Motivational Teaching Strategies in EFL Writing Class: Insights from Lecturer Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of motivational strategies not only promotes a positive attitude towards writing but also encourages more effective development of students' writing skills. This study explores lecturers' insights on how they perceive the motivational teaching strategies in their English writing class. This study employs a qualitative approach with two English writing lecturers from Maros Muslim University as participants. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observation were the instruments used to collect the data and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that both lecturers implement motivational strategies effectively by utilizing positive reinforcement, active learning strategies, and addressing students' difficulties. Positive reinforcement significantly improves students' motivation and writing performance. It was strengthened by the observational data that showed both lecturers constantly praised students whenever they responded positively during learning process. Lecturers emphasize that giving active learning strategies can motivate students to engage actively in writing tasks, which can enhance motivation and writing proficiency. The lecturers also acknowledge that addressing students' difficulties is essential in reducing their anxiety and fostering confidence in writing. Recognizing and responding to students' difficulties can reduce anxiety and encourage them to share their thoughts more confidently in writing.

Keywords: Motivational Teaching Strategies, English Writing, Lecturer Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

English writing, commonly regarded as one of the most difficult components of language acquisition, necessitates both linguistic proficiency and substantial motivate from learners. Dörnyei asserts that motivation is a vital factor in language learning success, affecting learners' attitudes, persistence, and performance in developing writing skills (Alshehri & Etherington, 2017). Therefore, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where students frequently struggle with writing intricacies, comprehending lecturers' perceptions and applications of motivational strategies might yield significant insights for enhancing instructional efficacy.

Studies show that motivation profoundly affects students' learning behaviors and

outcomes, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Maung et al., 2022; Xie & Zhu, 2023). Lecturers are crucial in cultivating motivation through numerous strategies that may either improve or impede students' writing progression. Moreover, a study by Lee and Lin indicates that motivational strategies utilized in postgraduate English academic writing courses were seen as efficient by EFL PhD students, implying that lecturers' perceptions correspond with students' experiences (Lee & Lin, 2022). This congruence is essential, since it signifies that when lecturers implement motivational strategies that engage with students, they can improve the learning experience. Dewi et al. (2021) underscore the significance of fostering a supportive environment that stimulates initial motivation and sustains it throughout the writing process. This entails the execution of motivational strategies alongside a profound comprehension of students' requirements and the obstacles they encounter in writing. Besides, the findings from Tiarsiwi & Amaniah (2020) who observed that effective motivational strategies utilized by teachers in secondary Islamic schools were important in enhancing student engagement. These results highlight the necessity of aligning teaching strategies with students' motivating requirements to reconcile their existing abilities with the expectations of academic writing.

In addition, the perspectives of lecturers concerning their strategies for motivation are shaped by their self-efficacy and comprehension of the psychological aspects impacting students (Huangfu, 2012; Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015a). The lecturers are more inclined to utilize successful strategies that cultivate a good learning atmosphere if they are possess confidence in their capacity to motivate students (Bai, 2022). Therefore, by minimizing these psychological challenges, lecturers can foster a more favorable learning environment, consequently enhancing students' writing performance. Furthermore, the role of lecturers in generating a positive atmosphere for learning is essential for sustaining student motivation.

Studies demonstrate that lecturers who attentively address students' behavioral and psychological requirements can markedly improve their willingness to write (Mali, 2017). Then, by comprehending the societal significance of writing and assisting students in establishing attainable objectives might furnish them with the motivation required to enhance their writing abilities (Duan, 2022). So, this underscores the imperative for lecturers to be cognizant of their students' motivation and to modify their pedagogical approaches accordingly. In spite of the fact that there is a growing body of literature that discusses motivational strategies being implemented in educational settings, the specific focus on lecturers' perceptions in English writing classes remains underexplored. As in Lee & Lin (2022) study, they emphasizes that several macro strategies adopted in postgraduate English academic courses, indicating that these

strategies may merely be a subset of the motivational interventions implemented by teachers. This indicates a possible gap in comprehending the complete range of strategies that lecturers consider useful for motivating students in writing contexts. Moreover, the study from Mali (2017) highlighted the importance of motivational teaching strategies in Indonesia EFL writing classroom, yet it predominantly addresses students' experiences rather that lecturers' perceptions, indicating a necessity for more study that concentrates on educators' viewpoints.

In this study, the researchers aimed to investigate the insight from lecturers on how they perceive the motivational teaching strategies in their English writing class. Establishing and sustaining relationships is an exceptionally efficient approach to enhancing student motivation in an EFL classroom; nevertheless, some lecturers may be unaware of the influence their strategies have on learners' motivation (Kassing, 2011).

METHODS

The qualitative research was applied in this study to obtain responses to the inquiries under investigation. Brooks & Normore (2015) emphasized the imperative for researchers to meticulously evaluate the validity and relevance of qualitative designs, while promoting transparency in data interpretation to bolster the credibility of results. Furthermore, qualitative research is crucial for comprehending

the "how" and "why" of educational occurrences. Cleland underlines that qualitative methods enable a more profound understanding of experiences and circumstances, essential for resolving intricate educational problems (Cleland & Cleland, 2017).

This study was conducted at private university named Maros Muslim University which located at South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The subject of this study was two English writing lecturers who have known frequently gives motivation to their students in the class. Furthermore, the limitation of this study has dealt with the number of participants which merely used two participants. This study utilized limited sample due to the location of this study has only two lecturers who teach writing because of the students ration. Then, the research instruments were interview and classroom observation. To collect the data, the researchers employed semi-structured interview which means the interviewer provides guidance and direction, but still enthusiastic to follow up interesting development and to let the interviewee elaborates on certain issues in investigatory manner (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). While, classroom observation had done beforehand the interview session. The researchers recorded the teaching process of the two lecturers using a camera. After that, the recordings were analyzed by relating them to the findings of the interviews.

After collecting data, researchers used thematic analysis to analyzed the data interview.

Thematic analysis is a common qualitative research methodology that emphasizes the identification, interpretation, and reporting of patterns (themes) within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke assert that thematic analysis lacks a precise definition, enabling researchers to tailor it to their own requirements and settings, hence augmenting its usefulness across many qualitative investigations (Nowell et al., 2017; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The steps undertaken by researchers utilizing thematic analysis was to familiarize themselves with the data. The researchers analyzed the interview results and correlated them with the field notes from classroom observation. After that, generalizing the basic codes derived from the acquired data. Following that, the researchers endeavored to identify and reviewing the appropriate themes. The researchers further defined and named the themes, ultimately producing them into the study's results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study investigated how lecturers perceive the motivational teaching strategies in their teaching English writing class. The data were obtained from interview with two lecturers who considered frequently give motivation in the class as well as from classroom observation. Then, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis to get lecturer's perception on the use of motivational teaching strategies.

1. Positive Reinforcement

Based on the classroom observation, the researchers found that both lecturers attempted to give positive reinforcement in fostering a sense of comfort to students. It showed that the lecturers used this strategy in order that students feel comfortable in expressing their idea to write so that it can enhance their self-confidence gradually. First lecturer considered her teaching process applied strategies made by her own in motivating students in the class. She teaches students based on what she thinks useful for them. The strategy devised by her while examining the material at hand and accompanied by giving them positive feedback.

"…I apply reward during learning process. For example, if they can answer my questions correctly, they will have reward such as additional scores or just simply bring things (like candy)". (Lecturer 1)

Regarding the lecturer statement above, the first lecturer emphasized that during teaching process she was regularly asking the student's understanding about the material after she explained the material in every meeting. Then, she applied reward in her teaching classroom in generating motivation effectively among students. For instance, she gives point plus to students' scores for properly answering questions posed by lecturer, or she merely gives candy to build up student's mood and create enjoyable environment in the class. Therefore, the reward can be considered as positive reinforcement. Besides, if lecturer is

asking students and the students have right answer, she always praises students to appreciate their effort.

> *"..I will try to give questions that I ensure they can answer the questions. Praise them when they can answer the questions. (Lecturer 1)*

Another insight from second lecturer, in her English writing class, she endeavored to establish positive relationships with students in order to facilitate the establishment of positive relationships through the process of developing chemistry with them. The second lecturer believed that establishing a positive relationship with students might help students feel more at ease as they are going through the learning process.

> *"…I try to know my students and build chemistry with them to create a positive and emphatic relations" (Lecturer 2)*

The second lecturer's statement is related to what happened in the real class when researchers observed her teaching process in classroom. She built up students' motivation by regularly praising students' works. The praising can be verbal by saying" good *job"* or *"well done"* or even by non-verbal such as clapping for students or giving thumbs up. Therefore, providing positive reinforcement in writing classes encourages students to strengthen their writing skills and enhances their self-confidence, hence promoting engagement in a motivating learning environment. However, lecturers considered the primary challenge in providing positive reinforcement to students is the inherent difficulty in delivering feedback that is both constructive and encouraging. Observational data presented that even though the lecturers praised the students who have positive behavior in the class, on the other hand, there were a few of students who continued to lack motivation. During the learning process, they did nothing but act passively and sit in the back most of the time.

2. Active Learning Strategies

As for teaching writing skill in the class, first lecturer mentioned that teaching writing skill is quite challenging because the students still struggling with the grammar problems. So, the lecturer assigns them to constantly write to encourage their interest in writing. Then, first lecturer tried to maintain student's motivation by setting students specific goal in the first place of teaching learning.

> *"Oh, it is hard, what I always do to make them write is giving them self-assessment assignment, I ask them to create a diary of their own learning to understand their strength and weakness." (Lecturer 1)*

By looking at the statement above, the first lecturer tried to give them advice of how necessary to learn by writing self-assessment in form of diary. It is an ideal strategy to get students habit to write in English. Also, as students become more comfortable with writing, their vocabulary expands, they can analyze the sentences they created. It was proven from the observational data, by the time

during learning process, the students regularly to write self-assessment in every meeting of writing subject. The results of this activity showed positive outcomes as for the students' writing performance increase gradually. Based on the field, the researchers have seen that students become independent in evaluating their writing works, their capability improves in recognizing the errors, punctuation, grammar and composition of their writing.

Different from first lecturer, the second lecturer used varied strategies in maintaining student's motivation in writing class. She used her gestures, mimic and vocal tone to attract students' attention when the class appeared to be losing interest. Besides, she employed relevant topics to engage students in writing, fostering their interest and enthusiasm.

"I use appropriate gestures, mimic, vary voice tone. I mostly use hot issue as example of my material topic." (Lecturer 2)

Since writing is not an easy skill to be learnt, the second lecturer tried to use gestures and mimicking while teaching writing, it can be as part of strategy to enhance students' mood in learning process. She believed that English writing class needed to be engaging and enthusiastic, so it is enabling students to relish the expression of their ideas in writing. Additionally, the second lecturer used vary vocal tone as well while explaining the writing materials. It was confirmed from observational data, she argued that by using vary voice tones can raise students' mood which is beneficial for

them when the students read narratives aloud. Besides, she utilized hot issues as writing topics to enhance student engagement and provide sufficient references for their writing. Despite both lecturers attempts to implement active learning strategies, several students found the activities assigned by lecturers were difficult. This behaviour can become one of barriers that lecturers must overcome. Researchers made direct observations, and unfortunately, certain students who might have a low level of understanding appeared to be at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers.

3. Addressing students' difficulties

It is widely acknowledged that the ability to write is one of the most challenging skills to acquire. A significant number of students struggled with conveying their thoughts in written form. First lecturer in this study claimed that teaching writing should be conducted incrementally. It signifies that she will not progress to the subsequent section of the material if the students remain confused. For instance, she instructs students on one segment and thereafter assesses their comprehension till the majority grasp the material.

"I can say teaching them using step by step. I teach them one part then I make them practice or examine their understanding, then continue the lesson, then repeat my strategy. The point is I do not move forward until the majority understand the material." (Lecturer 1)

First lecturer stated that in her teaching process, she tried to address why students get confused with material and what difficulties they have in learning process. Besides, she does things in her own way. If the students are still unable to comprehend the material, she will reexplain it to them; however, if they are still unable to grasp it, she will put them in groups with one student who is able to comprehend it well so that they can explain it to their classmates. As for her statement below:

"..I will try to give questions that I ensure they can answer the questions. Praise them when they can answer the questions. When they are confused with the lesson, I will re-explain the material as simple as I can or I have them into groups then they will discuss the material". (Lecturer 1)

Based on the observational data, the effort of first lecturer in addressing students' difficulties are clearly evident in the learning process. She looked very interactive in the class by constantly asking students understanding even with simple questions that represent the material taught. Similar to the first lecturer, the second lecturer attempted to assess students' needs when they appeared to experience difficulties during the writing lesson. She observed the students as they received the material and completed the writing task. If students require further clarification or necessitate a re-explanation utilizing a whiteboard.

"I analyse the students' needs. If they need more explanation along with the written example on the whiteboard". (Lecturer 2)

Second lecturer truly paid attention to students understanding, it was proven when researchers observed her writing class. On one time, students were unable to figure out the lecturer's instructions, leading the lecturer to clarify by speaking more loudly and slowly while moving among the students' seats. This method is significant way in overcoming the problems happened in the class. Addressing students' difficulties in learning process is an effective way in teaching, particularly in writing class. It lowered students' anxiety when they had challenging to share their thought in writing. The students' condition that feels anxiety and have low self-efficacy lead to psychological aspect of students and this become one of challenges faced by lecturers. The results of observational also showed that certain students appeared have no confidence in showing their writing tasks. They were afraid to have mistaken and did not believe in their writing abilities.

Discussion

The result of lecturers' perceptions on motivational teaching strategies in their English writing class has shown that both of lecturers employed motivational strategies properly. The lecturers considered students to be always being motivated during learning process. They both tried to create enjoyable classroom atmosphere so that students' mood remains constant in a positive way. Additionally, motivational teaching

strategies are essential for increasing students' motivation particularly in English writing. Dörnyei (2001) stated that his strategies posits that motivational teaching strategies aim to establish an engaging and supportive learning environment that examines the particular obstacles students have in writing tasks. The application of motivational strategies not only cultivates a favorable disposition towards writing but also promotes the enhancement of students' writing skills more efficiently.

Furthermore, a fundamental element of motivational teaching strategies is the establishment of a supportive classroom environment. Cheung asserts that writing lecturers utilizing motivational strategies can markedly enhance student motivation, especially in writing classes where students frequently encounter demotivation stemming from the perceived challenges of the assignments (Cheung, 2018). Therefore, this study proposed three themes as the result of data collected, it consists of positive reinforcement, active learning strategies and addressing students' difficulties.

Studies demonstrate that positive reinforcement can manifest in multiple forms, including verbal praise, feedback, or tangible rewards. Both lecturers employed positive reinforcement in their writing class such as give rewards and praise students verbally and non-verbally. Dewi et.al (2021) emphasized that providing rewards and grades in an encouraging manner is essential for sustaining student motivation in writing class. It correlates with Dörnyei's motivational teaching strategies which promote the creation of basic motivational conditions and encouraging positive self-evaluation among students (Dewi et al., 2021). When students are given positive feedback on their writing, it not only helps them feel more confident, but it also supports their willingness to participate in writing activities such as assignments. Moreover, the positive reinforcement given by lecturers can impact to psychological of students. The willingness of students to engage more in writing tasks can build up their self-efficacy. Kırmızı & Kırmızı asserted that motivation and encouragement are essential for the enhancement of writing skills in L2 learners, highlighting the need of cultivating self-efficacy in writing (Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015b).

Active learning strategies can substantially inspire students in writing by cultivating engagement, improving comprehension, and encouraging a sense of ownership in their learning experience. These strategies promote active student engagement in writing assignments, potentially enhancing motivation and writing proficiency. The lecturers applied teaching strategies in their own way that lead to make students engage in writing class and enhance their ability in English writing. First lecturer implemented self-assessment to develop the student's habit in writing. Dörnyei's framework classifies motivational teaching strategies into different stages, including

encouraging positive self-evaluation. This part plays an important role as it enables students to evaluate their development, acknowledge their accomplishments, and establish personal objectives for enhancement (Peacock, 2003). Through self-assessment, students can appraise their writing abilities and establish attainable objectives, thus bolstering their confidence and motivation to write (Adawiyah, 2022). As for the first lecturer used self-assessment in her teaching writing strategy, this self-assessment is the part of Dornyei's motivational teaching strategies. It falls under the category of encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. Self-assessment helps students reflect on their own learning, set personal goals, and take ownership of their progress, which fosters intrinsic motivation and a sense of responsibility for their learning. By incorporating self-assessment into teaching strategies, lecturer can help students develop a more active and engaged approach to their learning, fostering both intrinsic motivation and long-term academic success.

In addition, the use of gestures, mimic and varied vocal tone that second lecturer employed in her teaching writing skill considered essential for students to build up the enjoyable atmosphere so that students can engage effectively towards writing tasks. Research indicates that increased student engagement and higher writing outcomes can be achieved through the implementation of motivating strategies by teachers. These strategies include the use of expressive gestures and a variety of vocal tones (Cheung, 2018; Mali, 2017). For example, teachers that make use of gestures and voice variations are able to attract the attention of their students and create an environment in the classroom that is more engaging, which is beneficial to the pursuit of knowledge (Evenddy et al., 2023). The use of vary vocal tone may demonstrates to students how words can express diverse feelings or viewpoints, and how they may employ analogous variations in their own writing.

In the framework of motivational teaching strategies proposed by Dörnyei, addressing students' difficulties is an essential aspect. Dörnyei's framework underscores the necessity of comprehending and addressing the motivating requirements of learners, which entails identifying and alleviating the obstacles they encounter during the learning process. This perspective corresponds with the comprehensive understanding of motivation as a dynamic interaction between the learner and their environment, subject to impact by successful teaching strategies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Further, Dörnyei and Ushioda emphasize that motivational strategies must be customized to the particular situations and difficulties faced by students. This entails cultivating an environment in which students feel encouraged to surmount challenges, so substantially augmenting their intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Pašalić, 2023). In accordance with the principles of self-

determination theory, educators who take an active role in addressing difficulties build a sense of competence and autonomy in their students. These are essential elements of intrinsic motivation (Shala et al., 2024).

Therefore, both lecturers in this study have implemented effective motivational strategies in their writing class. The lecturers are significantly apprehensive regarding the state of the students who require motivation to remain consistently engaged in class, thereby fostering their intrinsic motivation. The intrinsic motivation is part of psychological aspects of students that play vital role in learning. Nourinezhad et al. discovered a strong correlation between intrinsic motivation and students' participation in writing assignments, indicating that when students derive personal significance and pleasure from writing, their motivation increases (Nourinezhad et al., 2017). Lee and Lin (2022) in their research have found as well that Postgraduate students in English academic writing courses experienced increased motivation when instructors recognized the academic challenges they encountered and adapted their teaching methods accordingly. This approach is that it not only reduces anxiety but also gives students the ability to take responsibility for their own learning process, which in turn boosts their intrinsic motivation (Lee & Lin, 2022). Moreover, anxiety is another psychological factor that can negatively impact students' motivation to write. This anxiety can impede their willingness to participate in writing

assignments, consequently influencing their motivation. Conversely, when students are offered helpful circumstances that reduce anxiety, their motivation to write can considerably enhance (Peng et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study have found that lecturers employed effective motivational teaching strategies in their English writing class for students. This study highlighted three main themes such as positive reinforcement, active learning strategies and addressing students' difficulties, both lecturers convey to students to sustain their motivation for continuous engagement during the learning process. This study offers insights of English writing lecturers on how they perceive the motivational teaching strategies that can significantly improve students' motivation in writing. Then, motivational teaching strategies are crucial for enhancing student motivation in English writing. Lecturers can substantially enhance students' engagement and performance in writing tasks by creating supportive learning environments, addressing individual challenges, and employing structured motivational strategies. However, due to the limitation of this study related to small data of participants, additional studies needed to be conducted with a larger sample to get more data and achieve more varied outcomes. Therefore, further research is required in other contexts such as exploring the challenges or impact of motivational teaching strategies to both lecturers and students, or

might analyzed in different English proficiency levels.

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