Saudi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of motivational strategies

Eman Alshehri
University of Salford

Abstract

This paper considers Saudi EFL teachers' and students' understandings of the motivational strategies used by EFL teachers to promote their students' motivation for L2 learning. Previous studies of motivational strategies focus on either EFL teachers or students, and the relationship between teachers' use of motivational strategies and students' L2 achievements (for example, Cheng and Dörnyei 2007; Bernaus and Gardner 2008; Deniz 2010). Little research has, however, investigated both teachers' and students' perceptions of these strategies. The purpose of this study is to examine the potential mismatches in viewpoint between students and teachers regarding motivational strategies in the Saudi context. This paper intends to discuss the findings of one data set, which is a part of a larger doctoral study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six EFL teachers and five EFL students in three higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The resulting data was thematically analysed. The analysis shows that although certain similarities exist between teacher and student perceptions, there are also many significant differences between the views of the two groups.
Keywords: L2 motivation, motivational strategies, EFL Saudi context

1. Introduction

L2 motivation is an effective factor in second language acquisition (Gardener and Lambert 1972; Crookes and Schmidt 1991; and Dörnyei 1994). Dörnyei (2005, p.65) states that "…without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long terms goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement". Therefore, it is important for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers to use motivational strategies to promote their students' motivation in the L2 classroom as this might lead to better second language (L2) learning. To better understand the effective motivational strategies that should be used in the English language classrooms, this study will examine the views of EFL teachers and students about the importance of motivational strategies which EFL teachers used/ should use during English classes.

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2. Literature review

A number of research studied L2 motivation to explore its complex nature and the way in which it affects the L2 learning process. During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, the social psychological approach (which was influenced by the work of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) dominated L2 motivation research. This approach integrated social and individual psychology to describe L2 motivation which plays a key role in mastering a target language. They viewed L2 motivation as a primary force to improve or hinder L2 learning. In the 1990s, there was a shift from a social psychological view of motivation to a more educational and cognitive one. This shift can be attributed to the need to expand L2 motivation research to incorporate classroom-oriented variables and motivational factors that are more relevant to language teachers (Crookes and Schmidt 1991; Dörnyei 1994; Oxford and Shearin 1994). These studies stress the importance of learning environment as an L2 motivational factor. As a result of the new research approach of L2 motivation, studies were more relevant to teaching practice and the L2 classroom, and incorporated more classroom-oriented variables and factors relevant to language teachers.

The development in L2 motivational theories led to the introduction of "the process model of L2 motivation" by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) which was later elaborated upon by Dörnyei (2000, 2001a). This model of L2 motivation attempts to account for the dynamic and fluctuating nature of L2 motivation in the classroom whether during one class, or over a period of time (Dörnyei 2000 and 2001a). In addition, it aims to synthesize in a unified framework the previous approaches investigating L2 motivation. Despite the strengths of the process model of L2 motivation, it has some limitations such as the difficulty in identifying accurate boundaries of each actional stage, and therefore, the difficulty in isolating an individual's actions which are preceded and followed by actions (Dörnyei 2005). These

limitations lead to the development of a new theory to understand L2 motivation which is "L2 Motivational Self System", proposed by Dörnyei 2005. This theory aims to increase the understanding of individual variations in L2 learning.

As L2 motivation is recognized as one of the main factors of L2 learning success, strategies that are used to motivate L2 learners were viewed as an important aspect of L2 motivation. Motivational strategies (sometimes referred to as motivational teaching practices) are techniques used by EFL teachers to promote and maintain students' motivation to learn English. They are defined as "those motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect" (Dörnyei 2001b, p.28). The importance of L2 motivational strategies has been highlighted by many researchers such as Dörnyei (1994), Oxford and Shearin (1994) and William and Burden (1997). Dörnyei (2001a, p.52) pointed out that studying what motivates students in language classrooms might be "the most pressing question related to motivation". This assumes a need for studying the motivational strategies that should be used by EFL teachers in the language classroom. Many researchers, such as Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) and Deniz (2010), have answered this call by studying the way in which L2 learners can be motivated, In addition, there are studies that have investigated the relationship between the use of motivational strategies by teachers and L2 learners' achievements. Examples of such studies are those by Bernaus and Gardner (2008), Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009), Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) and Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2011). The previous studies suggest a number of motivational strategies that should be used by EFL teachers, and show that the motivational strategies used by L2 teachers can increase students' motivation which leads to a positive effect on their L2 achievement.

It is important to highlight that although previous studies point to the importance of a number of motivational teaching practices, these studies are conducted in specific contexts, such as Hungary, and Taiwan, and their findings might be valid in their contexts. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998, p.224) assert: "we cannot say with certainty that the ten commandments [motivational strategies] are valid in every cultural, ethnolinguistic and institutional setting. There is clearly much room for further research in this respect." Indeed, teaching practices which might be motivational in one context might be seen as less useful in another context. Each context has its own variables, such as learning environments, learning resources, teaching materials and ideologies. These variables play a key role in affecting participants' beliefs about the importance of motivational strategies. Furthermore, previous studies have elicited data from either EFL teachers or EFL students. However, it is believed that researchers would gain better understanding of motivational strategies when examining both EFL teachers and students' opinion. Therefore, this study will address this issue by examining the importance of motivational strategies from the perspective of both, EFL teachers and students. In particular, the current study addresses the following research questions:

- What teaching practices do students find motivational in EFL classrooms?
- What teaching practices do EFL teachers believe are motivating for students?

3. Methods

3.1.The context of the study

This study will be conducted at three higher education institutions (HEIs) in Saudi Arabia. These HEIs establish a Preparatory Year Programme (PYP) as part of their degree curriculum; this programme is the first obligatory year for all students who are admitted to study at such universities. One of the major aims of this programme is improving the English skills of students; therefore, students receive an intensive general English language course

ranging from 17 to 19 hours per week. The level of the students when they first start studying in the PYP is between beginner and pre-intermediate, and students have to achieve at least intermediate level in English by the end of the PYP.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study were EFL teachers and EFL students who are studying in the preparatory year, in the three participating universities. The total number of participants is eleven female[12] participants, including six EFL teachers and five EFL students. The native language of all the participants is Arabic.

3.3. Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to gain information about the motivational strategies which are or should be used in the language classroom, in the context of Saudi Arabia. The aim of these exploratory interviews is to investigate the motivational strategies which are or should be used during the teaching and learning processes within an English language classroom. Interview guidelines are attached in appendix A.

3.4. Procedures

The interviews were conducted in the participants' place of education or employment. Interviews were conducted individually; they were face to face and recorded. In addition, they were conducted in Arabic to allow the interviewees to express themselves more clearly, but two teachers preferred to be interviewed in English. The purpose of the interviews was explained to participants and they signed a consent form prior to the commencement of the interview – see appendix B. The average length of each interview was about 30 minutes and the following table shows the duration of each interview.

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[12] Single sex education is adopted in all schools and universities in Saudi Arabia.

Table 1: Interview duration:

University name	Participants	Interview's duration
University A	Student	28:54
	Teacher	21:23
	Teacher	27:36
University B	Student	23:43
	Student	50:39
	Teacher	25:43
	Teacher	37:14
College C	Student	37:10
	Student	14:28
	Teacher	35:13
	Teachers	37:17
Total	5 students 6 teachers	5:39:20

3.5.Analysis

The interviews were transcribed, coded, and translated. Then, the qualitative data were thematically analysed, and the themes related to the motivational strategies used in the language classroom were grouped and then classified. Dörnyei's (2001b and 2008) conceptualisation of motivational strategies was used as a framework when analysing the motivational strategies which were discussed during the interviews.

4. Result

This section is structured according to 13 broad themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis. Eleven themes were discussed by both EFL teachers and students about motivating teaching practices and two themes were discussed by EFL teachers. It should be noted that there is some overlap between the different themes, although each theme is discussed separately to make it easier to follow. For example, the use of some strategies discussed in the theme 'Task' might be related to the theme 'Classroom atmosphere' since using motivating tasks resulted in a pleasant classroom environment which promoted student motivation. The next table shows the themes of motivating teaching practices perceived by EFL teachers and students. After the table, discussion will follow.

Table 2: Themes that emerged from the data

Themes of motivating teaching practices discussed by EFL teachers and students
- Teacher behaviour   - Classroom atmosphere   - Tasks   - Group work   - Teaching materials   - L2 integrative and instrumental values   - Goal setting   - Learner strategies   - Encouragement   - Feedback   - L2 ideal self
Themes of motivating teaching practices discussed by EFL teachers
Learner autonomy   Rewards

- Teacher behaviour

Motivational strategies related to 'teacher behaviour' were highly regarded by both EFL teachers and students. Teachers spoke about being a role model for their students, building a

good relationship with their students, sharing personal experiences with students and building a mutual respect. Teacher 3 talked about this in a general way; she stated:

> *I focus on establishing a good relationship with students as I feel this strategy helps to motivate them.* (Teacher 3)

She also pointed to the importance of mutual respect between teachers and students:

> *I think teachers should respect students…she should think of herself as their role model. After I start teaching, I pay more attention to my attitudes and lifestyles, you know, I feel I become a role model for my students, therefore I pay attention to everything I do.* (Teacher 3)

EFL students agreed with this and also acknowledged the importance of 'teacher behaviour' in motivating them to learn English. They emphasised several points which go under the umbrella 'teacher behaviour'. They described the positive effect of having a kind English teacher; for example, Student 1 explained how her English teacher motivated them by being kind:

> *My teacher is kind. When we do a mistake in class, she says:*
> *'It is ok, if you cannot do it now, you can do it next time with practice'. By doing that, she always motivates us.* (Student 1)

Furthermore, students pointed out that teachers should recognise the weaknesses and the strengths of her students in English, and she should also show her enthusiasm for English teaching, should act as a role model, and she should be ready to answer students' academic questions. Students also highlighted the importance of having a good relationship with their teachers. They mentioned some examples of how teachers build a good rapport with students, such as by greeting them, and listening to their problems. Student 2 commented:

> *When a teacher comes to class, she should say, for example, 'Good morning' and 'How was your weekend?' and by the end of the class 'Have a nice weekend' and 'See you tomorrow'. I mean, the*

> *relationship between a teacher and a student can be as friends but*
> *with respect...teacher should encourage students to speak with her if*
> *they are facing problems, whether these problems relate to studying*
> *or personal.* (Student 2)

From the above account of the EFL teachers' and students' views regarding the role of 'teacher behaviour', it appears that both groups stress the importance of this strategy in motivating students. The teachers and students acknowledged that teachers should have a good relationship with their students, be role models, and respect each other. However, students elaborated by expressing that having a 'kind' teacher motivates them, and that the teachers should care about their academic and personal problems. According to the survey conducted by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), teacher behaviour appeared to be the most important motivational strategy for EFL teachers. The results of the interviews clearly mirror these findings. A classroom environment based on respect and consideration of the students' personal needs is clearly one of the strongest motivational strategies in EFL learning.

- Pleasant atmosphere in the classroom

The teachers and students recognised the significance of creating a 'pleasant classroom atmosphere' to promote students' motivation during English classes. The teachers appeared to be more aware of the importance of this strategy than students and they expressed in more detail the way in which they create an enjoyable teaching environment. For example, they explained that they use interesting exercises at the beginning of the class such as puzzles and games. During the class and to break the routine of the class, they discussed topics related to students, used learning technologies, used different kinds of tasks and gave students a break for five to ten minutes. Teacher 7 commented on using several tasks during the class:

> *I try to use different tasks during the class, as there are students who*
> *prefer to write the answers on their notebooks, and other students*
> *prefer to write the answers on the boards.* (Teacher 7)

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One of the teachers stated that she occasionally does classes outside the classroom to create a pleasant teaching environment:

> *I try to take their opinion about where we should take classes. Students sometimes ask to have classes outside their classroom, so we take our class in the university courtyard.* (Teacher 4)

As for the students, they talked about the 'creating pleasant classroom' as a motivating strategy; however, they did not speak about this point in detail. Basically, they spoke about some of the strategies mentioned previously by teachers such as starting the lesson by using interesting activities and breaking the class routine by showing a part of a movie related to the lesson and doing some listening exercises. Student 1 explained the reasons why EFL teachers use interesting opening activities:

> *A teacher must start the lesson by using funny things. One of our teachers uses this technique and it was really interesting…and I felt it was useful and we were active in that class.* (Student 1)

It is interesting to note that the teachers give more importance to creating a pleasant classroom atmosphere which they are in control of, and plan lesson activities to motivate the students. Students often take this for granted as they are not aware of the planning the teacher has undertaken. Both the students and teachers agreed it is important as a motivating strategy, but the teachers were more aware of the importance of such strategy. The students focus on the amusing start to a lesson which is designed to attract their attention and make the lesson fun, whereas the teachers focus on the class as a whole, creating activities to motivate the students throughout. This finding is in line with the results achieved by previous researchers, such as Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) and Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), who found that the

importance of the classroom climate as a motivational strategy was placed highly by EFL teachers.

- Tasks

EFL teachers and students pointed to the positive effect of strategies related to the theme 'Task' on students' motivation. However, teachers appeared more interested in this theme as they spoke strongly about its impact on their students' motivation. Teachers indicated the use of different types of tasks during classes to promote and maintain students' motivation. For example, they used games, puzzles, role plays, and using authentic materials such as films and videos in English. Teacher 4 commented on using puzzles:

> *To motivate students, I try to use motivating tasks...for example, I bought some puzzles related to English language...I can see them motivated while trying to solve the puzzles.* (Teacher 4)

Furthermore, one teacher stated that she encouraged students to share their writing on Twitter and Facebook. She also asserted that she explained to the students the reasons behind doing some tasks in the class in order to motivate them.

The students agreed with the teacher about the use of authentic tasks in class such as films, as then a teacher can ask the students to write the words that they do not understand. Student 8 stated:

> *She can play a film in the class, she can ask us to write any unclear word, or she can ask us to write a summary of the film.* (Student 8)

In summary, it is clear that the teachers view the tasks as a strong motivator for the students, and it is understandable that teachers give more importance to the tasks set as they have an active role in the delivery of the task topic, whereas students appeared to be more passive as they only do the tasks they are given. For students it is more important to do something that

is enjoyable, such as watching a film, perhaps without the same understanding of the purpose of the task and its learning outcome.

- Group work

All the participants mentioned the role of 'group work' in motivating students during English classes. However, the teachers and students appeared to perceive 'group work' differently. The teachers focused on group work during activities such as doing posters, competitions, and role plays. The students, on the other hand, gave more examples of strategies involved in group work, such as going on trips and joining extracurricular clubs.

Teachers 3 and 11 agreed that using group work had some advantages, Teacher 3 stated:

> *Group work helps students with a low level of English. Groups should consist of an excellent student, average student, and weak student. The excellent student will help the weak and the average students will go in between. Teachers should monitor students when working in a group to make sure that not only one student does the whole work.*
> (Teacher 3)

From the above quotations, it can be concluded that the main advantages of using group work are to help weak students, and to promote cooperation between groups. As mentioned earlier, the students talked about group work strategies including organising class trips, joining extracurricular clubs, and performing group work during activities. Students also explained some of the benefits of doing group work in English classes:

> *To motivate students, the teacher can divide the class into groups. When you work in a group it is better than working individually, because if I have the wrong information, my friend might correct it…so, I get the correct information and I learn more.* (Student 5)

However, one of the students argued that group work has a drawback:

> *The group work depends on the students. Sometimes when a teacher*
> *puts an excellent student with a weak student, the excellent student*
> *carries out the whole work. So, the good group work depends mainly*
> *on the students who work with you.* (Student 8)

The students agreed with the teachers that group work has advantages such as sharing information. At the same time, one student pointed to one of the disadvantages of group work which is that the student with the highest level of L2 in the group will have to do the whole task.

It is clear that group work is seen as a motivational tool by the teacher, but this may not be the case for the student, as the more confident students may take over and leave the weaker student feeling demotivated.

- Teaching materials

All teachers noted the importance of using relevant curricula in motivating their students. To achieve this strategy, they used different methods, such as building the curriculum based on the students' needs and including extra teaching materials relating to students' everyday experience. Teacher 4 summarised:

> *The books, which are used in teaching, do not help sometimes because*
> *they include old topics which are not suitable and attractive for this*
> *generation. Therefore, I use extra materials in teaching, such as a*
> *newspaper article about something that happened recently.* (Teacher 4)

As for students, only one student discussed the importance of relating the teaching materials to students' experiences. She argued:

> *They should give us examples from our everyday experiences. For*
> *example, when we study a new word...to know how to use this*
> *word...the teacher should give us an example from our everyday life.*
> (Student 2)

Here we see that the teachers give more importance to the planning of the class keeping the students' needs in mind. For learning to take place, the teaching materials should be relevant to the students' interests and needs. Chambers (1999, p.37) confirmed this point: "If the teacher is to motivate pupils to learn, then relevance has to be the red thread permeating activities". The students' focus is more on the practicality of using the given language than in the setting. For example, as it appears in the previous quotation of student 2, the student wants to know how a word is used in a natural way. Understanding the use of a word in context is extremely important for motivation because if a student learns a new word, but not how to use it then this is pointless. McCombs and Whisler (1997, p.38) pointed out that "Educators think students do not care, while the students tell us they do care about learning but are not getting what they need".

- Integrative and instrumental values of L2

During the interviews, the EFL teachers and students suggested some motivational strategies related to the 'integrative and instrumental values of L2'. The teachers included authentic teaching materials such as songs and movies. In addition, they insisted on using L2 during the class and they explained the practical benefits of L2 learning to the students:

> *We are doing this because we need to… we need all the resources and all the information that is coming up in English. So, um, we are studying the language in order to be up to date, know what's going on.* (Teacher 6)

The students agreed that teachers should remind students of the benefits of L2 and should avoid using L1 in the English classroom. They also added two important strategies which are encouraging students to read English newspapers and watch English channels, as well as

inviting L2 speakers to the class. In the following quotation, Student 5 outlined the importance of watching English channels and the use of L2 by the teacher:

> *Because we have limited contact with L2 speakers, we will need to improve our language using other methods. For example, if we read something related to geography, the teacher can encourage students to watch something on the National Geographic channel, they should watch this in English. Also, the teacher should speak only in English in the classroom, because when she is using Arabic, the students will know that they will have to use English.* (Student 5)

Both students and teachers also agreed that introducing the integrative and instrumental values of L2 is beneficial to learning English. Using authentic texts in teaching such as songs and TV programmes is important to both as language learning is more than simply acquiring the language itself, it is also cultural. Authentic texts help with introducing L2 culture and also appeal to the students as they can see the language in a "real" setting. Students also mentioned inviting a speaker so they can interact with someone from the L2 culture as a motivational strategy. These findings are, therefore, in line with Gardner's notion (1985) that language learners' disposition towards L2 people and culture has a positive effect on their learning achievements.

- Goal setting

Both teachers and students appeared to be aware of the importance of 'setting student' goals' in order to motivate students to learn English. Teacher 10 stated that she tried to help students identify their goals in learning English at the beginning of each academic term. She explained:

> *At the beginning of the term, I ask students to write down what they are expecting to study, and why they are studying English, because students*

usually do not know why they are studying English, and when they do
not know, they got lost. (Teacher 10)

The students agreed with Teacher 10 as they expressed their need to identify their goal of learning English. Student 1 elaborated:

One of the important strategies that a teacher should use is to get
students to set their goal of teaching English, because most of the
students do not have goals. They should know what their goal of learning
English is …the most important thing is that they will need English in
their future work……and when they travel abroad. (Student 1)

It is clear that both, the teachers and the students agreed that 'goal setting' is a good motivator. As the teacher said, the students can get lost without knowing their goal. Without goals for an activity, students will become demotivated as they will not be able to work towards achieving their goals. Here the teachers are aware of the usefulness of goal setting but this is not always the case. Dörnyei (2001b, p.59) stated that "most students do not really understand (or accept) why they are involved in a learning activity", and a study by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007, p.163) showed that teachers demonstrated "a lack of recognition of the utility of goal setting".

- Learner strategies

One teacher and another student mentioned that teaching students' learner strategies motivates students to learn English. Teacher 10 noted that she encouraged students to read English books. She commented:

When we do a reading task, I encourage them to buy an English
book; I suggest a specific book which does not relate to what we
study. (Teacher 10)

Student 2 spoke favourably of the importance of teaching 'learner strategies' to students. She stated:

> *Teachers should give students advice on how they can improve their*
> *English during the day, and not only in the university; for example,*
> *watching TV without subtitles, reading short books, using*
> *mobiles…talking to your mum or sister in English, writing diaries in*
> *English...so, they should advise us of ways to develop our language.*
> (Student 2)

In general, little importance was paid to the teaching of learner strategies to students. What was mentioned was the importance of encouraging outside learning, particularly in Student 2's opinion as she was very emphatic about this point. Learning outside the classroom is very useful as it extends the learning beyond the classroom. Students can see the language used in an authentic way which will motivate them. In addition, this can help them to learn in their own way, as Dörnyei (2001b, p.95) asserts: 'the available evidence suggests that it is possible for teachers to help students to discover for themselves the ways in which they learn best'. However, neither teachers nor students focus on the importance of specific learning strategies; there are a variety of techniques (see, for example, Oxford 1990) that can be employed to help with EFL learning.

- Encouragement

Interviewees agreed on the importance of 'encouragement' to promote students' motivation. Both teachers and students spoke strongly about using two strategies relating to 'encouragement' which are using praising words such as 'well done' and 'you are a special group', and reducing students' anxiety when they are speaking in English. Teacher 4 described the way in which she dealt with anxious students. She stated:

> *A student who never participates in the class is afraid of making mistakes. I talk with them outside the classroom and tell them: 'If you do not make mistake you will not learn, English is not your first language and mistakes are chances to learn.* (Teacher 4)

The students agreed with the teachers that they should be encouraging them to overcome their anxiety, but they also added that teachers should allow students to use their L1 when they cannot express themselves in English. Student 5 commented:

> *'There are some students who become afraid when they speak in English. The teacher can give them the chance to speak in Arabic, and the teacher should give a student another attempt when her answer is not correct.'* (Student 5)

Both the students and the teachers agreed that anxiety should be overcome in the classroom to motivate students to learn; however, the teachers believe this should be done by encouraging the students to try and not worry about mistakes, whereas the students are apprehensive to do this for fear of looking incompetent. Praise is seen to be a big part of motivation, particularly by the teachers, and this directly affects motivation to participate during the lesson. The students also believe that not being able to use their L1 in the classroom is a demotivating factor as they cannot express themselves well in English and this causes them to avoid participation. The teachers try to overcome this problem by offering praise and encouraging students to make mistakes.

- Feedback

Although one teacher and another student talked about the influence of 'teacher feedback' on students' motivation, they spoke favourably about its positive impact on students' motivation. Teacher 10 explained the way in which she offered feedback to her students:

> *There is a technique I use; I do individual feedback with each student after correcting their assignment. Then I discuss their mistakes with them....I try to explain why these are mistakes. One of the students told how good the feedback session was for her.* (Teacher 10)

Student 2 described her motivation when she read her teacher's written feedback and when she noticed her improvement:

> *When our teacher returns our assignments and we see her feedback, and then we correct these mistakes, this helps us not to do the mistakes again...When we see how we have improved, and see the difference in our first assignment and our later assignment, this motivates us. (Student 2)*

Here both the teachers and students agreed that providing feedback is a motivational tool. Focusing on students' mistakes and how to improve their weaknesses is an important strategy, but this alone could be de-motivating if all the focus is on the mistakes. Therefore, it is equally important to focus on the students' strengths, as was mentioned above by Student 2 as she found the way the teacher monitors progress to compare now with past work and see the improvements as a strong motivating teaching practices. Another useful element in motivating students through feedback is the use of 'positive information feedback', where the students are encouraged to pay attention to and overcome their weaknesses (Raffini, 1993). Student 2 agreed with this as she said that correcting her own work following feedback from the teacher helped her to eliminate these mistakes in future work.

- L2 ideal self

As for 'L2 ideal self', a teacher and student acknowledged its significance in motivating students during English classes. Teacher 3 argued that drawing an attractive vision of the students' future motivates them to learn English:

> *I always try to speak about their future…for example, I explain to them why I ask them to do a presentation. I tell them that one day you might work in a company and you need to do a presentation to your clients.…I now try to give you the basic of the presentation skill, because one day when you graduate and have a job, you will need to do presentations…I feel that students' vision about themselves in the future motivates them.* (Teacher 3)

In addition, Student 2 described how inviting an L2 speaker motivated her to learn English. She stated that some L2 speakers give lectures at her university; they usually speak about interesting topics, for example, 'How to be a leader'. Student 2 indicated that she must learn English in order to understand L2 speaker's lectures and to expand her knowledge.

L2 ideal self was not discussed as a motivating theme by many of the interviewees but for the teacher and student here, L2 ideal self is a motivational tool as the students can envision themselves and where they want to be, which is the ideal starting point to achieving goals. L2 ideal self is a relatively recent theory in L2 motivation so it is possible that the teachers are not yet trained to use these strategies related to this concept, but it is interesting that it was still mentioned and given importance by one of the teachers. The student who spoke about L2 ideal self said that she was motivated by L2 speakers and it helps her to expand her knowledge. Dörnyei (2008, p.3) states that 'if the person we would like to become speaks a L2, the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because we would like to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.' The teacher too tries to help the student to construct their ideal L2 by giving scenarios of where they could be and how they could use their English, and this is considered to be the first step in constructing students' L2 ideal self according to Dörnyei 2008.

Themes mentioned by teachers only

- Learner autonomy

Two teachers talked about 'learner autonomy'. One teacher spoke about it in a positive way as it motivates her students. She stated that she thinks that her students become motivated when she asks them to search for some information, such as the meaning of some words. At the same time, another teacher stated that she tried to use this strategy with her students but she found out that the students do not cooperate, she said:

> *…but they [students] do not really respond because they are not used to do that…I told them…this time I want you to go and check what this means and I had only a few students who came up with things.* (Teacher 6)

Two out of the six teachers mentioned learner autonomy and while they both seemed to consider it important, Teacher 6, as appeared in the previous quotation, had a more negative view as she found it difficult to implement. Learner autonomy is something which needs to be created and this is done firstly by the teacher, which can be difficult in an environment where students are not used to having this autonomy. The split in opinion of these two teachers is interesting as it mirrors the dividing views on autonomy. Many researchers, such as Benson (2001), believe in its usefulness, but Sinclair (1999) argues that there is no evidence support the call for using learner autonomy in language learning.

- Rewards

All the teachers interviewed talked about the role of using 'rewards' in motivating their students during classes. Two types of rewards are mentioned: chocolates and bonuses. Some teachers explained that they sometimes give students chocolate after answering a challenging task. Other teachers argued that the offering bonuses is motivating for their students, and they

noticed an immediate effect of using rewards on the students' motivation. Teacher 11 commented:

> *One of the main things is [using] bonuses; once I say 'bonus' in class
> they are all with me...I try to bribe them with bonuses in class.*
> (Teacher 11)

It is very interesting that all six of the teachers believed in the importance to the role of rewards in motivating their students and yet none of the students did. This is reflected in Dörnyei (2001b, p.127): 'most teachers feel that it is a positive thing to reward their students' praiseworthy efforts and accomplishments'. Rewards appear to have an immediate positive effect on students' motivation, as the teachers mentioned. Rewards, however, can have the opposite impact to the desired effect. Deci and Ryan (1985) state that when students already have their own reasons for studying a language, the use of rewards might decrease the students' motivation.

5. Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to answer two research questions which are about the teacher and student beliefs of motivational teaching practices. To answer such questions, a qualitative data was collected including interviews with both teachers and students. From the results, it is clear that there are a variety of teaching practices which contribute to the motivation of students in the EFL classroom. As we have seen, there are many overlaps in the opinions of both the teachers and students as to what motivational teaching practices are important. Teacher behaviour appears to be a prominent motivational strategy to both EFL teachers and students. The classroom atmosphere was considered to be a highly motivating theme for the students, although they did not specifically focus on why. Group work was also seen as a motivating theme, although the teachers and students had a different idea of what group work

involved. A student also commented on how this could be demotivating, depending on the group members. Here we can see that the qualitative approach was useful as we can see how one strategy may be motivating for one student and not for another, as motivation can be very subjective.

One of the major differences seen between the teachers' and students' ideas about motivational strategies lies within the planning of the lesson and classroom activities when they talked about the two themes of 'classroom atmosphere' and 'task'. The teachers give much more importance to the motivating aspects of these themes. It can be assumed that this is due to the passive role of the students in this area. The teachers plan and organise the classroom and the delivery of tasks and their thoughts about it become evidence during the interviews. Students, being relatively inactive in organising classroom and in the delivery of tasks, are unlikely to realise the effect. Further investigation is needed here to understand the students' perception of classroom climate and task as motivating teaching practices. It is worth investigating in what way they believe the classroom atmosphere can become motivating, and also how a task can be motivating.

Another area of disagreement was that of rewards. The teachers believe rewards to be the most motivational of all strategies; however, the students do not seem to share this opinion as they did not speak about 'rewards' during the interviews. This may be due to the fact that rewards are the easiest, and therefore, most utilised strategy and so the students may now simply expect these rewards, therefore not realising their motivational effect. On the other hand, it may be the case that teachers wrongly give too much importance to rewards. Further investigation is needed into the use of rewards by showing the difference in classes where rewards are given and not given, and by looking at the difference in motivation between the

classes. The types of reward should also be investigated to find out which are the most effective.

Another area for further research is that of the L2 ideal self. As this is a relatively new concept in L2 motivation, neither teachers nor students in general are very familiar with it. Further investigation into how to inspire students using the L2 ideal and how motivational this will be should be undertaken.

From this study, it is shown that teachers and students agree that being motivated in the EFL classroom is important and there is a great deal of overlap between the two about what strategies are important, with some areas being more prominent for teachers and others for students. A combination of these strategies is therefore necessary to ensure each student is motivated, as all students are unique and require different techniques.

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Appendix A: Guidelines of exploratory interview

● **Teacher interview guidelines**

1   How can you describe your students' motivation in the English language classrooms?

2   Do you think it is important to use motivational strategies to develop students' motivation?

3   In your opinion what is the motivational strategies that should be used in language classroom?

4   At the beginning of the language class or task, how can you initiate your student's motivation?

5   How can you keep your student motivated during the classroom, or during a task?

6   At the end of the classroom or task, what strategies do you use to motivate your students?

7   Tell me about a motivated classroom, what you do to keep them motivated?

8   Now, tell me about a demotivated classroom, what do you do to encourage students' motivation?

9   What do you think are the most important motivational strategies, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia?

10 Do you have anything to add?

● **Student interview guidelines:**

1   How can you describe your motivation in the English language classrooms?

2   Do you think EFL teachers should use motivational strategies to develop students' motivation?

3   In your opinion what is the motivational strategies that should be used in language classroom?

4   At the beginning of the language class or task, how can EFL teacher initiate students' motivation?

5   During English classroom or during doing a task, how can a teacher keep students motivated?

6   At the end of the classroom or task, what strategies do a teacher should use to motivate her students?

7   Tell me about a motivated teacher, what does she do to keep you motivated?

8   What do you think are the most important motivational strategies, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia?

9   Do you have anything to add?

Appendix B: Consent form

Research Participant Consent Form

Title of study: Teachers' and students' perceptions about motivational strategies.

Name of Researcher: …..

● I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.	**Yes**	**No**

● I have been given the opportunity to ask questions (face to face, via telephone and e-mail)	**Yes**	**No**

● I agree to take part in the interview	**Yes**	**No**

● I agree to the interview being tape recorded	**Yes**	**No**

● I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time **without giving any reason**	**Yes**	**No**

● **I agree to take part in the above study**	**Yes**	**No**

Name of participant	…………………………………………………………………… …

Signature	…………………………………………………………………… ….

Date	…………………………….

Name of researcher taking consent: ….

Researcher e-mail address: ………