Gender Differences in the Use of Motivating Strategies in Saudi Tertiary EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This research investigates how Saudi male and female English as Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, had motivated students to learn English during regular classes. Forty instructors working in Saudi tertiary EFL classrooms completed a survey "questionnaire" comprising forty-three motivating strategies. Each statement in the survey was based on a five-point Likert scale that vacillates from "very important" to "unimportant." To analyze the data obtained from the survey, the researcher used means and standard deviation to decide the supreme and the smallest practiced teaching strategies in universities. Moreover, to determine if there was any difference between the two gender instructors on how Saudi tertiary EFL instructors viewed each strategy in terms of significance, the researcher used implicational statistics, t-test. On this matter, the research had shown that there is existed an outstanding resemblance in perceptions between the two genders of instructors. Instructors in Saudi tertiary EFL classes indicated that EFL instructors should make students feel accepted, wanted, worthy, and valued no matter their strengths and weaknesses. On the contrary, despite the importance of having a positive setting in the Saudi tertiary EFL classrooms, instructors considered this strategy the least practical technique for motivating their students. Due to time and sampling constraints, this study had its limitations; therefore, the researcher encourages other researchers to shed more light on motivating teaching strategies, as they are considered a critical factor in students' success. The researcher also proposes that EFL curriculum developers retain curriculum resources in coordination with motivating strategies experienced by instructors.

Keywords: Motivating strategies, instructor performance, motivation, Saudi Tertiary EFL.

1. Introduction
The role of motivation has been largely researched in EFL research (e.g., Garcia-Sampedro & Prado, 2020; Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 1994, 2005, and 2010). Learning a foreign language (FL) is impacted by the learner's level of motivation, according to

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Dörnyei (1998). It is thought that learners with an extraordinary level of motivation would be more determined to succeed than unmotivated learners (Dörnyei, 2010).

Students' level of motivation can be attributed to many factors. One of the key factors is EFL instructors' motivating strategies in classrooms. (Garcia-Sampedro & Prado, 2020; Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008). But compared to learning motivation by or in itself, this has not been thoroughly examined yet by researchers (Lee & Lin, 2019). Accordingly, this study sought to shed light on Saudi instructors' perceptions of the importance of motivating English teaching strategies. Moreover, this study concentrated on whether educational contexts (i.e., public) influence EFL instructors' use of motivating strategies.

Research Problem

Most Saudi students encounter challenges as they go through their journey of learning English; consequently, they fail to reach their goals (Al-Khairy, 2013a, Al Arabia, 2014). The reasons for this are manifold (Alrabai, 2014). For instance, students might be under certain circumstances that lower their motivation to learn, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, or diffidence. Instructors' strategies are also thought to have a remarkable effect on students' motivation. Accordingly, this research sheds light on motivating strategies used by EFL instructors. Further scholars had explored Saudi EFL instructors' use of motivating strategies (Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Alqahtani, 2016; Al Arabia, 2014; Alrabai, 2011). However, not much attention has been given on drawing a comparison between Saudi different gender instructors in the public sector. In view of this, this research aspires to find out the motivating strategies used by Saudi EFL instructors in universities.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1- How do Saudi male and female EFL instructors in Saudi universities perceive each motivating strategy in terms of importance?

2- How do diverse educational settings contribute to EFL instructors' use of motivating strategies?

Research Objectives

This study aims at:

1- Investigating gender variances in the usage of motivating strategies in Saudi Tertiary EFL Classrooms.
2- Examining the extent to which diverse educational settings contribute to instructors' opinions of the use of motivating strategies.

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3- Introduce a number of reliable applied strategies to provide a motivating learning setting for Saudi university students.

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. At the theoretical level, this study is essential in three ways. First, it sheds light on an area of research in foreign language teaching addressed extensively by applied linguists worldwide. Second, it provides information concerning the use of motivating strategies in Saudi Tertiary EFL Classrooms. Third, it extends the discussion of motivating strategies by looking at how gender influences the use of different motivating Strategies in the Saudi Tertiary EFL Classrooms. At the practical level, the proposed study would help instructors understand learners' different motivating tools to do well in English language classrooms. This study also provides guidelines to EFL instructors to tailor their motivating strategies to avoid mismatches between classroom practices and learners' expectations. The finding of the present study would help enhance English language teaching at the university level. Similarly, this study's results would provide the field of English Language Teaching with innovative, motivating strategies that could be integrated into their EFL teaching to increase learning.

Literature Review
Defining Motivation

Dörnyei (2001) describes motivation as an action or signal that pushes learners to better behavior or works to develop performance. In line with Daif-Allah & Aljumah (2020), Alharbi (2020), Csizer (2017) define motivation as a feeling or a factor that stimulates learners for specific behavioral choices. Accordingly, motivation is largely affected by nature, and the degree of incentives learners receive as an end goal.

Dornyei, 2013; Gardner & Lambert (1972) emphasize that motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, allows learners to satisfy their desires for knowledge and progress. In this context, Daif-Allah & Aljumah (2020) believe that learners' motivation inspires them to learn and obtain knowledge and meet family, school, or peers' expectations. They also confirm that motivation is a self-driving force towards vital and effective learning and achievement. In short, the author of the present study perceives motivation as the fuel or the inner ability that drives learners towards achieving their desired goals in time effectively and appropriately.

Principles of Enhancing Learners' Motivation

Instructors can effectively enhance learners' motivation to learn and obtain knowledge using a variety of teaching practices and behaviors. Cocca & Cocca (2019) emphasize that instructors should work hard in the classroom and even before coming to the classroom to maintain an interactive, relaxed and cooperative learning environment for the classroom group dominated

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by familiarity and common interest, moving away from bullying, orders, prohibitions, and violence. Instructors need to have a warm, friendly, and open personality. Many educational studies, Dornyei (2005); Wondim (2020), have indicated that the instructors who enjoy warmth, flexibility, tolerance, sympathy, and patience are highly concerned with meeting the interests and expectations of their students, often stimulate these qualities in their students.

Alarabai (2011), Cheng & Dornyei (2007) stress that the instructors' indirect methods of interacting with their students and directing them are considered important cognitive motivating strategies in the classrooms. An effective motivating strategy in the classroom stresses the instructors' appropriate social role in enhancing a healthy and secure learning environment. An instructor should be a model for his students to follow as a leader who is fair in style and treatment, or firm with naughty students (Garcia-Sampedro & Prado, 2020).

Moskovsky et al. (2013) are of the opinion that it is the instructs' role to help learners define their personal goals and plan implementation activities based on investing their self and collective energies shared by their peers. Similarly, Dörnyei & Csizeŕ, (1998) believe that instructors should enhance social acceptance among students on the one hand and between instructors and students on the other. This could be achieved by providing learners with an atmosphere of open interaction based on fruitful cooperation, interest, and mutual respect, away from quarrels and personal disputes in general.

In this context and based on the present researcher's experience, some instructors are sullen, critical, self-made in their characters, not interested in the desires and interests of their learners and are direct authoritarian in their dealings with their learners. These unethical classroom practices arouse a sense of alienation and resistance in students and increase the chances of classroom problems. Also, such unprofessional classroom practices would lead to the development of negative tendencies towards instructors and learning in general.

Method
Subjects of the Study
Gender Differences in the Use of Motivating Strategies in Saudi Tertiary EFL Classroom was investigated quantitatively through addressing a total of forty university EFL Instructors chosen randomly (twenty male instructors and 20 female instructors). These participants were requested to respond to a survey about the motivating strategies.

The Survey
To obtain data, a questionnaire was used in this study. The questionnaire designed based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very important" to "not important." Items of the questionnaire were developed and adapted from various sources (Daif-Allah & Aljumah 2020;

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Wondim 2020, Garcia-Sampedro & Prado,2020; Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Daif-Allah, 2013; Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, & Ratcheva, 2013; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). The first part of the survey aims at collecting participants' personal information. The second part of the survey includes a total of thirty-five strategies. After constructing the survey, it was piloted on 10 university EFL instructors to assess its reliability level. Then, it was submitted to a jury of five English Language teaching university professors to assess its validity. The Alpha reliability estimate for the survey was 0.689, which is an acceptable estimation for such a kind of survey. This study was carried out during the 2020 summer session. An online survey was used to collect the needed data for the study.

Results and Discussion
The following table (Table 1) includes the most important strategies used by Saudi tertiary EFL male and Female instructors.

Table 1 Motivating strategies used by tertiary EFL instructors

Strategies	M.	S.D.	Cronbach's alpha
Enhance learners' intercultural knowledge	4.30	0.69	0.81
Enhance learners' confidence	4.31	0.58	0.74
Meet learners' end-goals	4.19	0.73	0.72
Increase learners' expectancy of success	4.25	0.55	0.77
Promote learners' autonomy	4.22	0.60	0.79
Make the learning environment motivating	4.04	0.78	0.80
Provide relaxed classroom context	3.85	0.84	0.74
develop learners' aspirations	4.20	0.72	0.76
Promote group-ethics.	4.11	0.62	0.88

The table above includes the motivating strategies used by Saudi tertiary EFL instructors fluctuated from [M=4.31, SD=0.58]' ***Enhance learners' confidence'*** to [M=3. 85, SD=0.84] ***' Provide relaxed classroom context'***. This implies that the above listed strategies topped first of importance among all other strategies. Other strategies were regarded as vital in daily classroom practices. Increasing learners' expectancy of success, promoting learners' aspirations, developing learners' expectations, and meeting their learners' end-goals were viewed as important motivating strategies that should be considered while teaching to develop learners' cognitive abilities. Interpersonal skills could also be enhanced through promoting group ethics, relaxed learning environment, and promoting learners' autonomy and cooperation.

Consequently, the above discussion clearly provides the answer to the first research question: "*How do Saudi male and female EFL instructors in Saudi universities perceive each motivating strategy in terms of importance?*".

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To answer the second research question, "*How do different educational contexts contribute to EFL instructors' use of motivating strategies?",* a t-test was used to determine gender differences between male and female tertiary EFL instructors using motivating strategies in the classrooms. Findings indicated in the table below(Table 2), shows no significant differences among Saudi tertiary EFL male and female instructors at the level of ($p > 0.05$), but enhancing intercultural awareness was much more stressed by male instructors than females due to conservative nature of the Saudi society in discussing cross-cultural topics in the classrooms.

Table 1: Gender differences in the use of motivating strategies in the Saudi Tertiary EFL classrooms

Feature	Gender	M.	Level of importance	S.D.	T.	Mean difference	p
Enhance learners' intercultural awareness	Male	4.52	Very important	0.59	2.24**	0.45	0.03
Enhance learners' confidence	Female	4.07	Important	0.73			
Meet learners' end-goals	Male	4.26	Important	0.57	-0.62	-0.11	0.54
Increase learners' expectancy of success	Female	4.37	Important	0.60			
Promote learners' autonomy	Male	4.26	Important	0.67	0.62	0.14	0.54
Make the learning environment motivating	Female	4.12	Important	0.80			
Provide relaxed classroom context	Male	4.36	Important	0.55	1.34	0.22	0.19
develop learners' aspirations	Female	4.14	Important	0.54			
Promote group-ethics.	Male	4.20	Important	0.67	-0.29	-0.05	0.77
Enhance learners' intercultural knowledge	Female	4.25	Important	0.53			
Enhance learners' confidence	Male	4.20	Important	0.76	1.31	0.32	0.20
Meet learners' end-goals	Female	3.88	Important	0.79			
Increase learners' expectancy of success	Male	4.04	Important	0.93	1.54	0.39	0.13
Promote learners' autonomy	Female	3.65	Important	0.70			
	Male	4.27	Important	0.80	0.64	0.14	0.53

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			Important				
Make the learning environment motivating Provide relaxed classroom context	Female	4.13		0.63			
Develop learners' aspirations	Male	4.16	Important	0.62	0.51	0.10	0.62
	Female	4.06	Important	0.63			

Discussion

Findings shown in tables 1 & 2 above emphasize the importance of using a variety of teaching strategies in the Saudi tertiary EFL classroom by both equally male and female instructors for developing the cognitive abilities of the learners and enhancing their interpersonal skills. These results are in line with Alharbi (2020); Al Qahtani (2016); Daif-Allah & Aljumah (2020); Dorrnyei (2013), who have realized the importance of enhancing learners intercultural awareness, self-confidence, promoting learners' autonomy and meeting learners' goals and aspirations. They came to believe that providing such a supportive learning environment not only encourages the individual achievement of the students but rather stimulates each of them to see himself as an important member of his group, feeling that this membership is necessary for all of them since they have a mutual benefit and a collection of cognitive and academic complementarity. Findings of the present study are in agreement with Alharbi (2020); Al Qahtani (2016) who found no gender differences between male and female teachers in schools in using motivating strategies. Previous studies supported the present research results in the field by Garcia-Sampedro & Prado,(2020); Cocca & Cocca, (2019); Moskovsky et al., (2013); Alrabai, (2010); Dörnyei & Csizeŕ, (1998); Kounin (1970) consider praise as a crucial motivating classroom strategy. Parise is the drive of classroom instruction and activities, and it is a powerful variable in controlling irregular behavior and sustaining student attention.

Conclusion

The present study provided information regarding the effective motivating strategies that can be used in Saudi EFL tertiary classrooms. It also introduced a number of reliable applied strategies that can be used both male and female instructors to motivate Saudi university students. Additionally, gender variations were tackled. This study would contribute to helping EFL instructors realize the importance of using motivating strategies in Saudi Tertiary EFL classrooms and how it affects students' achievement.

At the practical level, the present study might help instructors understand learners' different motivating tools to do well in English language classrooms. This study also provides guidelines to EFL instructors to adapt their motivating techniques to meet learners' expectations and aspirations. The study recommends that educationists and policymakers in Saudi Arabia consider including the proposed motivating strategies gleaned from the study when designing the EFL curriculum and

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publicizing those strategies among EFL instructors and teachers at all educational levels to help develop EFL proficiency levels in Saudi Arabia. Further qualitative research focusing on discussing the effect of the proposed motivating strategies is highly recommended.

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