

**A STUDY OF TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS AND
IMPLEMENTATIONS ON THE USE OF MOTIVATIONAL
STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR
PRIMARY CHILDREN IN HEZHANG COUNTRY SECONDARY
SCHOOL IN CHINA**

**Jianxin Liu¹
Suwattana Eamorphan²**

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Abstract: This study determined the teacher's perceptions and frequency of implementing motivational strategies in English language instruction for primary children in Hezhang Country Secondary School in China. There were two research objectives in this thesis:

1. To identify the teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters.
2. To identify the frequency of the teachers' implementations of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters.

There were 61 primary English teachers at Hezhang country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China, who participated in this study. The research instruments used a questionnaire and structured interview form. The findings showed that (1) the teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters were high, and (2) the frequency of the teachers' implementations was also high. The interview form supported all findings.

It indicated that teachers think motivational strategies in English language instruction are necessary, mainly implementing them in English teaching. This research study has offered valuable suggestions and recommendations on the motivational strategy for this school.

¹ M.A English Language Teaching, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand. 1932401905@qq.com

² Ph. D. Associate Professor, Dean, Graduate School of Human Science, Assumption University, Thailand. drsuwattana@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Motivation refers to the decision to pursue or avoid any activity or goal and the degree of effort made in this respect (Gardner, 2005, p. 3). In contrast, motivation can also be seen as a characteristic or feature of an individual's personality. Using this in his opinion, Gardner also claims that highly motivated students perform better and bring more effort. They are objective-oriented and positive.

As such, the role of English is vital for the world now. To reiterate the importance of language in the 21st century, learning two languages from a young age is becoming a fashionable trend. According to Hadjikyriakou and Englezaki (2004), there are many advantages when children start learning a second language at a very young age.

Many researchers claim that teachers play a crucial role in improving and maintaining students' motivation (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Dörnyei, 2008; Lai & Ting, 2013; Loima & Vibulphol, 2014). According to Niemiec & Ryan 2009; Reeve, 2009, teachers can promote or suppress students' natural curiosity about learning.

In addition, teachers taught students English in traditional ways in China. The Chinese level of English proficiency is also poor relative to other Asian countries (e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore), according to Bolton (2008). Therefore, this study must give more valuable suggestions and recommendations for the difficulties in teaching and learning the English language in China, especially in primary and secondary schools.

Research Objectives

There are two objectives:

1. To identify the teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters in Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China.
2. To identify the frequency of the teachers' implementations of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters in Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China.

Literature Review

Incentives and Goals

Learning motivation is a direct cause and motivating power that promotes

learning. Research from Kimura, Nakata & Okumura (2001) has shown that learning motivation dominates the learning actions of the learners, what they want to know, and how much they want to learn. Motivation is the main component of effective language acquisition, so it can be considered a driving force that controls or directs the behaviors and activities toward something (Gardner, 1985).

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

According to Gardner and Smythe (1975), integrative and instrumental motivations are two critical components in language learning. Integrative motivation refers to a 'positive attitude towards the target language group and the integration capacity of that group,' which occurs when learners focus on language culture and want to associate with the language/culture of speakers. While instrumental motivation refers to the function of language learning, focus on some specific reasons, such as passing examinations, gaining rewards, avoiding punishment, or getting a better job.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), motivation is intrinsic and extrinsic. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory suggests that orientations can be divided broadly into two categories, including intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. (e.g. Noels et al., 2000; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999). Ryan's (1995) discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation indicates that it is reasonable to consider these constructs as orientations. Motivational Strategies in language Instruction.

Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction

Motivational methods for the English language classroom are found in the second language motivational study framework and practice in the classroom. According to Dörnyei (2010), Ushioda (2003), Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), motivational strategies can be defined as deliberately implemented instructional interventions by L2 teachers to encourage, improve and sustain student-motivated behavior and protect it from competing (and therefore potentially distracting) patterns in action. Ten micro-strategies comprise 48 strategies from Cheng and Dörnyei (2007).

This is a relatively complete and systematic motivational strategy. Many scholars use this motivational strategy for research. They are different in a different context, of course. This study will use these motivational strategies to explore if they are essential and often used in a Chinese primary school.

Teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies

The use of teachers' motivational approach successfully improves students' performance in language learning (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). The degree of motivation is the critical factor that leads students to success. Hedge (2001) and Nakata (2006) state that teachers are responsible for making the learning environment better for students. It proves that teachers are the most of the reasons that influence students to learn or not to learn, enjoy or not enjoy (Usman, Silviyanti & Marzatillah, 2016), and some teachers can inspire students to enjoy learning. Still, some teachers can upset students to learn.

Young learners in English language learning

Young learners can learn a language through different circumstances; they can enjoy themselves and understand by having fun. For instance, when they want themselves in an activity, they get entirely focused, and wish to carry on with it (Moon 2000:6), while; he said that "if young learners enjoy the learning activities, they will become more involved and this may increase their desire to continue." Musthafa (2010) argues that, unlike adults who have a long attention span, children only have an attention span of fewer than 15 minutes. Knowing those characteristics of children is an essential requirement for the teacher in creating effective instruction.

Conceptual Framework

This inquiry aims to survey the teachers' perceptions and implementation of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters in Hezhang country secondary primary school, Guizhou, China. According to the ten strategy clusters, the researcher intends to identify the teachers' perceptions and implement motivational strategies.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework

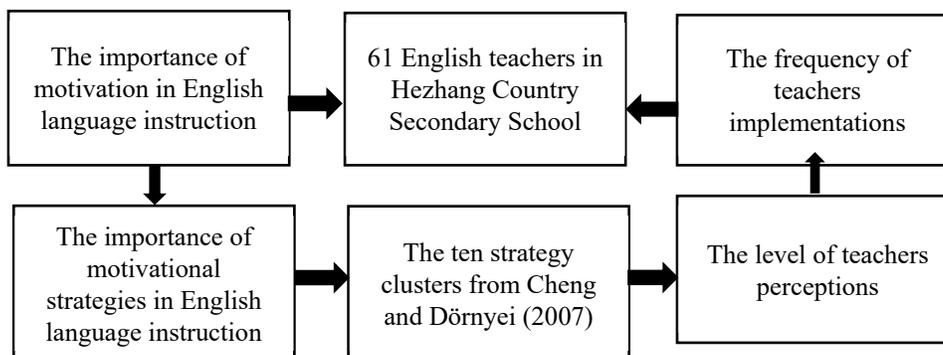


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Method

The research employed a qualitative and quantitative methodology, which was conducted by questionnaire and interview form, aimed at studying the teachers' perceptions of the level of teachers' perceptions and the frequency of teachers implementations in the motivational strategies of the primary children of the primary children in Guizhou province in China. Means and standard deviations data analysis and content analysis would be used to determine the level of teachers' perception of the importance and frequency of usage of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction for primary school. The main targeted population of this research was 61 English teachers from Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School during the academic year 2019-2020.

Instruments

This study has two instruments: a questionnaire and an interview form. An adapted version of an existing questionnaire by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) based on a systematic overview of the Dörnyei (2001b) motivational techniques was utilized as the study's instrument to determine quantitative findings. The questionnaire includes the “*importance*” and “*frequency*” of motivational strategies in English language instruction. The “*importance*” identified the teachers' perceptions, and the “*frequency*” identified the teachers' implementations of motivational strategies in English language instruction. The questions of the interview form were based on the questionnaire, which aimed to identify more detailed ideas and information about the teachers' perceptions and implementations of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction. The reliability review of the ten strategy clusters showed that the mean Cronbach Alpha was above 0.70. The teachers were required to reflect on their perceptions and frequency of implementations of motivational strategies in English language instruction by choosing one answer that best matched their perceptions, both important and frequency. The questions used a 5-point Likert scale. Table 1 shows the mean score and interpretation of the questionnaire.

Table 1. *Score and Interpretation for survey questions*

| Score | Range | Importance | Frequency | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 5 | 4.51 – 5.00 | Very Important | Very Often | Very high |
| 4 | 3.51 – 4.50 | Important | Often | High |
| 3 | 2.51 – 3.50 | Fairly important | Sometimes | Moderate |
| 2 | 1.51 – 2.50 | Not important | Rarely | Low |
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.50 | Not at all important | Hardly ever | Very low |

Source: Analyzing and Interpreting Data from Likert-type Scales, by Sullivan and Artino, (2013).

Findings

Findings from Research Objective One

This research objective identified the teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters in Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China.

Findings from the questionnaire of objective one

Table 2. *Teachers perceptions of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction (importance)*

| Dimension | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Present tasks properly | 4.33 | 0.80 | High |
| Familiarize learners with L2-related value | 4.20 | 0.75 | High |
| Make the learning tasks stimulating | 4.15 | 0.68 | High |
| Proper teacher behavior | 4.14 | 0.69 | High |
| Increase learners' goal-orientedness | 4.10 | 0.61 | High |
| Promote learners' self-confidence | 4.04 | 0.54 | High |
| Promote learner autonomy | 4.00 | 0.70 | High |
| Recognize students effort | 3.95 | 0.72 | High |
| Creating a pleasant classroom climate | 3.60 | 0.56 | High |
| Promote groups cohesiveness and group | 3.59 | 0.76 | High |
| Total | 4.01 | 0.68 | High |

Table 2 shows that the overall mean score of the teachers' perceptions of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction was 4.01, and the standard deviation was .68, which was interpreted as high. There were ten strategy clusters for motivational strategies, and the research findings showed each of their total mean scores. And the mean score of ten factors: *Present tasks properly* was the highest with $M=4.33$ and $SD=.54$, *Familiarize learners with L2-related* was in second rating with $M=4.20$ and $SD=.75$, *Proper teacher behavior* was in third rating with $M=4.15$ and $SD=.68$, *Promote groups cohesiveness and group* was in fourth rating by $M=4.14$ and $SD=.69$, *Increase learners' goal-orientedness* was in fifth rating with $M=4.10$ and $SD=.61$, *Promote learners' self-confidence* was in six ratings by $M=4.04$ and $SD=.72$, *Promote learner autonomy* was in seventh rating with $M=4.00$ and $SD=.80$, *Recognize students effort* was in eighth rating with $M=3.95$ and $SD=.56$, *Create a pleasant classroom climate* was in ninth rating with $M=3.60$ and $SD=.70$, *Make the learning tasks stimulating* was lowest in the rating with $M=3.59$ and $SD=.76$, all of the clusters were interpreted as high. It showed

that the ten strategy clusters are essential for English teachers in English language teaching. It determined that teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in English language teaching in Hezhang Country Secondary School, Guizhou, China were high.

Findings of Interview Forms from Objective One

For question one, *which one is the most important of the ten strategies? Why?*

Proper teacher behavior, present tasks properly, familiarize learners with L2-related values, promote learners self-confidence, increase learners' goal-orientedness encourage learner autonomy.

Explaining:

The answers indicated that *proper teacher behavior promotes learners' self-confidence, increases learners' goal-orientedness, creates a pleasant classroom climate, familiarizes learners with L2-related values, presents tasks appropriately, and promotes learner autonomy* can be most important in teachers' perception. Because teachers' perceptions consider that if you want good students, you should be a good teacher first. Thus, teachers should show care for them, and interest, confidence, atmosphere, goals, tasks can motivate students to learn well. So teachers should encourage students appropriately, and with self-confidence, students will overcome the difficulty in learning. Besides, clarify students' learning objectives to make a special effort. So most strategy clusters can be most important in selected English teachers' perceptions.

For question two, *Do you think which one is the most not at all important of the ten strategies? Why?*

Promote groups cohesiveness and group

Explaining:

The answers indicated that *promoting cohesiveness and group can be the least important*. Because they think that young learners are still young, they cannot learn automatically in groups without teachers' supervision, which can easily play or talk to each other rather than learn. So only one strategy is not very important in teachers' perceptions. However, the teacher can facilitate students to learn in groups. Motivational strategies cannot be discarded. Teachers have to use different strategies in different situations and for varying levels of students.

Findings from Objective Two

This research objective identified the frequency of the teachers' implementations of motivational strategies in English language instruction

according to the ten strategy clusters in Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China. This research objective was determined using the Mean and Standard Deviation for the questionnaire and Content Analysis for the interview form.

Findings from the questionnaire of objective two

Table 3. *Teachers implementation of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction (frequency)*

| Dimension | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Proper Teacher Behavior | 4.15 | .70 | High |
| Recognize Students Effort | 4.13 | .58 | High |
| Promote Learners' Self-confidence | 3.87 | .85 | High |
| Creating a pleasant classroom climate | 3.87 | 1.00 | High |
| Familiarize learners with L2-related value | 3.80 | .93 | High |
| Present Tasks Properly | 3.75 | .83 | High |
| Make the learning tasks stimulating | 3.74 | .55 | High |
| Promote Groups Cohesiveness | 3.73 | .55 | High |
| Increase Learners' Goal-orientedness | 3.71 | .71 | High |
| Promote Learner Autonomy | 3.70 | .45 | High |
| Total | 3.84 | .71 | High |

Table 3 shows that the overall mean score of the teachers' perceptions of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction was 3.84, and the deviation was .68, interpreted as high. There were ten strategy clusters for motivational strategies, and the research findings showed each of their total mean scores. And the mean score of ten factors was: *Proper Teacher Behavior* with M=4.15 and SD= .70 was in the first rating, *Recognize Students Effort* with M=4.13 and SD= .58 was in the second rating, *Promote Learners' Self-confidence* with M=3.87 and SD= .85, and *Create a Pleasant Classroom* by M=3.87 and SD=1.00 were both in third rating, *Familiarize Learners with L2-related Value* was in fourth rating by M=3.80 and SD= .93, *Present Tasks Properly* with M=3.75 and SD= .83 was in fifth rating, *Make the Learning Tasks Stimulating* was in sixth rating with M=3.74 and SD= .55, *Promote Groups Cohesiveness* was in seventh rating with M=3.73 and SD= .55, *Increase Learners' Goal-orientedness* was in eighth rating with M=3.71 and SD= .71, *Promote Learner Autonomy* was in ninth rating with M=3.70 and SD= .45, which all were interpreted as high. It means the frequency of teachers' implementations of motivational strategies in English language teaching in Hezhang Country Secondary School, Guizhou, China was high.

Findings from interview forms of objective two

Which one do you often use for question three *in your language teaching of the ten strategies? Why?*

Proper Teacher Behavior and Recognize Students Efforts.

Explaining:

The answers from teachers indicated that *Proper Teacher Behavior, Recognize Students Effort, and Promote Learners' Self-confidence* was used very often in English language instruction by selected teachers. The teacher has to be a good example for students. Young learners are particularly good at imitation, so teachers greatly influence students. Then teachers have to encourage students to improve their self-confidence in learning. Teachers should attach importance to students' self-confidence; young learners are needed to be encouraged all the time.

For question four *which one do you use least often in your language teaching for the ten strategies? Why?*

Promote Learner Autonomy.

Explaining:

The answers from teachers indicated that *Selected teachers seldom used to promote Learner Autonomy*. Because it's difficult for students to involve in course designing and organizing group learning by themselves, they are still kids. Teachers have to supervise and guide them and motivate them using several strategies. Thus, *Promote Learner Autonomy* is not a proper strategy for young learners.

Discussion

The findings of questions 1 and 2 illustrated that both teachers' perceptions and the frequency of teachers' implementations were high in using motivational strategies in English language instruction according to the ten strategy clusters from the questionnaire and interview form findings. Motivation plays a vital role in forming and developing an individual's personality (Gardner, 2005). It was found that motivated students are much better at academic tasks than those who are less motivated (Gardner, 2005). The skills necessary for the 21st century can be attained through motivating lessons. This study achieved similar findings in that all categories of both constructs were identified in the school in China (Dorney & Cheng, 2007).

The level of teachers' perceptions of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction

The total mean score was interpreted as high according to the research findings. And the content analysis of the interview form showed that most of

the motivational strategies were important in their perceptions. This indicated that the ten strategy clusters were positive for teachers in English teaching.

The frequency of teachers' implementations of the use of motivational strategies in English language instruction

The total mean score was interpreted as high according to the research findings. And the content analysis of the interview showed that most of the motivational strategies were often used by selected teachers. This indicated that the ten strategy clusters were positive for teachers in English teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers' perceptions and the frequency of implementation of motivational strategies in English language instruction at Hezhang Country Secondary Primary School, Guizhou, China, were high. It indicated that most of the motivational strategies were critical in teachers' perceptions, and most of the motivational strategies were used often by teachers in English language instruction.

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