



# EFL teachers' behavior of using motivational strategies: The case of teaching in the Korean context



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- EFL teachers' use of motivational strategies was investigated based on the ARCS model.
- Only one component of ARCS, attention, is found to be effectively utilized.
- Motivational strategies are appropriately used only in the beginning phase.
- L2 proficiency is positively correlated with the use of motivational strategies.
- Teaching experience is negatively correlated with the use of motivational strategies.

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## ABSTRACT

While studies have investigated the role of motivation in learning and teaching, research on teachers' motivational strategies remains scarce. This study examined the motivating behavior of in-service teachers of English in Korea ( $N = 12$ ). Videotapes of the teachers' classes were analyzed based on Keller's ARCS model using NVivo, revealing that the teachers did not effectively utilize motivational strategies or tactics, except for attention. Additionally, teachers' motivational strategies were correlated positively with their language proficiency but negatively with teaching experience. Finally, teachers' motivational strategies were shown to be grounded in traditional teacher-centered approaches rather than the promotion of student ownership of learning.

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## 1. Introduction

Motivation is a key factor in successful second language (L2) learning. It is an individualized trait that helps learners persist long enough to master the L2 regardless of their language aptitude or cognitive characteristics (Dörnyei, 2001a; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Motivation to learn is acquired through classroom experiences such as direct instruction, modeling, and interaction with the instructor, as well as general experience (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001a; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Moreover, a teacher's skills and teaching style are positively correlated with student achievement (Hirsch, 2001; Westwood, 2004). Several studies have also reported that motivation is an important component of effective teaching and that teachers' use of motivational strategies

affects students' English learning achievement (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Hirsch, 2001; Westwood, 2004). Teachers' skills are a crucial basis for the incorporation of *motivational strategies* into curricula and teaching to create motivating learning environments (Dörnyei, 2001a). However, few motivational studies have been specifically aimed at the implementation or evaluation of motivational strategies in the classroom (Moskovsky & Alrabai, 2009). To further support actual L2 teaching practices rather than merely developing theoretical concepts or components of motivation, then, it is necessary to focus on teachers and the strategies and techniques they use to motivate students in the language classroom.

At both the research and classroom levels, teachers' motivational strategies are not fully utilized. The Korean Ministry of Education (KMoE) has recently emphasized teacher education and training programs for in-service EFL teachers (KMoE, 2006). During the practicum for in-service EFL teachers in Korea, it was found that the teachers did not effectively incorporate motivational strategies to promote student motivation. Further, there is no teaching model

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available to help EFL teachers improve their use of motivational strategies in the classroom. In addition, there is a lack of empirical investigation of the differences between the motivational strategies used by novice and experienced teachers (Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Yilmaz, 2011). Moreover, most previous motivational studies have utilized surveys or self-reported questionnaires to gather data rather than basing their findings on the actual observation and evaluation of teachers' classroom motivation practices (Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini & Ratcherva, 2013).

Therefore, it is imperative to develop a teacher-driven motivational model incorporating practical strategies and tactics for EFL classrooms. In the classroom, L2 teachers' major interest with regard to motivation is not in the properties or components of motivation, as it is for most researchers, but rather in the skills that are required to motivate students. From this perspective, the ARCS (*attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction*) model (Keller, 1994, 2010) provides effective motivational strategies for classroom use. This model, unlike many other motivational models, offers a comprehensive picture of motivation, including both teachers and students, theory and practice, and broad components and detailed constructs of motivation. Moreover, the ARCS model is easily adapted into tools for instructional design, classroom guidance, and teacher evaluation or teacher training on motivational strategies. Thus, the ARCS model is an adequate tool for examining motivating behavior in the practice of Korean English teachers to support the development of an effective motivation training model for these teachers.

To develop effective motivational strategies and models for the use of teachers, it is first necessary to examine the status quo of teacher behaviors in relation to motivational strategies. Hence, employing the ARCS model, the present study analyzed the motivational strategies that Korean EFL teachers used in their teaching practice. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

Q1: How do Korean English teachers utilize motivational strategies in their instruction?

Q2: How do these teachers' motivational strategies differ by instructional phase (*beginning, during* [the session], or *closing*)?

Q3: How do teachers' personal characteristics (*English proficiency level and teaching experience*) influence their use of motivational strategies?

In the following section, we review theoretical perspectives on learning motivation and present the theoretical model—the ARCS Model—that is used as the analytical framework in this study.

### 1.1. L2 learning motivation theories

Motivation has drawn a considerable amount of attention in L2 learning, as it is difficult for unmotivated students to accomplish such a long-term, challenging goal as language learning (Madrid, 2002). As in the area of motivational psychology, scholars have highlighted the importance of L2 motivation and attempted to explain it from diverse perspectives (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). Dörnyei (1994) proposed a framework for L2 motivation comprising three levels of components: the *language level, learner level, and learning situation level*. In a subsequent model based on a process-oriented approach, Dörnyei (2001c) proposed the following motivational strategies: a) *creating the basic motivational conditions*, b) *generating initial motivation*, c) *maintaining and protecting motivation*, and d) *encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation*. These aspects are dynamic and cyclic; in other words, the last strategy influences the first in an ongoing virtuous circle. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) suggested four levels of

L2 motivation: a) the *micro level*, which concerns motivational effects on the cognitive processing of L2 stimuli; b) the *classroom level*, associated with motivational techniques and activities; c) the *syllabus level*, related to content decisions based on an analysis of needs; and d) the *extracurricular level*, related to informal, out-of-class, and long-term factors and to continuing motivation. Williams and Burden (1997) further distinguished L2 motivational constructs by contextual influences, including internal and external factors.

Other motivational studies have explored the factors that influence the motivational strategies used by teachers. According to Dörnyei (2001a, 2001c), motivational components at the learning situation level are especially associated with situation-specific motives related to the syllabus, teaching materials and methods, learning tasks, teacher's personality and behavior, teaching style/practice, and learner group characteristics. Chacon (2005) discovered that teachers with low self-efficacy for teaching tended to employ less effective techniques, and Yilmaz (2011) asserted that teachers' personal characteristics, such as gender, grade level that the teacher taught, and teaching experience, influence instructional decisions. He further found a positive relationship between teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their perceived level of language proficiency; that is, his study results suggested that more proficient and efficacious teachers use more effective instructional strategies, including motivational strategies. By contrast, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) indicated that the level of teacher efficacy did not have an effect on the types of instructional strategies used; Newby (1991) reported that *extrinsically* oriented strategies such as rewards and punishment were implemented most often by novice teachers, and Keller (1987b) mentioned that more teaching experience is required to effectively implement *intrinsically* oriented strategies such as confidence-building and relevance strategies.

Finding optimal strategies for motivating students in the classroom remains a challenging issue for most L2 teachers. Several studies have identified motivating students as the second-most serious source of difficulty that teachers encounter in the classroom (Daniels, 1994; Veenman, 1984), but relatively few studies have been conducted on how best to motivate learners in an actual classroom setting (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001c; Keller, 2008; Williams & Burden, 1997). Furthermore, prior studies on motivation have focused primarily on applied-linguistic aspects, such as attitudes and psychological components (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994); far less attention has been devoted to L2 motivation in terms of the various aspects of the learning context (that is, in general, the classroom context). Even the studies that have investigated motivation in the classroom context have largely focused on students, for example on their behaviors and perceptions, rather than on teachers' use of motivational strategies (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Dörnyei, 2001b).

Many theorists and researchers have proposed theories to explain motivation, but these have failed to provide an overall picture of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b, 2001c; Wloodkowski, 1988). Overall, these studies have investigated cognitive characteristics of individual students and treated motivation as a personal, unchangeable trait rather than one that is changeable and manageable by teacher intervention. Consequently, a majority of the research on L2 motivation to date has focused on the conceptual nature of motivation and of its role in L2 learning and on the perspective of L2 learners, as derived from insights in the field of cognitive psychology (Dörnyei, 2001c). Subsequent studies influenced by social psychology have begun to deeply consider the social context in which learning occurs as well; however, these studies have still emphasized universal motivational components in general learning situations rather than specific components pertaining to foreign language classrooms (Dörnyei, 2001c). In

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