The Effect of Teachers’ Motivational Strategies on EFL Learners’ Achievement

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Declaration

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Saleh Alqahtani
(Signed): ………………………………………………………………………. (Candidate)

16 April 2015
Dedication

To my father and mother,
whose prayers and patience have given me the hope
and strength to pursue my goals.

To my wife (Jawaher Alqahtani) and three sons (Mohammed, Omar, and Osama)
who gave me the courage and love to accomplish my achievement.
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Abstract

Motivation has been found to be a key factor in learning a foreign/second language (L2), and motivation theories have been fine-tuned and tested for the last 60 years. However, empirical investigations into teacher practice as an antecedent to learner motivation, and as influence on L2 achievement, are only a recent trend. L2 research has already established a more or less uniform ranking of motivation strategies across cultural contexts. However, there are few empirical investigations focusing on the effectiveness of the motivational strategies in the classroom on the learner’s proficiency measured with objective L2 tests. The present study is, to our best knowledge, only the first of this kind in L2 motivation research. The study was conducted to investigate the effects of motivational strategies on learner motivation and proficiency in English language classes in Saudi universities, and is quasi-experimental by design. The study was conducted in two stages. At a first stage of the study, 117 English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers with varying demographic characteristics (age, qualifications, teaching experience, and the like) rated 55 motivational micro strategies on a 5-point scale, which were then grouped into 10 macro strategies in accordance with previous research.

At the second stage, the participants were 189 learners divided almost equally into two groups (experimental vs. control) and 10 EFL teachers. Participating learners received EFL instruction for two months as a part of their education. Four instruments were used to assess teacher motivational practices and learner motivation levels before and after treatment: a student motivation survey; a classroom observation protocol; post-evaluation lesson; and, an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test as an objective measure of the learners’ English language proficiency.

Inferential statistical analyses (e.g. ANOVA and ANCOVA) were applied on the collected data. The findings revealed that the use of classroom motivational strategies by teachers led to an increase in learners’ motivation, in the learners’ self-evaluation of English language proficiency, and in the learners’ objectively-measured proficiency. Correlation and regression analysis revealed that employing motivational strategies positively affected teacher motivational practice, which in turn promoted
learner motivation and subsequent learner achievement in the experimental group. The results may have implications for teacher training and theory development.
List of the Thesis
Abbreviation

L2: second/foreign language
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESOL: English Speakers of Other Languages
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
MOE: Ministry of Education
SDT: Self-Determination Theory