RESEARCH ARTICLE

HIGHLIGHTS ON MOTIVATIONAL PRACTICES BY AN EFL TEACHER

[1]Sabria S. Jawhar and *,[2]Haifa A. Alnofaie

[1]Assistant Professor of Applied and Educational Linguistics, Languages and Cultural Studies Department King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Mail Code, 6565. P.O.Box. 9515, Jeddah 21423 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

[2]Assistant Professor of Applied and Educational Linguistics, Department of Foreign Languages/ College of Art Taif University, P.O.BOX 888, Taif 21974, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Teaching strategies in motivating EFL learners should be seen as an important aspect of teacher classroom practice. There are empirical research findings that identify effective teacher motivational strategies (Dörnyei and Csizér's, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001; Cheng and Dörnyei, 2008; Sugita and Takeuchi, 2010; Ruesh *et al.*, 2012; Wong, 2013). These studies examine the issue of motivational strategies mainly from a quantitative stand point. Qualitative investigations that identify the types of the teacher's utterances that are used as motivational strategies in classroom discussions are scarce. It is the purpose of this paper to examine how the teacher's utterances motivate EFL learners to participate in classroom talk. As drawn from the analysis of a classroom discussion in an EFL lesson (50 minutes length),the teacher used effective utterances that could provide learners with opportunities to express themselves (for example, asking referential questions, building on others' contributions, linking learners' contributions and inviting evaluation of answers). In addition to the teacher's effective use of her utterances as motivational strategies, task topic and teacher-learner rapport were identified as other motivational strategies that contribute to learners' active participation in talk. The observations highlighted in our analysis of teacher-learner interaction contribute to existing literature on teacher motivational strategies by identifying types of teacher motivational utterances. Another contribution of this study is the context. Studies that look at teacher motivational strategies in Saudi Arabia are limited (Alrabai, 2010; Alqahtani, 2016; Alnofaie, 2016). It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform the motivational practices of EFL teachers. More studies, particularly those that employ mixed approach methods, are needed in the field of teacher motivational practices.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher motivational strategies

Gardner and Lambert (1972) explain motivation in terms of two orientations: integrativeness and instrumentality. Integrativeness refers to learners' positive attitudes towards a target language and their desires to become a member of the target language group. Instrumentality refers to learning a target language in order to use it as a tool for achieving utilitarian goals as in finding a job or pursuing education. This classic view of L2 motivation portraits motivation as a psychological state. Dörnyei (2000) proposes a new direction

corresponding author: Haifa A. Alnofaie,
Assistant Professor of Applied and Educational Linguistics, Department of Foreign Languages/ College of Art Taif University, P.O.BOX 888, Taif 21974, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

for defining and examining motivation, a direction that emphasises its dynamic nature. Dörnyei (2000) views motivation as a sequence of actional phases: the preactional which is the starting point of motivated behaviour and includes setting goals and initiating action, the actional phase which deals with the actual implementation of action in order to reach the desired outcomes and the postactional phase which begins after achieving the goal. Increasing EFL learners' motivation seems to be a challenging task for teachers. Research has revealed that Saudi EFL learners feel anxious about speaking English (Alrabai, 2014; Al-Saraj, 2014; Dewaele and Al-Saraj, 2015). Teachers need to think of strategies that could facilitate learners' engagement and thus increase their motivation to learn. Dörnyei (2001, p. 28) defines motivational strategies as 'the motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect.' Dörnyei (2001) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) suggest four main dimensions, based on observations of motivational

behaviour, for clarifying the nature of teacher motivational practice. Below are briefly the four main dimensions of teacher motivational strategies:

Extract 1		
395	T:	W- What do you think- ↑Why do you think this happens
396		so much: nowa↓days?
397	S:	(?)
398	T:	[?] Violence like this happens every day (.)why
399	L:	Yes I told you because ((cough)) because the man
400		don't choose any urr-
401	S?:	His wife
402	Lu:	His wife
403	S?:	Sometimes you know
404		((laughter))
405	Wi:	Miss- miss (.) Sometimes and it's very popular °in
406		Saudi° okay the man loves some girl and when he (.)
407		want to marry her (.) he go to her parents (.) the
408		parents say "no" er so they're not from our family
409		noter: same cultureurr I will er: search for err
410		a good wife for you they force him to marry (.)
411		another girl so it's one of the reason
412	T:	>So< he beats her- so you think he should beat up
413		this new girl?
414	Sn:	Miss in my mind the man should choose the urr girl
415	T:	Okay (?) what about you: g:irls here? (.) What
416		you do: do you agree: with her: or you don't ag:ree
417		with her what are your reasons what do you think:
418		why is this happening in society tod↓ ay?
419	Sn:	Because er [IF THERE IS NO PUNISHMENT THEY WILL
420		MISBEHAVE]
421	T:	↑>Speak in English<
422		((laughter))
423	Wi:	Miss also
424	T:	Quick quick) let her ↑speak (.) ↓don't speak Arabi
425	Sn:	>He knows that no-one will pun↑ish him he will
426		do ↓whatever he wants.
427	T:	O:kay so you're thinkings:uch: men need to be
428		Punished?
429	Sn:	>↑Of< course
430	T:	Let's open a ni:ce page in the newspaper for us an
431		we will (.) try to advise these er: men

- Creating motivational conditions by establishing a good teacher-student rapport and creating a convenient classroom atmosphere
- Generating initial motivation by applying strategies for (a) increasing learners' success and (b) developing positive attitudes towards learning
- Maintaining motivation by choosing relevant tasks and tasks that promote learner autonomy
- Providing learners with effective feedback, increasing learner satisfaction, and offering grades in a motivational manner

Dörnyei (2001) breaks these macrostrategies down into more than 100 motivational techniques. When coding classroom discourse, we took into consideration the four main dimensions of motivational strategies mentioned above (i.e., teacher-learner rapport, developing positive attitudes towards learning, the choice of motivating tasks and teacher feedback). There are a few studies that have examined the issue of teacher motivational strategies. The majority of available studies rely mainly on quantitative methods such as questionnaires and systemic observational checklists (Dörnyei and Csizér's, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001; Cheng and Dörnyei, 2008; Sugita and Takeuchi, 2010; Ruesh *et al.*, 2012; Wong, 2013). Studies that examine teacher motivational strategies through a qualitative lens are scarce (Alnofaie, 2016). The qualitative analysis of teacher-student talk provides a detailed account of what happens in each turn, as presented in this paper. In this paper,

we set out to examine how a teacher's motivational teaching practice affects her students' motivated learning behaviour, as manifested by the functions of the teacher's utterances and the extent of students' participation and volunteering answers. The authors of this paper were interested in the following question:
How do the teacher's use of different motivational strategies affect her students' motivational learning? The coding of data into functions was informed by Dörnyei (2001) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) observations of motivational behaviour mentioned earlier.

The following section presents examples of the teacher's use of motivational strategies. The teacher was teaching English course to college students in Saudi Arabia. The extracts below, which were taken from a speaking lesson, illustrate the functions of the teacher's utterances and identify evidence of students' involvement in participation and volunteering answers.

The lesson

This lesson is a story of a woman who is abused by her husband. Students were asked to think of a solution or a decision that the lady should make (See the Appendix). This lesson illustrates how teacher talk can raise the level of students' motivation as reflected in their responses and active participation in classroom discussions. In this lesson, students personalised personalise the task, volunteered responses and applied evaluation as a critical thinking skill to judge what they hear. The task in this lesson was a story about a woman abused by her husband, and the students had to decide what she should do to change her life. The students had to share their opinions with their teacher and classmates. Extract 1 shows how the students were engaged in extending their responses and building on the responses of others.

In this extract, the teacher initiates the referential question (why do you think this happens so much nowadays?) (lines 395-396). Lu responds to it by stating a reason (line 399-402), and Wi extends Lu's response by showing agreement and adding more explanation in a long turn (405-411).The teacher here does not interrupt the students' turn and this results in Wi's complex turn. The teacher's feedback moves shows her efforts to involve the learners in a dialogue by avoiding the traditional IRF pattern. The teacher's feedback moves are not evaluative, but are used to apply elicitation strategies (i.e., wondering in lines 412 and 413, passing a student's idea to the class for judgement supported with reasons in line 416, confirmation request in line 427 and building on Sn's turn by adding her suggestion in lines 430 and 431). Such feedback moves encourage the students to take part in the dialogue. For instance, Sn builds on the others' contributions by providing a suggestion (line 414) and extends her participation by referring to an Arabic proverb and succeeds in explaining it in English (419-426). A valuable learning opportunity for the students is created by the teacher's insistence that Sn say the Arabic proverb in English (lines 421 and 424). This could help the other students to learn how to explain this proverb in English and might help them in communication outside the classroom. However, one drawback in the elicitation strategies the teacher applies here is the fact that she asks two different questions (lines 416-418) (i.e., requesting an evaluation of Sn's idea and requesting more reasons for why abuse is increasing). Asking students more than one question at once might confuse them. In a dialogue, a turn should be grounded in the one before it.

To sum up our analysis of this extract, the teacher exploits her feedback moves to elicit more answers through inviting students to evaluate their views or others' views. This strategy by the teacher goes hand in hand with Dörnyei's (2001) fourth dimension of motivational practice that focuses on motivational feedback and self-assessment. In extract 2 below, the teacher continues the dialogue using various elicitation strategies which involve the students in relating the task to their personal lives and later provoke a sensitive discussion about rejecting the idea of arranged marriages, a topic which is highly sensitive in a conservative society like that of Saudi Arabia.

Extract 2		
562	S?:	Miss
563	T:	Yes
564	S?:	She chose her husband
565	Wi:	>Yes I chose my: urr husband
566	T:	You chose your husband y:ou said I want thiso:ne?
567	Ss:	((laughter))
568	Wi:	We met before (.) urr he said to my parents I want
569		er: your ↑daughter
570	Ss:	((laughter)) ((Overlaps in Arabic))
573	Wi:	Yeah but my parents at first (?) they urr ignored
574		and not urr and not want and er but I come and say
575		I say: .hh I want him: urr I don't want anyone er:
576		an↑other and just I want him
577		((laughter))
690	T:	O:kay (.) a:nyway (.) do you agree: with her dad or
691		do you agree ↓with her?
692	S?:	No
693	S?:	Her dad with her dad
694	T:	↑>Plea:selisten< to e:very↓one (.) th- yes
695	Rh:	Um if my dad er: doesn't like my erhusbander:
696		I will not er choose him
697	S?:	(?)
698	Rh:	Because he know the better for me
699	Lu:	>Yes the first step my [dad]
		((Talk continues))
736	Rf:	↓Miss you have a ↑daughter?
737	T:	Yes ↓yes
738	Rf:	What if your daughter choo:se a man and urr you are
739		not happy you will agree
740	T:	>I: will never let her marry:<
741		((laughters))((Some turns by learners))
746	T:	As far as m- a boy is concerned it's ↓different but
747		as far as a ↑girl is concerned it's more subtle

This extract shows that interactive discussions take place. In line 564, a student introduces a new topic that is related to the main topic. Shifting topics is or even extending them is uncommon phenomena in EFL classroom. The student tells the class a secret about a friend of hers who got married to someone she had known previously. Wi bravely tells the class about her story in a series of extended turns (lines 568-576). It is unusual for learners in a conservative society like Saudi Arabia to talk about their personal experiences that do not fit within the Saudi cultural norms. However, this task was related to the students' lives, as such stories can be seen in real life, on TV and in the newspapers. The students engaged in discussing a real-life problem in the society and tried to think of a solution. The teacher's role here is focused on extending learners' participation by asking them to judge Wi's idea of marriage (line 690). The students take the floor and build on Wi's idea by expressing their disagreement (lines 692-699). The friendly relationship between this teacher and her students encourages one of the students to initiate a personal question to the teacher (line 736)and ask her if she would allow her daughter to marry someone of her own choice (line 738-739) and the teacher responds to the student's question (746-747). In this example, the teacher's traditional role as the source of information has been replaced with being a facilitator. Though the teacher is practicing her role in allocating some turns and making the decision regarding who should talk and who should not, there is a great deal of instances where the students self-select and added to the going on conversation. The students even felt secure enough to initiate a new dyadic cycle and ask the teacher to give her input based on her personal life. To sum up, when the teacher gave up her traditional controlling role, focused on the meaning rather than the form and invited the whole class to be part of the conversation, she succeeded in creating a safe environment for not only more participation but quality one. In extract 2 motivational strategies resulted in more volunteering and extended talk by the students. Relating learning to learners' lives fits under Dörnyei's (2001) second dimension of generating motivation through building positive attitudes towards learning experience. The students' positive attitudes in this paper were obvious in their sustained participation and maintaining the flow of talk. It should be noted here that what encouraged students to participate in active talk in this lesson were the convenient atmosphere of the classroom and topic relatedness to students' lives. As reflected in the data, the relationship between the teacher and her students was friendly which is related to Dörnyei's (2001) first dimension of motivational strategies concerning learning environment. Speaking of topic relatedness to students' lives which constitutes Dörnyei's (2001) second dimension, the topic of arranged marriage was appealing to students and this was obvious in topic shifting.

Conclusions and Suggestions

This paper provides an analysis of how teacher talk can be used effectively as motivational strategies in an EFL classroom. Examples of classroom talk were coded and analysed qualitatively, based on Dörnyei (2001) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) observations of motivational behaviour. It was found that some teacher's utterances, such as inviting students to evaluate what they hear, linking students' contributions and asking referential questions, motivated her students to participate and extend their contributions. Adding to this, task topic and teacher-student rapport were identified as important teacher motivational strategies. Our analysis of teacher-student interaction contributes to existing literature on teacher motivational strategies that are mainly quantitative. On another level, this paper contributes to the small body of available literature on teacher motivational practice in the Saudi context (Alrabai, 2010; Alqahtani, 2016; Alnofaie, 2016). It is hoped that the analysis presented in this paper will help EFL teachers to evaluate their use of motivational strategies. More research studies in the field of teacher motivational practice are needed for more in-depth understanding of this issue.

REFERENCES

Alnofaie, H. 2016. Engaging unmotivated EFL learners in classroom talk. *E- Journal of Advances in Social Sciences*, 2 (5), 360-365. *http://ijasos.ocerintjournals.org/article/view/5000199838*

Alqahtani, S. M. 2016. Motivational strategies and EFL teachers' perceptions: A Saudi survey. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6 (4), 663-674. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0604.02

Alrabai, F. 2010. *The Use of Motivational Strategies in the Saudi EFL Classroom*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle, Australia.

Alrabai, F. 2014. A model of foreign language anxiety in the Saudi EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 82–101. doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n7p82

Al-Saraj, T. 2014. Foreign language anxiety in female Arabs learning English: case studies. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8 (3), 257-278. doi: 10.1080/17501229.2013.837911

Cheng, H.-F. and 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

Dewaele, J.M and Al-Saraj, T. 2015. Foreign language classroom anxiety of Arab learners of English: The effect of personality, linguistic and sociobiographical variables. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 5 (2), 205-228. doi:10.14746/ssllt.2015.5.2.2 http://www.ssllt.amu.edu.pl

Dörnyei, Z. 2000. Motivation in action: Towards a process-oriented conceptualisation of student motivation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 70 (4), 519-538.doi: 10.1348/000709900158281

Dornyei, Z. 2001. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511667343

Dörnyei, Z. & Csizér, K. 1998. Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research,* 2 (3), 203-229. doi.org/10.1177/136216889800200303

Gardner, R.C. and Lambert, W.E. 1972. Motivational variables in second language acquisition. In R.C. Gardner & W. Lambert (eds.) *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. (pp. 119-216). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Guilloteaux, M. J. & Dornyei, Z. 2008. Motivating language learners: ¨ A classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42 (1), 55–77. doi:10.1002/j.1545-7249.2008.tb00207.x

Ruesch, A., Bown, J. & Dewey, D. P. 2012. Student and teacher perceptions of motivational strategies in the foreign language classroom. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching,* 6 (1), 15–27.doi:10.1080/17501229.2011.562510

Sugita, M., and O. Takeuchi, 2010. What can teachers do to motivate their students? A classroom research on motivational strategy use in Japanese EFL context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 4 (1): 21–35.doi:10.1080/17501220802450470

Wong, R. 2013. An investigation of strategies for student motivation in the Chinese EFL context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8 (2),132-154 doi: 10.1080/17501229.2013.777449

Appendix

Read the statements below, put them in a logical order. Decide if Maryam is going to run away from her husband.

1. Maryam is a 35 year old woman. She is married and has got 5 children.
2. Maryam husband is abusive. He beats her every day and keeps saying "I hate you! My mother forced me to marry you".
3. Maryam works as a house maid in the morning while her husband is in bed. The money her husband gains is not enough for the family.
4. Maryam works for a nice old lady who lives in her luxurious villa. The lady is pleased with Maryam.
5. Though Maryam's husband treats her badly, he is nice to his children. He never beats them.
6. Maryam likes the idea of running away from her husband, but she still fears her husband as she knows that he is a brutal man.
7. Maryam's husband is a taxi driver. He works at nights and returns home early morning.
8. One day, the old lady noticed some scars on Maryam's arms. Maryam told the lady for the first time about her sufferings with her husband. The old lady felt sorry for Maryam and offered her help. She suggested Maryam to run away with her children from the husband and they can stay with her in her villa.
9. The husband does not know that his wife works as a house maid in the morning because he wakes up late in the afternoon.

****