

# MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES APPLIED IN THE FIRST GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Yousevin.<sup>1</sup>, Mardijono, J.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> English Department, Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University

Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

Email: yocimeyousevin@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in order to find out the motivational strategies applied by an English teacher who was perceived successful in motivating students in learning English in a primary school in Surabaya. It was focused on the motivational strategies related to *appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students; a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere; and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms* in the first grade of primary school. Using qualitative approach, this study is based on Dörnyei's (2001) theory on motivational strategies. The data were collected from verbal and non-verbal interaction between the teacher and students in the classroom, in two meetings within two weeks. The duration of the class was 70 minutes for each meeting. The findings showed that the English teacher applied motivational strategies related to the first and second motivational components. Mostly, the teacher applied motivational strategies related to the first motivational component. However, the teacher did not apply any motivational strategies related to the third motivational component, since there was no activity related to making groups in the classroom. It can be said that by applying all those motivational strategies, the students could be motivated in learning English and be more active in following the lesson in the classroom.

Keywords: Motivational Strategies, Classroom Interaction.

Motivation is seen as an important factor for foreign language learners. Teachers have to have techniques in teaching students to make them be motivated in the language learning. The techniques of increasing students' motivation are called motivational strategies, those are techniques that promote the individual's goal related behavior in language learning process. Motivational strategies applied through words and actions, called as verbal and non-verbal interactions among teacher and students. This study used the theory of motivational strategies by Dörnyei's (2001) focusing on the first motivational aspect related to *creating the basic motivational condition*.

In this study, I wanted to find out the motivational strategies applied by the English teacher who was perceived successful in motivating his students in the first grade classroom of primary school. The first grade students were chosen to know how the teacher maintains the young learners' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. Qualitative approach was applied in this study.

The data of this study were collected by using observation (Zacharias, 2012), to explore attitude and behavior (Dawson, 2007). It involved participants as sample and interaction in collecting the data (Dawson, 2007).

Several steps were applied. After obtaining the official permission from the Principal of the primary school, the classroom observations were started by using video recorder in March 2015 in two weeks focusing on the teacher and students interaction in the classroom. The time was 70 minutes per meeting focusing on the students of 1B class. While doing observations, this following observation protocol was used:

Table 1. Observation Protocol

Name of course:		Name of instructor:	
Class time:		Total number of students:	
Class length:			
Times	Teacher's utterances and actions	Notes	

After finishing the observation, the recorded data of the first meeting and then the second meeting were transcribed using detailed transcription. Detailed transcription was a transcription which focused on the content and the narrative conveyed (Elliot, 2005 as cited in Zacharias, 2012).

Each utterance or action was numbered using two-digit numbering system. The first digit represented the meeting, and the second digit represented the order of utterances or actions which contain motivational strategies.

In analyzing the data, firstly, I summarized the theory for helping to determine the type of each motivational strategy. Secondly, I looked at all utterances and actions one by one in the transcript and I used the summary of the theory as my guideline. I gave yellow color for verbal interaction and blue color for non-verbal interaction in the transcript.

Thirdly, after marking the data in the transcript with colors, I put the utterances and actions one by one in the table analysis. In the table analysis, I bolded the utterances and actions of motivational strategies.

Table 2. The analysis of motivational strategies

Code Number	Transcription	Motivational Strategies			V/NV	Notes
		A	B	C		

Fourthly, I counted the percentage of the use motivational strategies in each motivational component of creating the basic motivational condition based on Dörnyei's (2001) theory. I used the symbols for these three motivational components. The example of the symbols were A, B, and C. A represented appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students; B represented a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere; C represented a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms. For the percentage of motivational strategies, this formula was used.

$$M = \frac{a}{Total} \times 100$$

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The whole findings referring to the use of motivational strategies by the teacher in the classroom were summarized in the following table.

Table 3. The findings of motivational strategies used

Motivational Strategies		N	%
Appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students	Enthusiasm	1	1.54%
	Commitment to and expectations for the students' academic progress	2	3.08%
	Good relationship with the students	47	72.31%
	Good relationship with the parents	1	1.54%
A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom	There is no tension in the air	3	4.61%
	Students are at ease	3	4.61%
	There is no need for someone to feel anxious or insecure	5	7.7%
	Using humor	3	4.61%
A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms	-	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table above it could be seen that teacher mostly applied the strategy of *good relationship with the students* which related to *appropriate teacher behaviors and a good*

*relationship with the students. In contrast, the least used motivational strategies were related to a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.*

### **Motivational Strategies in showing appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students**

#### **1. Showing Enthusiasm**

*Almost in the end of the class in the second meeting, when the teacher was marking students' books, the teacher told to the students that English gave benefits for their lives. (Pak Benny is the English teacher who teaches this primary school and becomes the subject of my study)*

**2.146:**

**“Enak ya kalau bisa bahasa inggris, kayak pak Benny gini, bisa jadi guru, bisa ngomong sama bule, terus juga bisa keliling dunia karena bisa ngomong pakai bahasa internasional, bahasa inggris.”**

*(Well, if we can speak English like Mr. Benny, we can be a teacher, can speak with foreigners, and go around the world because we can speak using International language, English language)*

While giving mark on the students' books, the teacher shared the advantages of mastering English language. Telling good experience of mastering English language to the students was a good thing for motivating students. It was such a motivating sentence for students that they can know how important the English language for their lives. In his sentence, the teacher told the students that learning English language was a useful thing in life, explaining that learning English language could bring benefits for their lives. It was an example of verbal interaction between teacher and students in the classroom. Teacher made students be motivated through his sentences. His sentences showed the teacher's desire or enthusiasm in mastering English language which made his life beneficial for himself and others.

#### **2. Showing Commitment to and expectations for the students' academic progress**

*A student asked the teacher about 'where he had to write the explanation given by the teacher', then the teacher came to the student's desk and gave the answer.*

**1.148:**

**“Ditulis di bagian atas judul di buku kalian” (Write this at the top of the title in your books) (While going to the student's desk, he told to that student where he had to write)**

A student asked the teacher about something which was related to the English lesson. Then the teacher came to the student's desk to answer student's question. Coming to the students' desk when they need help is one of the examples of non-verbal interaction to give motivation to the students. Logically, when the students ask something to the teacher, it means that the students do not really understand at that part. When then the teacher is willing to come to the students' desks, it means that the teacher cares about the students' progress. Students will be motivated in learning English language in the classroom because they see that the teacher also expects the best result for them. The teacher shows it through his action in supporting the students' progress in the classroom by helping the students in academic progress.

*In the second meeting of my observation, the teacher gave mark on students' books. The students came to the teacher's desk one by one.*

**2.145:**

**“Ayo sekarang pak Benny nilai satu persatu ya bukunya” (Come on, Mr. Benny will give mark on your books one by one) (Teacher began to give mark on students' books. Students came to the teacher's desk one by one)**

The example showed that the teacher gave mark on the students' papers or books. It was a motivating way in giving and increasing motivation to the students. There are some reasons behind it. First, by marking the students' papers or books, the students would not underestimate the tasks,

they would do it because they knew that the teacher would correct it. Second, the students would try to do their best in finishing the tasks because they wanted to get good scores from the teacher. Third, they would attempt to get better score than their friends, it means that they would learn the material seriously. Fourth, the students would be motivated because they knew that the teacher appreciated their effort by correcting and giving mark on the students' papers or books. Those examples show that giving mark on students' papers or books will be a motivation for students in doing the tasks and following the language learning process. It is an example of non-verbal interaction from the teacher to the students to make them be motivated.

### **3. Showing Good relationship with the students**

*In the beginning of the class, the teacher gave greeting to the students.*

#### **1.1:**

(Opening the class) **“Assalamualaikum, sudah berdoa belum?”**  
(*have you prayed yet?*)

In the beginning of the lesson, the teacher commonly gives greeting to the students. In this example, the teacher said **“Assalamualaikum”** in the beginning of the lesson. This is one of the examples of greeting the students. This is important to do in motivating students. It is because the beginning of the lesson determines the whole process in the classroom. Greeting can show the students that the teacher welcomes the students in the classroom, in the language learning. It also shares the friendliness, warmth to the students. Moreover, the students will feel the conducive condition in the classroom between the teacher and students. However, when the teacher does not greet the students, the students will feel the unsupported situation in the classroom because they do not see the mutual relationship between the teacher and students, so that they cannot follow the language learning process well. Therefore, greeting students is important for teacher to do in the beginning of the lesson. It is a part of verbal interaction to motivate students in the language learning process.

*While reading the reading passage, the teacher moved around in the classroom to see the students one by one.*

#### **1.89:**

**“I am Tia” (The teacher walked around to the students' tables one by one to make sure that all students followed the lesson well)**

This example showed that the teacher moved around in the classroom. It is categorized as teacher's action which can motivate the students. This non-verbal interaction from teacher in the classroom shows that the teacher cares and pays attention to the students' work. When the teacher moved around in the classroom, the teacher looked at the students one by one, he wanted to make sure that all students followed the lesson seriously. The teacher did not want his students to lack attention to the lesson. From this action, the students could see that the teacher cared for them by actively checking them at their desks, and he wanted to give the best thing for them. Because of that, the students will be serious in learning because they know that the teacher pays attention to them, they will think that the teacher will always be there for them, so that they will do as what the teacher's wants or commands them to do.

### **4. Showing Good relationship with the parents**

*When there was a student who defecated in the classroom, the teacher called the student's parent to come to the school to pick the student up.*

#### **1.127:**

**(Teacher called the student' parent by phone in the classroom to inform that the child defecated in the classroom. By informing that, the parent could pick the student up to change his clothes)**

The example gave the picture that the teacher had good relationship with the students' parent. I could see it during my classroom observation. When there was a student who defecated in the classroom, the teacher directly called the student's parent by using his own mobile phone. It meant

that the teacher saved the phone number of students' parents. By saving phone numbers of students' parents in his own mobile phone, it showed that the teacher considered it as an important thing. Having good and close relationship was important for him. It gave benefit for him at that time because he could call the student's parent directly to pick the student up, so the problem was solved quickly. That teacher's action could eliminate the student's anxiety and fear because the teacher let the parent pick the student up after making embarrassing thing in the classroom (defecating in the classroom). It could be seen that having good relationship with the students' parents is important for teacher, in the emergency situation the teacher can directly call and inform the parents about the students' condition. Calling the students' parents on phone is a part of verbal interaction.

### **Motivational Strategies in showing a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere**

#### **1. Showing *There is no tension in the air***

*In the first meeting when I entered the class, the students looked scared with my presence. They might think that I would disturb them or make them feel uncomfortable in the classroom. Then, the teacher directly told to the students that my presence would not threaten them.*

##### **1.17:**

(When the students felt scared with my presence in the classroom, the Teacher gave motivational sentences to them through his words)

**“Miss Sevin ini cuma mau melihat saat kalian belajar di kelas. Jadi kalian tetap fokus belajar ya, tidak usah takut. Siapa tahu nanti jadi guru kalian hahaha. Oke ya, sudah ya.”***(Miss Sevin just wants to see you when you are studying in the classroom. So that, you have to keep focusing on learning, don't be scared. Who knows that she will be your teacher later. Okay)*

On the first day of my observation, the students looked scared with my presence in the classroom. They were curious with my purposes of coming to the class. They were worried that I would disturb them, and I made them feel uncomfortable in the learning process time in the classroom. It made students not feel relaxed in the classroom. After the teacher knew that situation, the teacher tried to make the students feel okay with my presence by giving them understanding and explanation that my presence would not disturb them, and they did not need to pay attention to me. They just kept focusing on learning and doing the tasks well. This was an example of verbal interaction because through the teacher's utterances, the students felt free of worry. There was no tension for them in the classroom, and they could learn as usual regardless of my presence. Because of that, these teacher's utterances were really motivating the students.

*After the teacher finished taking care of the student who had defecated in the classroom, then the teacher gave brief direction to the students.*

##### **1.132:**

**“Oke siap ya? Ayo dengarkan, dengarkan dulu. Siapapun yang mau Kebelakang atau mau ke kamar mandi bilang ya. Kalau memang sakit ijin aja, gak usah takut sama gurunya, iya?”**

*(Okay are you ready? come on listen, listen first. Whoever wants to go to restroom just let me know. If you feel unwell, just ask permission, don't be scared with the teacher, okay?)*

In the example, it could be seen that the teacher demonstrated to the students that there was no need for them to feel scared to tell the truth in the classroom. It was because the teacher would understand and care about the students' condition, so that they had to tell the truth to the teacher. No need to feel afraid with the teacher to tell the truth. In this way the teacher tried to break the tension in the classroom between the teacher and the students. It was a motivating sentence because by saying that, the students would feel comfortable to learn in the classroom. Moreover, they would be motivated in following the language learning because there was nothing that they should be afraid of. This example of verbal interaction was a good way to be used in motivating students.

## 2. Showing *Students are at ease*

*A student made noise on his desk, then the teacher came to his desk to make him stop in doing that.*

### 1.18:

**(A student made noise. Then, the teacher came to the student and hold his hands to make him stop do that)**

The feeling of students will be also influenced by things and situation around them. At that time, there was a student who made noise in the classroom. That noise would disturb other students in the classroom. They could not concentrate well in the classroom. Even, they would feel unhappy sitting in the classroom. Because of that, the teacher directly stopped the student who made noise. It was because the teacher wanted to make all students feel happy. Moreover, the teacher made sure that there was not one thing that disturbed them in the learning process. If there was no noise in the classroom, it could be said that the students would feel happy and concentrate on the lesson. Good situation in the classroom is one of the motivating ways in the classroom.

*The teacher did not let anything disturb the learning process in the classroom, including the bad smell in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher cleaned up the floor.*

### 1.128:

**(After the parent arrived at the school, the teacher cleaned up the floor and made sure there was no unpleasant smell anymore in the classroom)**

Students' feeling will be also influenced by smell around them. They could not learn seriously if there was unpleasant smell around them. In this example, there was unpleasant smell which came from the student who defecated in the classroom. The students went out from the class because of the bad smell. After knowing that, the teacher cleaned up the class and made sure there was no unpleasant smell anymore in the classroom. When everything was done, the students went back to the class and sat comfortably as before. This teacher's action succeeded to make the students be motivated again in continuing the lesson because the teacher had cleaned up the class. It proved that bad smell will decrease students' motivation, but then the teacher solved it. It was an example of non-verbal interaction which was done by the teacher to make students sit in a comfortable place which may increase their motivation.

## 3. Showing *There is no need for someone to feel anxious or insecure*

*After reading the reading passage, then a student told the teacher that there was a bad smell around him. Then, the teacher tried to find out the smell. Apparently, his friend sat beside him who defecated in the classroom.*

### 1.121:

**“Kamu poop ya? Gak papa bilang aja, ayo kalau ‘poop’ bapak antar ke kamar mandi.”** *(do you defecate, yeah? It doesn't matter, just say it, if you defecate then I will bring you to the bathroom)*

The student who defecated in the classroom felt embarrassed, afraid with his friends and the teacher. Although the situation was like that, the teacher tried to make that student feel okay and not cry again. The teacher explained to that student (who defecated) that it was a normal thing, and he did not need to feel afraid. The teacher made sure that students did not need to feel worry, anxious or insecure if they made something bad in the classroom. The teacher told the student (who defecated in the classroom) that it was a normal thing, and he did not need to feel worry or anxious for it. It was the way of the teacher to make that student feel okay through his utterance. His words in those sentences helped the students not feel so bad; those teacher's utterances could make students feel that it was not a weird thing, so that student (who defecated in the classroom) did not need to feel scared. Through those teacher's utterances, the students would not feel afraid or scared to come to the school and classroom. The student would be motivated again to follow the language learning process. This is an example of motivating students through verbal interaction with the students.

#### 4. Showing Using humor

*The teacher made a joke related to the unusual thing which might happen in the classroom. It was also related to the incident that just happened in the classroom.*

**1.134:**

**“Siapa biasanya yang ‘poop’ disini? (who usually defecate here?)**

(in the classroom). (Teacher gave sentence of humor)

When the teacher said like that, it would be a joking utterance to make students laugh. It was because when the teacher said it, a student began to point other students, another student pointed other students, and so forth. Through that reciprocal utterance, the teacher and the students laughed together. They laughed together when the teacher said it because it was like unusual thing which was done in the classroom. Actually it will be embarrassing thing if it is done. Because of that, the teacher tried to create humor by asking unusual thing to the students. It was categorized as verbal interaction from the teacher who succeeded to make students laugh.

*The teacher created another joke to answer the first joke. It was meant to make students laugh together.*

**1.139:**

**“Stop, stop. Iya dua kali yang ketahuan, tapi yang gak ketahuan?**

**Hahaha (Yes twice is caught, but how many are not caught?)**

**(The teacher and students were laughing together).** Sudah- sudah ayo

kita lanjutkan belajar.” (Okay done, we continue to learn)

The teacher made joke through his sentence. The sentence could make the students laugh because it was not supposed to happen in the classroom (defecate in the classroom), but the teacher said that some students did it many times. Children would laugh when the teacher talked about unusual things happen in the classroom. Because of that, the teacher and the students laughed together. This is a verbal interaction to create humor in the classroom.

#### **Motivational Strategies in showing a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms**

This motivational component offers many motivational strategies related to make group works among students in the classroom in doing tasks. It was explained by Dörnyei (2001) that group plays important role in the learning process for the students. However, in this first grade class that I observed, I did not find any motivational strategies related to *a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms* applied in the classroom. It was because the teacher did not create activities for them to make them work in group. The teacher just explained the lesson and asked the students to pay attention to them then took note in their books. Therefore, the teacher did not apply motivational strategies of this motivational component. Although the teacher did not apply any motivational strategies in this part, it did not give bad impact to the language learning process in the classroom. The learning process ran well.

The findings showed that the teacher applied four motivational strategies of the first motivational component, those are *enthusiasm, commitment to and expectations for the students’ academic progress, good relationship with the students, and good relationship with the parents*. Mostly the teacher applied motivational strategies related to *good relationship with the students*. The teacher also applied four motivational strategies of the second motivational component: *there is no tension in the air, students are at ease, there is no need for someone to feel anxious or insecure, and using humor*. The analysis showed that the teacher mostly applied the motivational strategies related to *there is no need for someone to feel anxious or insecure*.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study was about the use of motivational strategies by the teacher in the first grade of elementary school. The theory applied in this study was on motivational strategies by Dörnyei (2001) and supported by classroom interaction by Thomas (1987). The data were verbal and non-verbal interactions related to motivational strategies in it.

Focusing only on the first motivational component, the study revealed that, firstly, the teacher applied the motivational strategies related to *enthusiasm, commitment to and expectations for the students' academic progress, good relationship with the students, and good relationship with the parents* of the first motivational component. Those motivational strategies were applied through the teacher's behaviors toward the students in the classroom and the way how the teacher treated the students in the classroom. Secondly, the teacher applied the motivational strategies related to *there is no tension in the air, students are at ease, there is no need for someone to feel anxious or insecure, and using humor* of the second motivational component. Thirdly, the teacher did not apply any motivational strategies related to *a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms*; it was because there was no activity of the material that asked the students to make group, and also the teacher did not create activity related to making groups. Through all those motivational strategies applied by the teacher, the students got motivated in learning English in the classroom.

This study is a small scale study, which is based only on one teacher, one class, and two meetings. Further study can be done in a larger scale. Hopefully, this study can be useful and can inspire English teachers about the use of motivational strategies in the language learning process.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Mahrooqi, R., Abrar-ul-Hassan, S., & Asante, C. C. (2012). Analyzing the Use of Motivational Strategies by EFL Teachers in Oman. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 8(1), 36-76.
- Cheng, H-F. & Dörnyei, Z. (2007). The Use of Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 153-174.
- Dawson, C. (2007). *A practical guide to research methods: A user-friendly manual for mastering research techniques and projects (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Oxford: How To Books Ltd.
- Djigunović, J., M. (2012). Attitudes and Motivation in Early Foreign Language Learning. *Center for Educational Policy Studies*, 2(3), 55-74.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hecht, M., A. & Ambady, N. (1999). Nonverbal Communication and Psychology: Past and Future. *The New Jersey Journal of Communication*, 7(2), 1-15.
- Merriam, S., B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Thomas, A., M. (1987). *Classroom Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zacharias, N., T. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for second language education: A coursebook*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.