Cheng and Dornyei (2007) only 18 motivational strategies are performed by the English teachers of Pag-asa National High School. This result may be due to ESL teachers' repetition of the same set of motivation strategies in their classes. ESL teachers were not fully aware of the other motivation strategies that they can apply in their lessons or classes. Thus, these results show an impact on the teaching and learning outcomes of the learners.

In addition, motivation strategies directed to promoting learners' confidence are mostly utilized by the teachers, while motivation strategies directed to familiarization of learners with L2-related values are least utilized. Most of the ESL teachers' focus is on building the self-confidence of the learners in using the language thus directed to fluency. The result may imply that due to the focus on building the confidence, the reflection and self-management of the learners in using the second language may be left behind which actually promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Lastly, the different parts of the lesson are associated with the motivational strategies showing a strong relationship between the various motivation strategies and the parts of the lesson. The ESL teachers may use this relationship in classes to further enhance the motivation. This may bring about a successful learning outcome.

It is recommended that an action plan should be made by the English teachers of Pag-asa National High School in relation to the employment of motivation strategies that they use in their classes. This may aid the teachers in realizing whether they employ enough motivational strategies in their classes. Moreover, the paper would let the teachers examine their pedagogy since the employment of the motivational strategies had a significant relationship to the parts of the lesson. Lastly, the results of this study may become a basis for conducting Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions among the teachers.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The author of the article declares no conflict of interest.

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