

The impact of EFL teacher motivational strategies on student motivation to learn English in Costa Rica

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Abstract This paper explores the relationship between EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher motivational strategies and student motivation. Previous research has shown a positive relationship between EFL student motivation and student acquisition of the target language; however, little work has been done to explore what EFL teachers can do to generate, foster, and maintain the motivation of their students. The present study uses the MOLT scheme (as developed by [Guilloteaux & Dörnyei 2008](#)) in middle and high school classrooms in Costa Rica. Student self-reported questionnaire data was compared to student and teacher classroom observation data. The study found strong positive correlations between student motivation and all aspects of the teacher's motivational practice except 'teacher discourse,' suggesting that a teacher who speaks too frequently in the EFL classroom may impede student motivation.

1 Introduction

Previous research in the field of Second Language Acquisition has been conducted to empirically link English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student motivation and student achievement ([Gardner & MacIntyre 1991](#), [Dörnyei 1994](#), [Tremblay & Gardner 1995](#), [Noels et al. 1999](#), [Masgoret & Gardner 2003](#)). Knowing that a student with higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will likely achieve more in the EFL classroom, it is then beneficial to consider things that the EFL teacher can do to improve and foster the motivation of their students. To date, previous research has already shown that student motivation impacts student achievement. This study seeks to examine the relationship between teacher motivational strategies and student motivation. If we can show that teacher motivational strategies affect student motivation, we can then transitively hypothesize that teacher motivational strategies would affect student achievement as well.

2 Literature review

Most of the previous research on this subject of EFL motivation has focused on the correlation between EFL student motivation and achievement, in situations both where English (Gardner & MacIntyre 1991) or other languages (Gardner et al. 1997, 2004, Tremblay & Gardner 1995) were the target languages. In the field of educational psychology, Vansteenkiste et al. (2006) showed experimentally that intrinsic motivation is associated with higher levels of achievement.

Dörnyei (1994) notes that extrinsic motivation can often negatively impact intrinsic motivation in the classroom, for instance, when required reading or upcoming tests take away student enjoyment for learning. In this study, Dörnyei delved deeply into the nuances of EFL student motivation categories, looking at student motivation at three levels: language, learner, and learning situation. Of the three of Dörnyei's (1994) levels, the latter two are related to my research topic. Learner level motivation includes linguistic self-confidence and speaker anxiety, while learning situation level motivation is comprised of course-, teacher-, and group-specific motivational components. Dörnyei concluded this paper by noting that learning situation level motivation had not been studied in depth; however, in the two decades since this paper's publication, a number of researchers have attempted to examine the relationship between EFL teacher behavior and student motivation/achievement. Gardner (2007) consistently finds a fairly weak correlation between classroom attitude and achievement (independent from the measure of achievement he uses); however, he does not think that this means that teacher practices have no impact on student motivation.

In 2005, Chen et al. (2005) examined the effect of teacher motivational strategies and suggested that there is a cultural and/or governmental component to EFL motivation which should be factored in alongside teacher motivational strategies. However, the study's participants were older than schoolchildren (an average age of 25) and most of them had studied science or engineering, a global field in which English is a leading language. Thus, for these participants, Chen et al. suggest that a more intrinsic aspect of motivation such as integration is not as salient as an extrinsic instrumental aspect, such as needing English for a career path.

While all of the previously mentioned studies relied on learner self-report questionnaires to assess student motivation, Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) developed a framework to observe motivation quantitatively in the EFL classroom in conjunction with a self-report questionnaire: the Motivation Orientation of Language

Teaching (MOLT). MOLT includes observational guidelines for evidence of both learner motivation and teacher motivational strategy use. 'Learner motivated behavior' is observed in three categories: 'alertness,' 'participation,' and 'volunteering,' where the observer marks a box each minute corresponding to the approximate percentage of the class who demonstrates the categories in that time frame. 'Teacher's motivational teaching practices' are observed as a construct of 25 observational variables pulled from Dörnyei 1994 paper, which contained a list of 30 items that a teacher could use to motivate students. Teacher motivational strategies were coded per minute: each minute of the observation video was assigned a behavior, such that the percentage of class time spent on each motivation strategy could be calculated.

Since the invention of the MOLT framework, aspects of it have been used in a few studies that examined the impact of student motivation on achievement (Heidari-Shahreza 2014, Huang 2011, Stroud 2013). However, fewer studies have replicated the entirety of the MOLT framework.

Papi & Abdollahzadeh (2012) replicated the Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) study where MOLT was first used, with the addition of the impact of motivational strategies on the learner's ideal vs. ought-to self (from Dörnyei's 'The L2 Motivational Self System' (1994)). Papi and Abdollahzadeh further examined the aspects of learner motivated behavior: specifically analyzing whether the observed learner motivated behavior correlated with the students' self-reported motivation. Due to cultural restrictions, the participants were all male, with an average age of 14. The study found strong correlations between teacher motivational practice and learner motivated behavior, but intriguingly, a nonsignificant correlation between learner motivated behavior and self-reported motivation. The authors noted that in implementing the MOLT framework in Iran, they had 'generalized beyond national boundaries.' My study also makes use of the entire MOLT framework, and furthers this generalization across borders, because it implements the framework in Costa Rican classrooms. Additionally, my sample is more reflective of the population, because I survey students of both genders.

Analyzing the relationship between teacher motivational strategies and student motivation is an important step in the research field because if we can see a link between EFL teacher behaviors and student motivation, we can as EFL teachers and/or tutors transitively foster student achievement in an effective manner. The present project's data from grade school classrooms in Costa Rica can then be compared to data from other parts of the world, to see if there is a universally effective teaching motivational strategy, or if it is more culturally bound.

The present paper examines the teacher motivational strategies that promote increased motivation among EFL students, as well as the sub-areas of student motivation that are most affected by the teaching strategies. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1 Which EFL teacher motivational strategies maximally promote student motivation?

RQ2 Do EFL teacher motivational strategies have more of an impact on intrinsic or extrinsic student motivation?

RQ3 Is intrinsic motivation reflected in learner motivated behavior?

I hypothesize that the motivational strategies that foster positive student self-images, decrease classroom anxiety, and stimulate student interest will be the most effective. Among the students, I hypothesize that the area of motivation most affected by the instructor to be intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, because student confidence, comfort, stimulation, and enjoyment are all intrinsic aspects. Extrinsic factors such as the influence of peers, family, society, and culture, are less likely to be affected by the student's teacher and classroom experience. While the teacher could also influence a student's extrinsic motivation (e.g. by stressing the importance of English for a future career), Noels et al. found that the teacher's style of teaching 'may not be relevant if the student pursues learning for extrinsic reasons.' Student perception of the teacher's style and classroom environment are associated instead with intrinsic motivation (Noels et al. 1999).

2.1 The Instructional Conversation pedagogy

While the examination of the effectiveness of this pedagogy is not the focus of the current study, it bears briefly introducing, because the videos analyzed in the present study are videos from teachers who have received training in this pedagogy. The main focus of the Instructional Conversation (IC) is to provide students with opportunities for extended dialogue, where that dialogue both has educational value for the students and is also relevant to their lives (August & Hakuta 1998). The IC aids students not only in developing their language skills, but their complex thinking skills as well, because a successful IC requires an intellectually challenging task that is collaborative in nature.

A successful IC environment divides a classroom into small groups (3–7 members) in a challenging but non-threatening atmosphere. Each group then engages in a joint productive activity (JPA). When the teacher is involved in a JPA as a conversational facilitator, this is an IC/JPA. Each JPA should have a clear thematic focus (that is, a connection to a larger, relevant issue), and the tasks should require students to produce more complex language and expression. Thus, the IC/JPA fosters and improves literacy, social skills, critical thinking, vocabulary, and oral production of language.

3 Methodology

3.1 Participants

Eight middle- and high-school teachers in Costa Rica had students complete the Motivation Questionnaire via Qualtrics, an online survey platform. Two of those eight teachers only had one student each complete the questionnaire, so their responses were not analyzed because of the small sample size. All teachers speak Spanish as L1, and English as L2. Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 had received previous training in the IC Pedagogy. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 had 24, 72, 45, 57, 20, and 18 students complete the questionnaire, respectively. All student participants speak Spanish as L1 and English as L2, and range from 11 to 16 years of age.

3.2 The Motivation Questionnaire

The Motivation Questionnaire was developed from Guilloteaux & Dörnyei's (2008) student motivational state questionnaire. The original questionnaire was composed of three subscales: attitudes towards the course (9 items), linguistic self-confidence (8 items), and L2 classroom anxiety (3 items). The present study added a fourth subscale: external factors, because the three former subscales excluded extrinsically motivating factors. For consistency among the subscales, the present study added additional questions in each subscale (from Dörnyei 1994), such that each of the first three subscales contained 10 items, and the final subscale (external factors) contained 7 items (37 items total). The questions were worded exactly as Guilloteaux and Dörnyei had done, except that the present study changed any place names to Costa Rica.

For each item, students were asked to select the amount to which they agreed or disagreed with the given statement, in the format of a six-point Likert scale. Each

point on the Likert scale was assigned a number, ranging from 1–6, such that the lowest number corresponded with ‘totally disagree’ and the highest corresponded with ‘totally agree.’ Thus, the higher the student’s total from all items, the more motivated that student is.

All 10 items in the ‘classroom anxiety’ subscale were negatively worded (e.g. ‘I often feel nervous when speaking English in class.’). There was no indication that this was confusing to the participants. In order for the scoring of the questionnaire responses to remain consistent, the numbering was reversed; for these items, 6 corresponded with ‘totally disagree,’ and 1 corresponded with ‘totally agree.’

In addition to the 37 motivational state items, the questionnaire also asked for demographic information such as school, birthplace, age, grade level, gender, and the number of years the student had been taking English classes. Student motivation score was calculated as the sum of the student’s responses to the motivation questionnaire.

For this study, the questionnaire was translated into Spanish and distributed to Costa Rican teachers involved in an ongoing collaboration with the University of Georgia’s College of Education. The Costa Rican teachers were asked to have their students complete the questionnaire via Qualtrics, an online survey platform, which facilitated the gathering of data, as students could complete the questionnaire on their cell phones. This online platform randomized the order of the questions such that the subscales were distributed throughout the entire questionnaire. The randomized order was the same for every student.

Overall, 233 responses were collected from students of 8 different teachers. However, two teachers (Teachers 7 and 8) only had one student response each, so their responses were not used for statistical purposes.

3.3 Video observations

Of the 6 teachers whose students’ questionnaire responses were analyzed, only 4 of these teachers (Teachers 2, 3, 4 and 6) were able to provide videos of their classrooms. The videos obtained were examples of the teachers conducting IC/JPAs in their classrooms. All videos were self-recorded by the teachers conducting the IC/JPA.

The videos were coded according to the MOLT framework explained in Guiloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), with a few modifications. I decreased the time frame from 1 minute to 30 seconds, and instead of coding only one strategy per time

unit, I coded all that occurred within that time unit (instead of just the dominant one). Furthermore, I redefined some of the original framework's terms (all from the 'activity design' subscale) to fit the IC/JPA lesson format:

1. Tangible task production—the students are constructing something tangible, but that item does not have to be an item to be presented, such as a poster or brochure.

Some observed activities which I considered to be this strategy were: a) manipulating index cards with individual words and/or morphemes to create grammatical sentences; b) collaborating on a poster if new information was being added or the students were organizing existing information into a hierarchy. I did not count activities such as binary sorting, or the completion of a worksheet.

2. Intellectual challenge (namely, what is challenging?)

I considered a task to be intellectually challenging if a) the students are required to produce novel information, b) the task requires more than a single-word answer (not just that the teacher asks for complete sentences), c) students are asked to explain or defend their response, d) students are helping to correct others' work and explain their corrections, or e) the task requires self-evaluation.

3. Personalization

Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) define this item as 'creating opportunities for students to express personal meanings (e.g., experiences, feelings, opinions).' Part of the structure of an effective IC is that at the beginning, the students set conversational or participation goals for themselves. I considered this choosing of a personal conversational goal to be an instance of personalization in the activity design, because the students were given the choice of their goal.

4. Element of interest, creativity, fantasy

Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) describe this item as 'the activity contains ambiguous, paradoxical, problematic, controversial, contradictory, incongruous, or exotic material; connects with students' interests, values, creativity, fantasy, or arouses their curiosity.' I simplified this to focus on the aspect of creativity. For example, if the activity required the students to create their own sentence in a given tense with a given verb, I considered this to have a creative element.

Teacher 2 submitted two videos, both of her administering the exact same lesson. Both of her videos were analyzed, and the results were averaged to give her an observed motivational strategies score. Teachers 3, 4, and 5 only submitted one video. For each video, after the coding, the total amount of time units spent per motivational strategy was calculated. Since all videos were different lengths, these numbers were standardized by calculating the percent of each lesson devoted to each motivational strategy. These standardized numbers were then compared across teachers. Additionally, teacher motivational strategies scores were calculated by observed subscale (learner motivated behavior, encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, activity design, participation structure, and teacher discourse) by summing the standardized values in each subscale.

4 Results

4.1 The Motivation Questionnaire

Total teacher motivational strategies scores across the four questionnaire subscales ranged from 168–180.75. Scores from four teachers (1, 2, 4, 6) clustered at the bottom of the range (168–169.64), and the two remaining teacher scores (from Teachers 3, 5) were approximately ten points higher. An ANOVA test shows, however, that the difference in means is not statistically significant (p -value = 0.106).

The maximum possible student motivation score (the student answers 6, or ‘totally agree’ for all statements) was 222. The minimum possible score (responding 1 to all statements) was 37. Student motivation scores from all six teachers fell into a range (148–184) corresponding to the students responding with mostly 4 and 5. There were multiple student motivation scores above 200, distributed across all teachers.

Delving deeper into the subscales of the questionnaire, ‘external factors’ was the highest-scoring subscale. The maximum possible score on this subscale was 42, and students of all teachers scored between 36–39. (Most students answered 5 or 6 on all questions in this subscale.)

‘Attitudes towards the course’ was the second-highest scoring subscale. The maximum possible score on the three subscales examining intrinsic motivation was 60, and student motivation scores for the ‘attitudes towards the course’ subscale ranged from 48–51.

Student motivation scores on the subscale ‘linguistic self-confidence’ ranged from 44–50. Students of Teachers 3 and 5 scored the highest on this subscale.

The final intrinsic subscale, ‘classroom anxiety,’ was the lowest scoring subscale of the four. Student motivation scores ranged from 34–41, with the lowest average coming from students of Teacher 6. Scores of this subscale had the most fluctuation of any subscale in the questionnaire, as well. Students of Teacher 3 scored highest on this subscale.

4.2 Video Observations

As previously mentioned, only four teachers of the six who had students complete the questionnaire were able to send in videos of their classrooms. I did not receive videos from either Teacher 1 or Teacher 5. Each of the four videos was intended to be an example of the teacher conducting an IC/JPA, though not every teacher managed to implement the pedagogical model with fidelity.

Teacher 2 submitted two videos. In both videos she is conducting the same lesson, but each video is with a different group of students. Teacher 2’s first video was 47 time units long (one time unit is equal to thirty seconds), and her second, 53 time units long.

The lesson focused on the structure of the English present progressive. The activity was collaborative, with an emphasis on cooperation. Students began by sorting sentences into groups based on tense: there were six sentences and three ‘tenses’ (where tense can mean a combination of morphological tense and aspect): past, simple present, and present progressive. Next, the group was given a set of index cards where each card had one word or morpheme of a sentence. The -ing form of the present progressive was separate from the main verb. For example, one card would have the word *he*, others *run*, *n*, *ing*. There were four sentences total. After constructing those sentences from their pieces, students had to describe the structure of the present progressive. The final activity was to create sentences in the present progressive, when given a main verb to use.

The topic of Teacher 3’s video was teamwork, and the characteristics of good teamwork. The students were given approximately a dozen slips of paper, each with one characteristic of teamwork, and asked to organize the strips of paper into a hierarchy of importance. Once they had reached an agreement on the hierarchy, they were asked to add their own characteristics of a successful team into the

hierarchy. This teacher's video was 30 time units long, the shortest of any of the four teachers who submitted videos.

Teacher 4's lesson focused on biodiversity in Costa Rica, with an emphasis on the flora and fauna of Costa Rica. The students were asked to discuss reasons that Costa Rica was famous, and then the majority of the lesson was spent with students categorizing English names for Costa Rican plants and animals based on whether they were flora or fauna. The lesson was 37 time units in length, but it was not an example of a successful Instructional Conversation.

Teacher 6's lesson discussed holidays in both Costa Rica and the United States. Where the other videos were solely of an IC/JPA, Teacher 6 began with a class-wide 'hot potato' activity: if the student was holding the 'hot potato' when the music stopped, s/he had to answer a question from the teacher about holidays and their celebration. The JPA from this video was a discussion about how holidays are celebrated differently in Costa Rica than they are in the United States. Most of the discourse structure was T-S-T (Teacher-Student-Teacher) rather than the optimal JPA discourse structure of T-S-S (Teacher-Student-Student). The students involved in the JPA did not do much speaking to one another. Unfortunately, this video was low in quality, and there were times where the audio was not synced with the video. I stopped analyzing this video in the 30th time unit, when Teacher 6 leaves the first JPA closest to the camera, because she then becomes impossible to hear.

The video observational framework was comprised of five subscales. The first (learner motivated behavior) focuses on observing student behavior, while the subsequent four focus on observing teacher behavior and the lesson design.

4.3 Learner Motivated Behavior

The correlation between student motivation scores (from the questionnaire) and observed learner motivated behavior was very strongly positive: 0.908.

Delving deeper into the subcategories of learner motivated behavior, students in all videos performed similarly regarding engagement and attention. Students of Teacher 3 paid attention 100% of the time during the video, closely followed by Teachers 2 and 6, whose students paid attention 97% of the time. Students of Teacher 4 paid the least attention, but their percentage of attention was still quite high at 89%.

The final subcategory of observable learner motivated behavior (eager volunteering) showed the most interesting difference between teachers in this subscale.

Eager volunteering applied in a time unit of the video if over $\frac{1}{3}$ of the students were raising their hands or giving answers to questions. Students of Teacher 3 volunteered eagerly 53% of the time. Students of Teacher 2 volunteered eagerly 32% of the time, and students of Teachers 4 and 6 showed similar percentages to each other (19% and 17%, respectively), both less than half the frequency of the students in Teacher 3's video. (See Table 1 for observational data.) When the 'eager volunteering' subcategory of learner motivated behavior is isolated from the other two, it correlates even more strongly with the student motivation scores: 0.963.

4.4 Teacher Motivational Practice

Combining all four subcategories of observed teacher motivational practice, there was a positive correlation (0.647) between student motivation scores (from the questionnaire) and observed teacher motivational practice. (See Table 1 for observational data.)

4.4.1 Subscale (i): Encouraging Positive Retrospective Self-Evaluation

Teacher 3 scored the highest on this subscale, with a total subscale score of 63. He was one of only two teachers to use 'effective praise'; the other was Teacher 2, who scored the second-highest on this subscale, with a total subscale score of 51. Teacher 4 was the only teacher for whom the subcategory 'class applause' applied, although it only accounted for 3% of the lesson time. He had a similar percentage of neutral feedback (32%) as Teacher 3, however, Teacher 4 fell behind Teachers 2 and 3 with regards to the elicitation of self/peer correction (5%). Thus, Teacher 4's total subscale score was 40. Teacher 6 only made use of one subcategory from this subscale, neutral feedback. None of the teachers used the subcategory 'process feedback.'

The correlation between student motivation scores (from the questionnaire) and observed subscale (i) was strongly positive (0.896) and the highest among subscales of teacher motivational practice, though not as strong as the correlations in the learner motivated behavior subscale.

4.4.2 Subscale (ii): Activity Design

Teacher 3 also scored the highest on this subscale, with a total subscale score of 86. Only Teachers 3 and 2 gave lessons requiring a tangible task product. Teacher

			Time Units per Strategy				Percentage of Lesson per Strategy				
Learner Motivated Behavior	Eager Volunteering		32	16	7	5	32	53	19	17	
	Engagement		89	27	31	21	89	90	84	70	
	Attention		97	30	33	29	97	100	89	97	
Teacher Motivational Practice	Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation	Class Applause	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	
		Effective Praise	8	4	0	0	8	13	0	0	
		Elicitation of Self/Peer Correction	25	5	2	0	25	17	5	0	
		Process Feedback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Neutral Feedback	18	10	12	10	18	33	32	33	
	Generating/Maintaining/Protecting Situation-specific Task Motivation	Activity Design	+ Team Competition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			+ Individual Competition	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	13
			+ Tangible Task Product	16	10	0	0	16	33	0	0
			+ Intellectual Challenge	43	16	1	1	43	53	3	3
			+ Creative Element	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
			+ Personalization	4	2	2	0	4	6	5	0
			+ Tangible Reward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	P.S.	Group Work	26	14	9	2	26	47	24	7	
		Pair Work	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
	Teacher Discourse	Referential Questions	3	0	2	11	3	0	5	37	
		Promoting Autonomy	2	0	2	1	2	0	5	3	
		Promoting Cooperation	12	1	3	1	12	3	8	3	
		Scaffolding	38	4	9	3	38	13	24	10	
		Arousing Curiosity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Promoting Instrumental Values	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Promoting Integrative Values		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	10		
Establishing Relevance		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Stating the Communicative Purpose of the Activity		4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0		
Signposting		26	5	5	6	26	17	14	20		
Social Chat		3	0	1	0	3	0	3	0		
		Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 6	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 6		

Table 1 Time Units / Percentage of the Lesson Devoted to Each Motivational Strategy (excerpt from MOLT Observation Framework)

2 scored second-highest on this subscale as well, with a total subscale score of 66. She was the only teacher to incorporate a creative element into the lesson, but she fell behind Teacher 3 in the tangible task product subcategory: Teacher 3's lesson made use of a tangible task product over twice as frequently as Teacher 2's. Teacher 6 was the only teacher to use individual competition in this subscale. Teacher 4 scored the lowest on this subscale, with a total subscale score of 8.

The correlation between teacher motivational scores and observed subscale (ii) is also strongly positive (0.819).

4.4.3 Subscale (iii): Participation Structure

Teacher 3 also has the highest total subscale score for this subscale, at 47. Teacher 3 had students working in groups (not just divided into groups) 47% of the total lesson time. This is approximately twice as frequently as Teachers 2 and 4 (26% and 24%, respectively). Teacher 2 had one instance of pair work, although group work was much more prominent. Teacher 6 only had students working in groups 7% of the total lesson time.

The correlation between student motivation scores and observed subscale (iii) is the second-highest of the subscales of teacher motivational practice (0.894), and only slightly lower than the strongest from subscale (i) (0.896). In a few of the videos, students readily admit that they prefer working in groups, because it allows them to participate more.

4.4.4 Subscale (iv): Teacher Discourse

This final subscale has a different hierarchy of teachers from the rest of the observed subscales, including learner motivated behavior. Teacher 2 has the highest score of 88 and makes use of the most subcategories. She has the highest percentage of scaffolding; she frequently speaks to remind students of previous class work, or to give them the tools to complete the activity.

Next highest is Teacher 6, with a score of 83. She is the only teacher to use the subcategory of promoting integrative values, but her lesson topic (holidays in Costa Rica versus holidays in the United States) lends itself better to this subcategory than the other teachers' lessons do. Teacher 4 is next highest, with a total subscale score of 59.

Teacher 3 scores the lowest on this subscale (30). Teacher 3 only makes use of three subcategories: promoting cooperation, scaffolding, and signposting. He is the only teacher not to use the subcategories of referential questions and promoting autonomy, although his group work percentage is the highest of any teacher.

The correlation between student motivation scores and observed subscale (iv) is strongly negative (-0.840), the only negative correlation of this study.

5 Discussion

5.1 The Motivation Questionnaire

The high student motivation scores on the ‘external factors’ subscale are in line with the cultural views towards the English language, where many jobs require English proficiency, and career opportunities are much more extensive if one speaks English. It is interesting to see that even at a middle-school age, students in Costa Rican classrooms understand and can articulate this societal pressure to learn English. Additionally, this external pressure to learn English is felt by students in different types of schools – not just technical schools or magnet schools.

The medians for the ‘attitudes towards the course’ subscale were very similar across all teachers, which is a promising finding because it means students in different school settings view their English classes favorably. The similarity in student attitude even coming from different schools could be related to the Instructional Conversation pedagogy, which increases student involvement in the course. A student who is more involved in his/her own learning would likely have a more favorable attitude towards the course itself, because that course is structured to give the student a voice in the classroom, fostering engagement. Students likely enjoy a class more when they can actively participate.

The low student motivation scores on the ‘classroom anxiety’ subscale are likely related to the IC’s emphasis on small group work. Students would feel more comfortable making mistakes in front of a small group of their peers than they would in front of the entire class, because in a small group it is easier to build trust and rapport among fellow group members.

5.2 Learner Motivated Behavior

Contrary to [Papi & Abdollahzadeh’s \(2012\)](#) findings, in this study, there is a significant relationship between self-reported student motivation and observable

learner motivated behavior. This could be a result of this study's use of the IC pedagogy, which Papi and Abdollahzadeh did not utilize. The small-group structure of a successful IC could impact the students' feelings of accountability in the classroom and motivate them to volunteer more readily and pay more attention. Additionally, students are more comfortable in small groups, and increased comfort facilitates participation, because students are not as worried about making mistakes when they are comfortable. Students of Teacher 2 report that they like the IC style of lessons better because they participate more, and in Teacher 3's video, the students are smiling and laughing with each other and the teacher: behaviors that could indicate comfort with the environment.

5.3 Teacher Motivational Practice

5.3.1 Subscale (i): Encouraging Positive Retrospective Self-Evaluation

The correlation between student motivation scores and this subscale was the strongest positive correlation, suggesting that encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation is likely a good motivational strategy for teachers.

5.3.2 Subscale (ii): Activity Design

The correlation between student motivation scores and this subscale was also strongly positive (0.819), indicating that activity design may foster student motivation. If a task or lesson is intellectually challenging, it is also likely to be more engaging, because students would be interested in participating. Engagement is a motivated behavior (as discussed above), so an intellectually challenging activity design could help transitively foster student motivation (intellectual challenge promotes engagement, which promotes motivation). Similarly, working on a tangible task product would keep students engaged because they would be constantly producing something, or working collaboratively to produce something. There is less opportunity for a student's mind to wander if the activity is designed with an intellectual challenge or tangible task product in mind. Student enjoyment, engagement, and attention all foster an increase in intrinsic motivation.

5.3.3 Subscale (iii): Participation Structure

The importance of group work on a student's level of intrinsic motivation could be reflected in the subscales of intrinsic motivation 'linguistic self-confidence' and 'classroom anxiety.' Making mistakes can be frightening, or the cause of nervousness, especially in front of a student's peers. However, if there are fewer peers (as is the case when students work in small groups), a student may feel more comfortable speaking and making mistakes. When students work with the same groups for extended periods of time, they build rapport and establish trust with the other members of the group, both of which help the students in the group feel comfortable making mistakes around each other. Another benefit of group work with regards to intrinsic motivation is that small groups increase each student's opportunity to speak and participate. If a student has the opportunity to speak frequently (or is encouraged to speak frequently, as occurs in an IC) that student might grow to have more linguistic self-confidence.

More frequent participation could increase linguistic self-confidence, and increased linguistic self-confidence is also linked to increased intrinsic motivation. Indeed, in the observations, we see that where there is more group work, there are also higher percentages of learner motivated behavior such as eager volunteering, engagement, and attention—all of which are easier accomplished in small group settings than in classroom-wide settings.

5.3.4 Subscale (iv): Teacher Discourse

The low percentage of teacher motivational strategy 'promoting autonomy' in Teacher 3's video could indicate that his students already function in his classroom with a high level of autonomy; the teacher no longer needs to promote this autonomy through speech, because it would then verge on being redundant. Redundancy would likely not hold students' attention or keep them engaged, because if they have heard the same information before, it would be easy for them to mentally check out. Similarly, his low score in the subcategory 'promoting cooperation' could be explained by the students' ease with which they work in groups; if the students already function very cooperatively, there would be less of a need for Teacher 3 to promote this value aloud. The present study's findings suggest that students are more motivated when the teacher is much more hands-off and allows

the students to take the reins. However, the teacher is still a part of the group, ready to assist and facilitate discussion when necessary.

The strongly negative correlation between student motivation score and observed teacher motivational strategy ‘teacher discourse’ suggests that a teacher who speaks frequently (even if that speech is designed to be helpful, as is scaffolding) could impede student motivation. Students likely enjoy working together and having their voices heard in the classroom, so when the teacher does a lot of talking, student enjoyment (and motivation) would drop concurrently.

6 Conclusion

This study examined the impact of teacher motivational strategies on the motivation of their students as reflected in the students’ responses to a self-report motivation questionnaire as well as in the students’ observed learner motivated behavior.

RQ1 Which EFL teacher motivational strategies maximally promote student motivation?

Teacher motivational practice correlates strongly with student motivation in the classrooms observed, suggesting that teacher motivational strategies do matter. However, this study found that not all aspects of the teacher motivational practice correlate positively with student motivation; namely, ‘teacher discourse’ (i.e. how the teacher speaks in the classroom) correlated negatively with student motivation. This finding is important because it suggests that a teacher who speaks too frequently or redundantly can impede student enjoyment and motivation in the classroom.

RQ2 Do EFL teacher motivational strategies have more of an impact on intrinsic or extrinsic student motivation?

The high degree of extrinsic student motivation across all schools, teachers, and classrooms in this study suggests that teachers do not play as large of a role in the shaping of their students’ extrinsic motivation as they do in the shaping of their students’ intrinsic motivation. This study found differences in student intrinsic motivation among different teachers, suggesting that teachers play a larger role in the improvement and maintenance of the intrinsic motivation of their students by creating comfortable, stimulating classroom environments that facilitate student participation and student-to-student discourse.

RQ3 Is intrinsic motivation reflected in learner motivated behavior?

This study found that self-reported student motivation is reflected in observable learner motivated behavior, which is important because it suggests that the students' motivation is impacting the way that they behave in the classroom.

6.1 Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited in size and location. It would be statistically useful to replicate this study on a larger scale, with more sample classrooms and teachers, as well as in different locations. It would also be useful to further explore the relationship between the Instructional Conversation pedagogy and EFL student motivation, to analyze certain aspects of this pedagogy that work well as EFL teacher motivational strategies. This study makes anecdotal notes along these pedagogical lines, but future research could explore this more empirically, as the IC Pedagogy was not designed as an EFL classroom tool.

Another flaw of the present study was the method of video recording. Teachers self-recorded the videos that were analyzed, which may introduce bias into the study.

Furthermore, this study highlighted the issue of the use of the native versus target languages in the EFL classroom, as there is no way to account for these disparities in the MOLT scheme. It would be interesting for future studies to use a similar classroom observation framework to examine the impact of the use of the native versus target languages in these classrooms on student motivation and language acquisition.

It may also be useful to examine not only what teachers can do to motivate their students, but also how to generate, foster, and maintain the motivation of the EFL teachers themselves. If student motivation impacts student learning, it is likely that teacher motivation also impacts the effectiveness of their teaching.

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