

## Teachers' Motivational Strategies and Students' Anxiety among Libyan freshmen Secondary School Learning English

استراتيجيات التحفيز لدى المعلمين وقلق الطلاب الليبيين في المرحلة الثانوية الأولى لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية

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### ABSTRACT

A favourable consensus about the efficacy of teachers' use of motivating techniques with formative English as a foreign language learners have surfaced in recent years. This study investigates the significance of these strategies in Libyan freshmen students in secondary public schools. The study employed an empirical survey to collect the data. Forty-three students ranked a list of 6 motivational strategies items and a list of 6 anxiety items on a Likert scale (1-5) from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The findings revealed that teachers used motivational strategies (M: 3.46, SD: .64) were highly relevant in motivating learners and decreasing students' anxiety (M: 2.71, SD: .76) in the early stages of learning English as a foreign language.

### الملخص

برز في السنوات الأخيرة إجماع إيجابي حول فعالية استخدام المعلمين لأساليب التحفيز مع متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المراحل التكوينية. تبحث هذه الدراسة أهمية هذه الأساليب لطلاب السنة الأولى بالمدارس الثانوية الحكومية الليبية. استخدمت الدراسة استبياناً تجريبياً لجمع البيانات، حيث قام ثلاثة وأربعون طالباً بالإجابة على استبيان يضم ستة بنود لاستراتيجيات التحفيز وأخرى تضم ستة بنود للشعور بالقلق على مقياس ليكرت (من 1 إلى 5)، من "أرفض بشدة" (1) إلى "أوافق بشدة" (5). وكشفت النتائج أن استخدام المعلمين لاستراتيجيات التحفيز (المتوسط: 3.46، الانحراف المعياري: 0.64) كان ذا أهمية بالغة في تحفيز المتعلمين وتقليل الشعور بالقلق للطلاب (المتوسط: 2.71، الانحراف المعياري: 0.76) في المراحل المبكرة من تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الطلاب الليبيين ، اساليب التحفيز ، القلق

### Introduction

In recent decades, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become a globally recognized approach to English language education, emphasizing meaningful communication, student interaction, and fluency development. However, successful implementation of CLT relies not only on teaching methods but also on students' psychological readiness,

particularly their motivation and anxiety levels. Motivation is critical in encouraging students to actively engage in communicative tasks (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998) while language anxiety can significantly inhibit their willingness to participate and use the language in real-life context (Horwitz, 2001).

In Libyan secondary public schools, despite awareness of CLT principles, the effectiveness of communicative teaching remains limited, largely due to student-related psychological barriers. Many students exhibit low motivation toward learning English as they perceive it as an academic requirement rather than a valuable life skill. Dörnyei (2001) defines motivational strategies as “techniques that promote the individuals’ goal-related behaviour” (p.28). Cohen, (2014) argues that “learners need strategies to keep motivated”. Instructors could apply various motivational strategies inside the classroom to achieve a positive and persistent learning effect (Dörnyei, 2001) This lack of motivation reduces their participation in communicative activities and diminishes the overall learning experience (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, Dörnyei and Schmidt, 2001, Clément et al., 1994, Brown, 2014). Simultaneously, high levels of language anxiety stemming from fear of making mistakes, peer judgment, and cultural attitudes toward error-making and feel shy to communicate in English.

Motivational strategies have been extensively researched in many countries and regions around the world, such as Saudi Arabia (Alrabai, 2011) , Iran (Papi and Abdollahzadeh, 2012) , Turkey (Sucuoglu, 2017). Japan (Sugita and Takeuchi, 2014), Korea (Guilloteaux, 2013), Taiwan (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007), Hungary (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998) and Libya (Alhodiry, 2016). These studies have focussed on the role of teachers and the motivational strategies they used in motivating university students. Teachers’ Motivational strategies are used to help Individuals between the ages of 15 to 17 had not yet received more attention in Libya's educational system in terms of teaching English language. Therefore, the paucity of research in the Libyan context focusing on the role of teachers’ motivational strategies role in encouraging freshmen in secondary school learners to learn English as a foreign language makes this study's novelty clear.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite spending years learning the language in primary and secondary schools, Libyan students struggle to improve their speaking abilities and are unable to converse as effectively as native speakers. English fluency is sometimes attributed to traditional methods used in Libyan schools, such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)( Tawir & Baharum,2024). The absence of cooperative group work possibilities in Libyan secondary schools may have contributed to the underwhelming performance by denying students the chance to connect and communicate in the classroom. One could argue that additional research can clarify the role that teachers’ motivational strategies play in helping secondary school students engage with one another and reduce their speaking anxiety in the classroom and pique their interest in utilizing language more skilfully. Thus, the purpose of this study was to find out how EFL teachers might inspire 16-year-old secondary school students. The study investigated motivational strategies English language teachers used effectively and whether they actually have lower anxiety in English classroom.



### Research Questions

- 1-What is the level of English language teachers' motivational strategies stated by students?
- 2- What is the level of students' speaking English language anxiety?

### Literature Review

Since one of the key components of any successful learning process is motivation, research has turned to methods for raising and strengthening students' motivation. Motivational strategies are "techniques that promote the individual's goal-related behavior," according to Dörnyei (2001) (p. 28). According to Cohen (2014) "learners need strategies to keep motivated" (p. 41). To produce a favorable and long-lasting learning effect, teachers might employ a variety of motivational techniques in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2001). Creating a laid-back and welcoming environment in the classroom is one of these tactics (Zaman, 2015). Additionally, educators must encourage students' confidence, make studying engaging and fun, and give them positive feedback (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). According to Bénabou & Tirole (2002) and Tavani & Losh (2003), boosting students' low anxiety and self-confidence might help them become more motivated, which in turn improves their academic achievement (Clément et al., 1994). Therefore, the effectiveness of using motivating techniques by English language teachers must be assessed based on how learners perceive and internalize them in addition to their existence (Hsu, 2020). Exploring the Motivational Strategies and anxiety on secondary school students' engagement, instructors can develop more effective strategies for implementing communicative teaching.

### Research Method

A descriptive approach was adopted to conduct this study. Therefore, the study employed a questionnaire to gather quantitative data in order to examine the motivational techniques Libyan EFL teachers employed with formative students. The statements of the questionnaire were adapted from the original questionnaire by Cheng, and Z. Dörnyei(2007) with five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5) was used to gain responses on 12 items. There were 42 freshmen students (21 females and 22 males) studying English in secondary schools in Alsyaiah reign in Libya. To analyse the collected data, SPSS software was used.

### Findings

This section presents the descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the study, which aimed to explore the levels of motivational strategies and anxiety among secondary school students in English language classroom. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire that measured students' perceptions of their teachers' motivational strategies and their own levels of language speaking anxiety during classroom participation. The descriptive results include the mean scores and standard deviations for each item under the categories of motivational strategies and anxiety. These findings provide insights into the frequency and perceived importance of each strategy and anxiety symptom. The data provide a basis for understanding the psychological dynamics that influence students engagement in learning English in classroom, offering educators a deeper look into how motivational strategies and anxiety may coexist and affect students behaviour.



Table 1: Summary of the demographic data

Gender	Repeat	%
Males	21	49%
Females	22	51%
Total	43	100%

Based on Table 1, it is observed that the sample is relatively balanced in terms of gender distribution. Females constitute a slightly higher proportion of the participants, representing 51% of the total sample, while males account for 49%. This near-equal distribution suggests that both genders are fairly represented in the study, which may enhance the generalizability of the findings regarding communicative teaching in Libyan secondary schools. The descriptive analysis presented in Table 2 shows teachers' motivational strategies level, which is found to be in the moderate range (mean = 3.41, SD = .64).

Table 2: Summary of the Means of Items According to Variable (motivational strategies) خطأ! لا يوجد نص من النمط المعين في المستند.

Variables	importance	
	Mean	S. D
<b>Motivational strategies</b>		
1 The teacher creates a pleasant and friendly classroom environment.	4.16	.843
2 The teacher encourages students and explains that making mistakes is a natural part of learning.	3.58	1.349
3 The teacher chooses interesting topics that relate to students' lives.	3.65	1.044
4 The teacher uses various materials and activities (games, videos, songs, etc.).	2.40	1.330
5 The teacher allows students to make real choices in class activities.	3.26	1.274
6 The teacher introduces the culture of English-speaking countries to make lessons more interesting.	3.72	1.221
Total Teachers' Motivational Strategies	3.46	.641

The results presented in Table 2 indicates that the overall level of motivational strategies applied by teachers, as perceived by the students, is moderate, with a total mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 0.641. Among the individual items, "the teacher creates a pleasant and friendly classroom environment" achieved the highest mean (4.16), suggesting that students highly value a supportive and welcoming learning atmosphere. Conversely, "the teacher uses various materials and activities (games, videos, songs, etc.)" received the lowest mean score (2.40), indicating a relative deficiency in the use of diverse and engaging teaching resources. Furthermore, the data reveal that strategies related to promoting positive attitudes toward mistakes (mean = 3.58), selecting relatable topics (mean = 3.65), and incorporating cultural elements (mean = 3.72) were rated at a moderate level. Overall, the findings suggest that while students



recognize efforts made by teachers to foster motivation, there remains significant room for improvement, particularly in diversifying instructional materials and promoting student autonomy through real choices in classroom activities.

Table 2 Summary of the Means of Items According to Variable (Anxiety)

Variables	importance		
	Mean	S. D	
<b>Anxiety</b>			
1	I feel nervous when I speak English in front of my classmates.	2.77	1.109
2	I worry about making mistakes while speaking English in class.	2.98	1.406
3	I feel anxious when I'm asked to answer questions in English.	2.58	1.258
4	Anxiety prevents me from participating in group activities.	2.33	1.085
5	I get stressed when I do not understand instructions in English.	3.07	1.242
6	I prefer traditional teaching methods because I feel less anxious	2.56	1.368
Total	Students' Anxiety	2.71	.7623

The results summarized in Table 3 reveal that the overall level of anxiety among students in English language classes is moderate to low, with a total mean score of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 0.7623. Among the individual items, the statement "I get stressed when I do not understand instructions in English" recorded the highest mean (3.07), indicating that difficulty in comprehension is a major source of anxiety for students. This is followed closely by "I worry about making mistakes while speaking English in class" with a mean of 2.98, suggesting a persistent concern about errors. On the other hand, "Anxiety prevents me from participating in group activities" received the lowest mean (2.33), implying that students may feel comparatively less anxious during collaborative tasks. Similarly, preference for traditional teaching methods due to lower anxiety scored a relatively low mean (2.56), indicating that most students are open to modern communicative practices despite their anxiety levels. Overall, the findings suggest that while students experience low anxiety related to speaking and understanding English, their anxiety does not strongly deter them from participating in interactive learning activities, which is encouraging for the application of motivational strategies teaching in classroom.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The study questions sought to determine the students' anxiety and the degree of motivational techniques that students' teachers employed during the teaching-learning process, based on the collected participant reports, the teachers used a variety of tactics to encourage students to learn English; they demonstrated proper conduct by speaking loudly and clearly, being kind to students, listening to their issues, and providing one-on-one assistance. The results offer strong support for a few of Dörnyei's (1998) "Ten commandments of Motivation." It can be concluded that certain motivating techniques are applicable in a variety of cultural and ethnolinguistic circumstances. Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), for instance, found that the following techniques were more successful in inspiring EFL students: Set an example, create a



relaxed atmosphere, reduce anxiety to Promote learners' self- confidence and Familiarize learners with L2-related values.

To conclude, Although the current research on motivational strategies in EFL classrooms is important and highly significant, it could be expanded to include more diverse motivation strategies rather than just Dörnyei and his colleagues' framework. Motivation is a major factor in the complex process of EFL learning. Theories of motivation in EFL instruction require further study. Suggestions for broadening theoretical models to enhance language instruction and foster students' willingness to learn and reduce fear will evaluate successful motivating techniques in many cultural and educational situations. As a result, theoretical models are essential for enhancing the classroom's motivational elements and provide direction on how to integrate methods into instruction.

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