The Upshot of L2 Instructors' Motivational Strategies in South Indian Technical Classroom Milieu during COVID-19

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Abstract

Motivation is an inevitable factor in Second Language (L2) learning and teaching; moreover, various motivational strategies are involved in this factor. In the teaching-learning process, motivational strategies are paramount to robust the attainment of L2 learners and instructors. This study aims to investigate the use of motivational strategies given by the L2 instructors in technical classrooms (online) during the COVID-19 pandemic. A simple random sampling method is used to collect data amongst 159 L2 instructors in South India. The questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses from the informants. The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, internal reliability, and correlation. The study results revealed that various motivational strategies are not carried out meritoriously in an online class. Therefore, notable changes have occurred in the use of strategies in the virtual classroom. Stakeholders could utilize the strategies effectively and support the instructors' community for balanced growth.

Keywords: motivational strategies, quantitative study, second language, instructors, covid-19

1. Introduction

In the field of Second Language (L2) and Foreign Language (FL) learning, motivation has been recognized as one of the predominant factors that determine L2 achievement. Past three decades, motivation in L2 has been the most dynamic and rapidly expanding science within the humanities. Thus, motivation provides "the primary impetus to initiate the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Dornyei, 1998, p.117). Similarly, motivation is believed that "why people decide to do what they do, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it" (Dornyei, 2001). Motivation is identified as internal and external factors that are continually interested in attaining a certain goal. To create and sustain motivation, the implementation of motivational strategies and the role of the teacher is recognized as being highly significant in all the stages of the motivational process. Moreover, teachers are one of the major variables determining the level and success of second language learning.

According to Gardner (1985), the term motivation in a second language learning context is "referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity (p.10)". In addition, he proposed three key components of second language motivation i) "motivational intensity or effort", ii) "desire to learn the language", iii) "attitudes towards learning the language". Teachers are one of the most vital factors of second language learners' motivation (Dornyei, 1994 & Tanaka, 2005), and they act as an initiator, a facilitator, a motivator, a mentor, a consultant and moral supporters. So, teachers have a huge responsibility to start learners' motivation and keep it alive throughout the learning process.

In India, the Department of Higher Education is responsible for the overall development of the basic infrastructure of the higher education sector, both in terms of policy and planning (Jansi Rani, Kavitha Maheswari, Kot, & Hariharasudan, 2019). Even though the policies and panning are significant in technical education, to develop higher and technical education among rural learners, Universities, autonomous colleges, and affiliated colleges have to implement the recommended policies by higher education (Hariharasudan, Rahiman, Nawaz & Panakaje, 2021). After the graduation of technical education, everyone has an instinct to get a good job through the campus interview. Thus, it is necessary to develop the technical learners' employability skills. Language instructors' motivational strategies are beneficial for the success of a second language and employability skills. Learners from rural

backgrounds are struggling to achieve L2 and their career too. They are not able to compete with other learners. Even though the teaching methods in rural and urban areas are similar, the rural students cannot shine in their placement. Hence, this study will investigate the influence of language instructors' motivational strategies in ESL classrooms.

1. Conceptual Framework

During the 1990s, many researchers emerged into the field of motivation in second/foreign language learning. Based on their experiments and reviews, they developed their motivational framework for the success of L2 learning. Self-determination Theory involves L2 learners' internal and external factors, such as integrative and instrumental paradigms (Deci et al., 1985). In contrast, the study by Dornyei (1994) framed three different levels of L2 motivation like language level, learner level, and learning situation level. In addition, Williams and Burden (1997) constructed two factors for motivation in language learning, such as internal factor and external factor. Similarly, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) extended the model of L2 motivation for better achievements; the model includes language attitudes, goal salience, valence, self-efficacy, motivational behavior, foreign language dominance, and adaptive attributions. The process models of learning motivation in the L2 classroom are the Preactional stage, the Actional stage, and the Postactional stage (Dornyei, 2001). The overview of the various frameworks on motivation showed that it is a complex aspect, which contains a multifactor variant rather than a unifactor variant. This study focuses on the language instructors' use of motivational strategies in the technical classroom.

1.1 Literature Review

The pioneer who conducted the teachers' motivational strategies were Dornyei and Csizer (1998). In addition, a few studies (Dornyei&Csizer,1998; Wlodkowski, 1999; Cheng &Dornyei, 2007) have been carried out in second and foreign language learning. Teachers' motivation implements innovation, because teachers play an important role in the implementation of a research project by organizing, grouping, motivating, and guiding students (NCFTE, 2009).

Ushioda (2003) indicated some significant factors on teachers' motivation, such as group development process, opportunities for continuing individuals' learning, dialogic interaction, goal setting, freedom to experiment, level of work, and responsibilities. Similarly, employee-centered environment, teacher efficacy on the skill, task identity and significance, freedom, and feedback are vital motivating factors for teachers (Pennington, 1995). Correspondingly, Astuti (2016) carried out a study on teachers' use of motivation strategies using qualitative studies in the Indonesian context. The data were collected from language instructors using interviews, classroom observation, and students' group interviews (Nawaz, Durst, Hariharasudan & Shamugia, 2020). The result showed that the following factors influence students more: teachers' classroom behaviour, supportive classroom atmosphere, and resources and activities.

Dornyei (2001) identified that several factors could obstruct learners' motivation, including poor infrastructure, lack of self-confidence, terrible opinion about the second language. Therefore, individual motivational variables like empathy, self-esteem, anxiety, and extroversion/introversion were played a significant role in language learning (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Motivational strategies have different methods and techniques to generate and maintain the learners' motivation and promote the individual's goal in language learning. Carlen (2021) carried out a systematic review on motivational strategies in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The author analyzed how motivational strategies are distinct from prior researchers. The result showed that most of the researchers recommended an intrinsic motivational strategy (Hariharasudan & Kot, 2018). In contrast, few researchers mentioned that it is not based on a single motivational strategy; however, more factors are involved. Similarly, Saranraj et al. (2014) carried out a study on L2 instructors' use of motivational strategies in tertiary level English as a second language class using a convenient sampling method amongst 19 instructors in private universities in India. The results showed that instructors are proper in presenting and conducting the activity, and they are using appropriate motivational strategies based on the need.

The pioneer of this research area, Dornyei and Cesizer (1998), conducted a study on 200 Hungarian teachers. The study reveals that behaviour is a powerful tool of motivation in the classroom, and they present Ten Commandments for teachers that are directed to improve students' motivation. The role of classroom dynamics and the learning environment are important to motivate the learners. In the same way, Cheng et al. (2007) conducted a study on the use of motivational strategies in the Taiwan EFL context. This paper is a modified replication of the Dornyei & Csizer (1998) study. Similar and dissimilar motivational strategies are found based on cultural and ethnolinguistic contexts.

Wong (2016) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate teachers' strategies and attitudes used to motivate students to learn English as a Foreign Language. The result suggested that the more sensitive to individual student potential,

teaching approaches to students' levels of understanding and importance in motivating students to learn English, these three suggestions help the language instructor more effective in teaching (Rahiman, Kodikal, Biswas, & Hariharasudan, 2020). An empirical study was carried out to know the Japanese English teachers' use of motivational strategies in their context (Thavabalan, Mohan, Hariharasudan & Nawaz, 2021). The result revealed that based on the learners' proficiency level, the teachers are using motivational strategies in different ways (Sugita et al., 2010).

The study conducted by Moskovsky et al. (2013) did a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effects of motivational strategies used by Saudi EFL teachers and Saudi EFL learners' self-reported learning motivation. The result provided compelling evidence that teachers' motivational behaviors cause enhanced motivation in second language learners. In contrast, Sugita et al. (2014) examined that the students with higher English proficiency have higher motivational intensity; however, students with lower English proficiency have lower motivational intensity. Ruesch et al. (2012) conducted a study on student and teacher perceptions of motivational strategies in the foreign language classroom by using 17 macro strategies (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). The result predicted that there is a difference in teachers' and students' perceptions except for the classroom climate, which strongly influences learners' motivation (Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, 2017). Overall, the language teacher could bring positive rapport with the students by creating a pleasant relaxed atmosphere and understanding the tasks in the classroom. A study was carried out on the effect of motivational factors amongst rural engineering students in India, and the result showed that students are aware of instrumental motivation rather than intrinsic motivation (Saranraj et al., 2016). Yang & Wyatt (2021) carried out a study on motivation strategies and practices among Chinese university language teachers. The result showed that motivational awareness and practices should be inculcated amongst ESL teachers. Liu et al. (2020) examined the language instructors' use of motivation strategies by using self-determination theory, and the result showed that autonomous and controlled motivational strategies have developed positive instrumental value and negative instrumental value, respectively.

From the reviewed literature, it can be understood that a few studies have been conducted in English as a second and foreign language context. However, no prominent studies have been carried out in the multilingual country, especially in the southern part of India. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of language instructors' motivational strategies in Indian context ESL classrooms.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Due to the pandemic situation, most of the L2 instructors are focused on covering the prescribed syllabus, and they are not enhancing practical skills and motivational strategies in their language classes. Moreover, learners feel it is difficult to face the interview during placement (on-campus and off-campus), and their classroom is always teacher-centered. Subsequently, the researchers interact with the language instructors, and the instructors state that the learners are unsuccessful because the educational backgrounds of the students are different. Learners speak more of their mother tongue than English and are too dependent (Thavabalan, Mohan, Hariharasudan & Krzywda, 2020). Hence, this study investigates language instructors' use of motivational strategies in ESL classrooms. The researchers selected only the engineering college instructors because engineering courses are the backbone of infrastructural development for a country.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Which strategies do the technical language instructors use in their classrooms?
2. What is the impact of using motivational strategies in the ESL classroom?
3. Which motivational strategies are more effective for the success of L2 learning?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

To identify the language instructors' use of motivational strategies how to motivate L2 learners, which is the effective motivational strategy in L2 learning, the researchers adopt a quantitative research design. In addition, simple random sampling under the probability sampling method is used for this study.

2.2 Participants

The quantitative method of data collection was used in this study. 159 technical language instructors were voluntarily involved from various engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. The participants teach technical English language in a wide range of Universities, government engineering colleges, autonomous engineering institutions, and affiliated engineering colleges in South India.

2.3 Data Collection

The data was collected through the quantitative method and adapted the 'Motivational Strategies Questionnaire' proposed by Cheng & Dornyei(2007). The questionnaire contains two parts. The first part deals with the demographic details of the respondents and in the second part, instructors are asked to rate the strategies used in the language classroom using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). The adapted questionnaire examined the factors influencing the instructors' use of motivational strategies in the technical classroom and focused on major strategies, such as recognizing students' effort, learners' self-confidence, classroom climate, present task, learner autonomy, and learning tasks stimulating. The quantitative study examined how reliable the strategy used by the instructors in the English classroom, qualitative study is to investigate which strategies are more effective. The quantitative data was collected through in-person and mail questionnaires.

3. Results

The quantitatively collected data were statistically analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, internal reliability, and factor analysis.
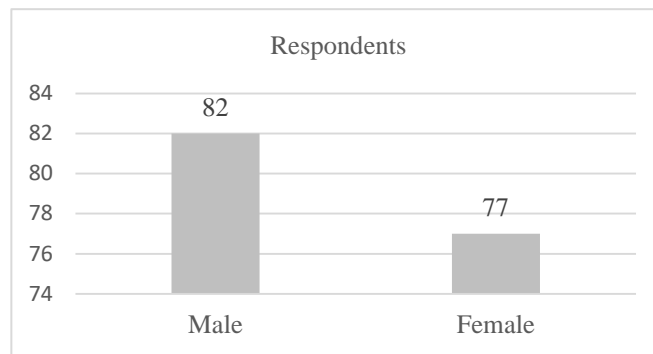

Figure 1. Gender

Figure 1 shows that 82 respondents are male and 77 respondents are female; on the whole, 159 respondents are involved in this study.
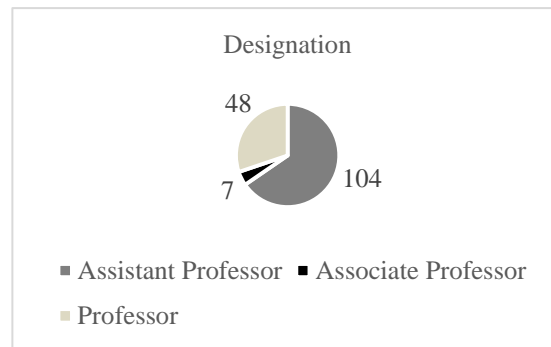

Figure 2. Designation

Figure 2 shows the designation of the respondents;104, 7 and 48 respondents are Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors, respectively.

Table 1. Sampling Adequacy for Factor Analysis

Sl. No	No. of Items	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy
1	25	0.879

Table 1 shows the sampling adequacy for factor analysis, KMO values for 25 items are tested, and the value is 0.879, which lies between 0.8 and 1. It indicates that the sampling is meritorious for factor analysis.

Table 2. Eigenvalues

Factors	Eigenvalues Total	Eigenvalues(% of Variance)	EigenvaluesCumulative %
1	9.169	36.674	36.674
2	2.220	8.881	45.555
3	1.967	7.868	53.422
4	1.445	5.781	59.203
5	1.106	4.426	63.629
6	1.014	4.055	67.684

To identify how many factors are generated, eigenvalues and scree plots are carried out. The result showed that six factors are generated, and the values are encrypted in Table 2.
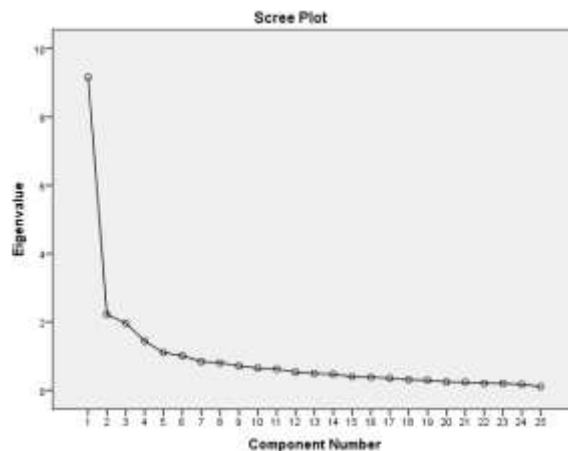

Figure 3. Scree Plot

The scree plot is generated to know the curve changes, and it has changed from vertical to flat, it is shown in Figure 3. To identify the relationship between factors, the matric is rotated, and therefore, six factors formed are as follows,

Table 3. Factor 1: Create self-Assessment

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Observe students' contributions and progress, and offer them positive feedback.	4.29	0.64	.763
2	Proposing various learning techniques and pedagogies for creating an edutainment environment	4.31	0.62	.716
3	Grading not only on the achievement but also on the efforts rendered by the students on a particular task	4.27	0.663	.714
4	Making the students believe that their work whether it is successful or failure is acknowledged completely	4.2	0.654	.712
5	Kindle the students' spirit that they can perform more as they are capable of.	4.27	0.633	.701
6	Propose reliable tasks so that the students will enjoy completion.	4.16	0.645	.657
7	Encouraging students by offering constructive feedback with suggestions	4.08	0.636	.654
8	Applauding students accomplishments based on assessments	4.23	0.704	.646
9	Clear the mind block of committing grammatical mistakes when speaking English, defining the purpose of language is to communicate thoughts.	4.21	0.65	.639

Factor 1 is interpreted as Create Self-Assessment, shown in Table 1. It induces learners' self-assessment in various aspects of the teaching and learning process. Language instructors often provide constructive feedback after each formative assessment. In addition, instructors are instituting new techniques to understand the concept meritoriously. The mean and standard deviation showed that L2 instructors often comprehensively assess the learners' classroom performance and provide effective feedback.

Table 4. Factor 2: Promote ease of learning

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Express your enthusiasm for teaching English by keeping yourself committed and motivated throughout.	3.99	1.099	.799
2	Reflect on whether the students are disturbed when you comment or others comment on them	3.5	1.475	.653
3	Create a joyful and enjoyable classroom	2.37	1.077	-.683
4	Making use of warm-up tasks for arresting the audience attention	2.24	1.052	-.695
5	Talk or attack vehemently the students about the grades	2.25	1.135	-.746

Factor 2 is interpreted as promoting ease of learning, shown in Table 4. Language instructors show enthusiasm and commitment toward successful learning. However, a few variables are loaded as negative, and it stated that the negative variables are run in the opposite direction to this factor. The instructors could not make warm-up tasks and create a fun-filled in their online classes. The mean and standard deviation for items 3, 4and 5showed very minimal importance in the online class; henceforth, no ease of learning ensued.

Table 5. Factor 3: Promote classroom climate

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Create an opportunity for students for sharing personal experiences and more chances for addressing other students	3.81	1.238	.811
2	Provide an amicable classroom climate that encourages risk-taking and exploring new ideologies	2.09	0.977	-.731

Factor 3 is interpreted as promoting classroom climate, shown in Table 5.Instructors provide opportunities to uplift students' community; nevertheless, instructors could not make the amicable ambiance in the virtual classroom.

Table 6. Factor 4: Understand values

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Promoting group activities so that the students could be convenient in a social gathering	3.46	1.162	.773
2	Demonstrate to students that you respect, accept, and care for every one of them without bias.	4.15	1.068	.666
3	Pool opinions from students to construct a task-oriented classroom with more moral values	3.9	0.667	.614
4	Informing the students of the class rules and their importance and how to involve in activities without defaulting to the rules	3.62	1.296	.516

Factor 4 is interpreted as understanding values, which is shown in Table 6. It showed that instructors emphasized the values in different aspects, especially developing interpersonal communication amongst learners' communities.

Table 7. Factor 5: Familiarise language culture

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Inform your students of the importance of English learning based on your experience in English learning.	4.04	1.043	.775
2	Build a good and reliable relationship with your students.	4.02	1.064	.682

Factor 5 is interpreted as familiarising language culture, which is shown in Table 7. It showed that instructors always emphasize target language culture and used to make good rapport with their wards. The mean and standard deviation values showed very strong occurrences happened between these variables.

Table 8. Factor 6: Effective activities in the classroom

Sl.No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev.	Rotated Component Matrixa
1	Explain the importance of an activity or task to the students to encourage participation	4	1.091	.849
2	Instruct with illustrations for all the activities or tasks to be performed	3.79	1.253	.722

Factor 6 is interpreted as effective classroom activities, as shown in Table 8. It showed that instructors are demonstrated every activity effectively and harmoniously. The mean and standard values showed that instructors strongly believe and emphasize their students to do activities. Moreover, one variable (Try to be yourself in front of students without putting on an artificial 'mask', and share with them your hobbies, likes, and dislikes) is not involved in any factors either directly or indirectly. This could be the result of instructors being irrelevant to this study.

4. Discussion

Seven (2020) discussed in his work that motivation through teaching was primarily concerned with: 1) Energizing human behavior, 2) channeling and directing such behavior, 3) Maintaining or sustaining the acquired behaviour. Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) introduced instrumental and integrative motivations in which the first one refers to the usage of language our of interest for utilitarian purpose and the latter refers to the interest to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community, which is also called as Socio-Educational Mode. Nawaz et al. (2020) underlined that universities should involve the academic members in all Knowledge Management practices with motivation to strengthen universities' effectiveness and quality (Nawaz, Durst, Hariharasudan & Shamugia, 2020). As Huitt (2001) stated, paying attention to the importance of language would help learners improve their motivation to learn even if they do not have enough intrinsic motivation. Notably, teachers should be aware of the significance of motivation in learners' language. Gangalakshmi & Naganathan (2019) referred to the existing challenging setup for the budding teachers where "the teachers are pressed to follow the conventional chalk and talk method instead of being motivated to adopt new strategies to make students motivated to listen to class completely as well as to actively participate in the language learning process. In an empirical study by Suresh & Gangalakshmi (2020), 75.2% of the target teachers group prefer motivation literature. In addition, the researchers analyzed the need for the new course content spinning around motivation literature and technology for a promising outcome of human values, especially among Gen Z students. The above-mentioned studies discuss the impact of motivation in education unfurling the need for the students to learn a language without hindrance. Covid-19 impact and the switchover from offline to online and then from online to offline accelerated the fear about education in the students' minds. So even in the difficult times especially in the third wave where once again online classes are preferred, it is important for the language faculty to imbibe motivation to learn a new language in the mind of the students. They must be motivated even to create an environment for learning. The teachers should reflect on their teaching strategies and must incorporate valuable motivational stories to enhance the students' active participation and online learning mindset. Instrumental and integrative motivations are to be focussed on with much more importance given to the students' interests. The materials must be designed by the teachers motivating them to listen, and strategies must be adopted to keep them on their toes while learning.

5. Conclusion

In this study, 25 variables are used to identify the effective use of L2 motivational strategies, and six factors are extracted and retained for investigation. The investigation showed that most of the motivational factors are used by the language instructors in their virtual classrooms. However, effectiveness and impact are notable for the following factors, such as creating self-assessment, understanding values, language culture, and activities in the classroom. Motivation strengthens the individuals' performance and gives its direction. Dornyei (2001) emphasizes that teachers' use of motivational strategies depends on the perception of the motivation. Therefore, the teacher could be aware of the importance of the motivational elements to support learners in developing their learning techniques and achieving their language learning goals. All the motivational strategies will be more reliable to motivate the learners in the ESL classroom. A language teacher should be skilled and willing to improve students' motivation in language learning (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Language instructors might be aware of motivational factors and build learners' self-confidence (Saranraj & Meenakshi, 2016). Instructors should establish high expectations, inspire and set moral objectives amongst the learners, and they should also foster learners' autonomy. Similarly, learners should be willing to take risks and struggle for their successful careers. Moreover, it is everyone's (instructors and learners) responsibility to create a stress-free online class ambiance. Lack of training for language instructors, students of different levels in the same class, pressure on teachers to show high pass percentage in end semester exams, lack of

quality materials, and lack of support from college managements are some of the reasons in ineffective ESL classroom.

Acknowledgments

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