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Motivational Teaching Strategies in Essay Writing Class: The Lecturer's Perception

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Abstract. Motivation triggers students to get better learning achievement. In English teaching, there are many researches which give more attention to the study of implementation of teaching strategies in motivating ways which has been proved to give significant contribution to the improvement of students learning. This study has purpose to explore the lecturer's perception of teaching strategies which are motivating learners in Essay writing class of English education program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo. This study employed a qualitative study in which the data were through giving questionnaire and semi-structured interview to Essay writing lecturer. Teaching strategies in this study cover the certain strategies used by the lecturer and teaching strategies which are the most valuable for promoting learning motivation among the learners particularly in Essay writing class. The findings of the present study have implications on effective Essay writing teaching and learning and enhancing lecturer's experience as well as knowledge to the purpose of motivating English learners through the practice of different teaching strategies in the class.

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Keywords: Motivational strategies, teaching, Essay writing

1 Introduction

The motivation gets its key role in the process of language learning. Motivation in learning foreign language particularly English is needed to help learners keep their effort in an English learning process. Motivation is believed that even the cleverest learners could not achieve goals which are settled for long term, good curricula at schools, and good teaching media without having sufficient motivation [1]. To make students being motivated during joining lesson can be difficult and even complex one in which a multiplicity of psycho-sociological and linguistic factors are involved [2], but most English teachers will attest to the important role motivation plays in the teaching/learning process. Motivation prepares successful second language students and people who communicate to become confident [3]. In addition, it is believed that the students'

level of interest, students' keenness, their excitement during learning and students' eagerness on English learning are the basic constituents of motivation.

There are at least three components of motivation which students gained [4]. The first form four is the factor from personal and sociocultural. They could be in the form of individual characteristics such as the attitudes and the values which are brought by the students to college based on personal, family, and cultural previous experiences. The second one is the factors from classroom environment [5] which can pertain to instructional experiences in different subjects. The second from the last component is internal factors or students' belief and perceptions. Internal factors are influenced by both personal and sociocultural factors and classroom environmental experiences. Eccles and Roeser argue that the term motivational strategies refers to all teaching strategies aimed at encouraging students' learning [5]. This term also refers to those strategies that motivate students by pressuring them. Motivational strategy has been researched and gave fruitful information on the benefits towards language teaching. Harmer said that people who learn any study can be success if they are being consciously involved in its learning [6].

As one of skills in English teaching, writing is an essential aspect for students to communicate their knowledge to the world. In order to be understood by the readers, there are six elements of writing according to Brown in [7]. They are content, organization, discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics. There are a number of studies done in the field of motivation during last three decades. The researchers have tried to show how motivation influences the holistic achievement in a language classroom. Many of them are about how students learn in language class and how the students' motivation is. However, there are few studies on the language teacher's use motivational teaching strategies in English class. This study explores the lecturer's perception on motivational teaching strategies in Essay writing class.

2 Method

This study applies a qualitative study. Qualitative methods have been used by researchers in doing their studies on motivational strategies [8],[9]. L2 motivation is an 'intricate, multifaceted construct' [10] and therefore, it seems quite difficult to explore the dynamic and complex case by applying only qualitative method. However, a small number of respondents who take part in a qualitative study may raise impossibility to put the result in the generalization [11]. The subject of this study was a lecturer who is teaching Essay writing class. The data were collected through giving questionnaire in 35 items. The data were analyzed using 1-5 Likert scale with anchors ranging from "not important at all" to "very important". Score 1 represents "not important at all", score 2 represents "not really important", score 3 represents "somewhat important", score 4 represents "quite important", and score 5 means "very important". The statements used in the questionnaire were adapted from Dornyei with some addition to meet the writing condition. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted before the practice of motivational teaching strategies. There are four questions proposed to the lecturer. The result of the interview is used to verify the result from questionnaire about the lecturer's perception toward motivational teaching strategies in Essay writing class.

3 Results and Discussion

The lecturers belief on the strategies he used which can motivate students may represents the his own belief about motivation in learning English. To take conclusion, the lecturer perceptions can be seen from table below.

Table 1. Lecturer' questionnaire on how important is each motivational teaching strategies in category creating basic motivational condition

| Category of teaching strategies which are motivating | Very important | Quite important | Somewhat important | Not really important | Not at all important |
|--|--|---|--|---|----------------------|
| To create basic motivational condition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To perform and talk about lecturer enthusiasm for the Essay writing materials, and how they affects the lecturer personally. - to create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere during Essay writing lesson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve a personal relationship with the students - to promote the development of group work cohesiveness - to form a group norms explicitly and then being discussed and agreed by all students - To have the group work norm regularly observed | To take the students' learning very seriously. | To develop a collaborative relationship with the students' parents. | |
| % | 25 | 50 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 0 |

In the case to create the basic motivational conditions, eight motivational strategies were presented in the questionnaire. Two from eight are categorized as very important with 25%. They are to create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere during Essay writing lesson. The highest percentage is 50% for To improve a personal relationship with the students to promote the development of group work cohesiveness to form a group norms explicitly and then being discussed and agreed by all students, to have the group work norm regularly observed. Meanwhile, the other two strategies belong to "somewhat important".

Table 2. Lecturer' questionnaire on how important is each motivational teaching strategies in category generating initial motivation

| Category of Motivational teaching strategies | Very important | Quite important | Somewhat important | Not really important |
|--|--|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| Generating initial motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to improve the students' intrinsic interest in Essay Writing learning process. - to provide 'integrative' values by encouraging a positive and open-minded disposition towards Essay writing courses - to provide the students' awareness of the instrumental values associated with the knowledge of Essay writing courses - to increase the students' expectancy of success in particular tasks and in learning Essay writing courses - Increase the students' goal-orientedness by formulating explicit class goals accepted by 13n. - Make the curriculum and the teaching materials relevant to the students. - Help to create realistic learner beliefs. | Promote the learners' language-related values by presenting peer role models | - | - |
| % | 87.5 | 12.5 | 0 | 0 |

In generating initial motivation category, there are eight strategies. 7 even from eight are considered as "very important" in Essay writing class. Another strategy, *Promote the learners' language-related values by presenting peer role models*, is considered as "quite important".

Table 3. Lecturer' questionnaire on how important is each motivational teaching strategy in category maintaining and protecting motivation

| Category of Motivational teaching strategies | Very important | Quite important | Somewhat important | Not really important | Not at all important |
|--|--|--|---|---|----------------------|
| Maintaining and protecting motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to build students' confidence by giving them regular encouragement - 2 help students minimize language anxiety by removing or reducing the anxiety-provoking elements in the Essay Writing learning process - to create students' confidence in their Essay Writing learning abilities by teaching them various learner strategies 2 learn - to let students to maintain a positive social image while they are engaging in writing tasks to improve student motivation by promoting cooperation among them - to improve students' motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy | <p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to make learning more stimulating and enjoyable by breaking the monotony of classroom events the learning stimulating and enjoyable by increasing the attractiveness of the tasks to make the learning stimulating and enjoyable by enlisting them as active task participants to present and administer writing tasks in a motivating way. to apply goal-setting methods in Essay Writing classroom. | <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply contracting methods with students to formalize their goal commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to provide learners with regular experiences of success | |
| % | 50 | 42.9 | 7.1 | 0 | 0 |

The third category of *motivational* teaching strategies is maintaining and protecting motivation. From fourteen strategies, the first half are considered as “very important” to practice in Essay writing class, while another half are “quite important”.

Table 4. Lecturer' questionnaire on how important is each motivational teaching strategies in category encouraging positive self-evaluation

| Category of Motivational teaching strategies | Very important | Quite important | Somewhat important | Not really important | Not at all important |
|--|---|--|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| To encourage positive self-evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to promote effort attributions in your students - to give students with positive information feedback - to increase learners' satisfaction - to use grades in a motivating way, reducing as much as possible their demotivating impact | To offer rewards in a motivational way | - | - | - |
| % | 80 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The fourth category is encouraging positive self-evaluation. There are five strategies in this category and four of them are categorized as "very important". From thirty five strategies in four categories, twenty strategies are chosen as "very important" with 57.1%. He puts more intentions on generating initial motivation and encouraging positive self-evaluation. Previous studies have been conducted in the field of motivational strategies that they are in relation to improving the confidence of the learners and providing writing task with motivating ways. They are conducted in Saudi Arabia [12], and South Korea [13], [14], [15]. In addition, the finding indicates the internal motivation of language learners leads to academic outcomes. Moreover, their English achievement in general was also improved after being studies for certain periods.

Creating the Basic Motivational Condition

A number of researchers have been conducted that anxiety may affect second/foreign language achievement, and towards social communication interaction [16]. Besides, it influences the three stages of learning. They are input, process, and output [17]. In addition, Krashen [18] stressed the importance of creating a low stress learning situation in improving learner' language competence. Anxiety defined as an intimate friend of education. As a result, it can be stated that students in the learning process may have anxieties within the certain periods [19]. In the specific case, the students may have anxieties in the environment where they should use their language skills during the process of "language skills training". In Essay writing class, the students' anxiety can be reduced by delivering humour or promote the development of group cohesiveness. This strategy of creating a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom gets the highest percentage in the questionnaire.

Generating Initial Motivation

In generating initial motivation, he believes that to raise students' intrinsic interest in the L2 learning process, and to help the creating realistic learner beliefs are very important. This finding

is supported by the result from interview that he states “I think student’s interest in my class will really help me to run the class so I give them encouragement to learn and I describe the benefits of learning Essay writing to get job after they graduate”. In addition, making the curriculum relevant to the students is also very important. The lecturer conducted need analysis in order to meet the teaching objectives as formulated in the curriculum. Some teaching materials are also taken from several sources such as internet and some articles. Learning needs vary which means that different student needs different learning need including learning material and learning strategy. Need analysis is a procedure for collecting information about learners’ needs. the purpose is to establish key learning outcomes and requirements in the design and delivery of a course or learning activity [20].

Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

The strategies in this subcategory are believed to be very important for the lecturer to practice. Interest can make human willingly to participate in a several amount of time and energy in activities. Students who are protected in their motivation tend to learn better than the students who aren’t protected. The way the lecturer introduce the students about several learning strategies can contribute to the students’ motivation. From the questionnaire, it is also supported by allowing students to keep a social image in classroom while they are engaging in the Essay Writing tasks. They feel enjoy during the tasks and assignments as well.

In encouraging positive self-evaluation, the lecturer tends to consider the strategies as “very important”. The students’ achievement is rewarded through giving grades. This finding is also being supported by qualitative data when the lecturer states that making students have better writing achievement is important seen from them improvement of scores.

3 Conclusion

From the results, there are four main categories of motivational teaching strategies applied by the lecturer in Essay writing subject. All of strategies listed in the questionnaire are considered to be very important, quite important, somewhat important, and not really important. None of the strategies is considered as not important at all. From thirty five strategies, twenty of them are to be very important. It indicates that the lecturer puts more intention on the students’ better involvement in writing class as well as the improvement of writing achievement.

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