Motivational Practices in English as a Foreign Language Classes in Saudi Arabia: Teachers Beliefs and Learners Perceptions

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Abstract
This study investigated the beliefs of 36 teachers of English as foreign language in Saudi Arabia of their motivational practices in language classes and their 826 students' perceptions of their foreign language motivation in these classes. A structured questionnaire was employed to identify the teachers' frequency of use of some motivational techniques like developing a positive relationship with students, designing and presenting stimulating learning tasks, promoting learners' self-confidence, enhancing autonomy, reducing language anxiety, etc. A self-report questionnaire was utilized to evaluate some aspects of students' motivation like their attitudes toward language teacher, self-confidence, autonomy, anxiety, as well as instrumental, integrative, and intrinsic orientations. A variety of preliminary and main analyses were used to analyze the collected data. The findings of these analyses indicated that teachers' beliefs of techniques use mostly matched learners' perceptions of their motivation in language classes. Some areas of discrepancy in teachers' and learners' ratings were identified. Results further indicated that motivational techniques are not frequently utilized in English language classes in Saudi Arabia and that very important aspects of learner's motivation like reducing learners' language anxiety and promoting their autonomy are frequently ignored in teacher's practices in this context.
Keywords: Motivation; motivational teaching; motivational techniques; teacher behavior.

Introduction

Motivation is a key factor in the acquisition of second and foreign languages. In spite of its undeniable importance in this aspect, it is widely acknowledged that Saudi EFL learners generally do not possess very high levels of L2 motivation (AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2011; Al-Shammary, 1984). The reasons for this phenomenon are diverse and complex, but the nature of research on motivation within the Saudi context has certainly made no significant contribution to improve this situation. The available studies on foreign language (FL) motivation in the Saudi context attempted to identify the types and levels of language motivation among Saudi EFL learners (e.g. AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2007; Al-Shammary, 1984) with no attempts to explore the applications of motivation in the actual classroom (e.g. how really teachers' motivational practices impact learners' foreign language motivation). The chief goal of this study therefore is to approach a novel method of foreign language motivation research in the Saudi context by exploring the beliefs of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia of their motivational practices as well as their students' perceptions of these practices.

Literature review

Motivation is important in that it influences the extent to which other factors involved in SL/FL acquisition (e.g., attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence, language anxiety, intelligence, etc.) are recognized (see, e.g., Dörnyei, 2001b; Gardner, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Gardner (1985, p. 10) conceptualized the term language learning motivation as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning a new language." The work of Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, established research in the field of FL/SL (L2) motivation with a social psychological perspective that dominated the field from the 1960s until the early 1990s. The common belief during this period was that students' attitudes toward a specific language group were likely to influence their success in incorporating aspects of that language (Gardner, 1985). Research during this period was more concerned with integrative-instrumental motives/orientations dichotomy. Gardner and Lambert (1972) stated that integrative motivation refers to the interest in learning an L2 because of a personal interest in the people and culture of the target language; while instrumental motivation relates to the desire to learn the L2 for a particular purpose, such as getting a job or fulfilling educational requirements.

The early 1990s was a turning point in the research of L2 motivation, with researchers' attention in this area shifted to a more education-oriented approach laying the foundation for the cognitive-situated period of L2 motivation research. This shift has resulted in the appearance of situation-specific motivational concepts, such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-determination, language anxiety, learner autonomy, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, motivational group dynamics concepts, etc. According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), intrinsic motivation is the desire to learn for learning own sake without external incentives. Dörnyei (1994) has defined group cohesiveness, which is a group motivational component, as the strength of the relationship linking the learner group members to one another and to the group itself. Linguistics self-confidence refers to the belief that the mastery of an L2 is well within the learner's means (Dörnyei, 2009). Language anxiety, which is a component of linguistics self-confidence in Dörnyei's (1994) model of L2 motivation, was conceptualized by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p. 128) as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." Learner autonomy, according to Little (1995), involves the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action.

Since this shift in SL motivation research, numerous studies proposed different techniques to generate, sustain, and promote learner motivation in language classes (e.g., Alison, 1993; Alison & Halliwell, 2002; Brown, 2001; Chambers, 1999; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Williams & Burden, 1997). Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) indicate that motivational techniques refer to the instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation. In 2001, Dörnyei developed a systematic framework of L2 motivational techniques known as *Motivational Teaching Practice.* This framework presents main techniques and different sub-techniques that are categorized in four dimensions. The first dimension concerns creating the essential motivational conditions in the classroom needed to initiate learners' motivation. These conditions include having positive relationships with learners, building a friendly and supportive learning atmosphere in class, and creating cohesiveness among learners in the language classroom. The second category of techniques comprise those necessary to generate primary student motivation like findings ways to acquaint learners with the culture and values of the foreign language and its community, promoting learners' expectations of success, helping students to have clear, realistic, and attainable goals when learning English, and establishing relevance between the teaching materials and learners' goals and needs. The third dimension concerns maintaining and protecting the learners' generated motivation. This involves presenting cooperative learning in the classroom, protecting learners' self-esteem and promoting their self-confidence, making learning stimulating and enjoyable to learners, and supporting learners' autonomy. The fourth dimension entails techniques that aim at encouraging learners to hold positive motivational self-evaluation for themselves as language learners. Among such techniques are those dealing with increasing learners' satisfaction about learning the foreign language, providing them with motivational feedback about their performance, helping learners' to make positive motivational attributions about their past language learning experience, and offering rewards to learners in a motivating manner.

The body of research on motivational techniques remains limited. To the researcher's best knowledge, the only four studies that empirically examined the practicality of motivational techniques so far are those by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), and Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, & Ratcheva (2013). In the first two studies, 200 Hungarian and 387 Taiwanese EFL teachers ranked 50 odd motivational techniques in terms of their perceived importance in promoting learners' motivation to learn English, and as well their actual frequency of use of these techniques in their language classes. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) used a variety of instruments like self-report questionnaires, classroom observations, and a post-lesson teacher evaluation scale to evaluate the motivational practices of 27 EFL teachers and the FL motivation of over 1300 EFL learners in South Korea. The findings of this study revealed a significant positive correlation between teachers' motivational teaching practices and students' classroom motivation. A significant limitation of Guilloteaux and Dörnyei' s study was, however, that it was more concerned with the teachers' general motivational practices and did not utilize specific motivational techniques in the language classes to examine their effectiveness in enhancing learners' FL motivation.

Using a longitudinal pre- and post-treatment quasi-experimental design, the study by Moskovsky et al. (2013) provided a methodologically-controlled investigation into the effects of ten preselected teachers' motivational techniques motivation, which were implemented among an experimental group during an eight-week teaching program. The results of this investigation provided strong evidence that implementing motivational techniques in Saudi EFL classrooms resulted in a significant positive change in learner motivation, and it also confirmed a positive

causal relationship between teacher's motivational techniques and student. The major limitation of the study by Moskovsky et al. (2013) was that the findings were inconclusive in terms of how the utilization of motivational techniques would impact learner actual achievement.

English language status in Saudi Arabia

English was introduced in Saudi schools in the late 1950s (Al-Shammary, 1984). It was initially taught only in intermediate and secondary schools (years 7-12). Currently, English in Saudi Arabia is taught starting from grade six of primary school up to grade three of high school. The rationale for the late learning of English is that its acquisition might interfere with the acquisition of the mother language (Arabic) if taught at an early age. As for university, English is taught at the preparatory year for two semesters, and it is a prerequisite for admission to most Saudi universities. It is also a requirement for completing higher education in some majors in Saudi faculties like medicine, engineering, and nursing, where it is the medium of instruction. English is still considered a foreign language in Saudi Arabia (e.g., Al-Maini, 2006) because of the dominance of native Arabic in most daily activities. This dominance results in relatively few opportunities to hear, speak, and write English inside or outside of the classroom (Al-Otaibi, 2004).

Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) stated that the Saudi government has recognized the importance of English language by making it a mandatory subject in schools and universities. However, the level of achievement in learning English as a foreign language is far below expectations: after years of study, most Saudi students are unable to communicate in English and have only the most basic reading and writing skills. This phenomenon may be attributed to a number of cultural, social, religious, and political barriers that undermine the value of learning English in the Saudi context.

In addition to religious and cultural restrictions, there are other challenges to the EFL education in the Saudi context, such as the nature of English classroom instruction which is usually a teacher-centered rather than student-centered (Al-Shehri, 2004), the typically overcrowded classes (Al-Mohanna, 2010), and the authoritative character of the English language teacher in that context who is typically seen the ultimate controller of class who decide what students can and cannot do (Alrabai, 2011).

All of these challenges contribute to the phenomenon of low degree of motivation to learn English by Saudi learners, and it is therefore essential that EFL instructors integrate motivational techniques in their teaching practices. As a first step in determining the optimal methods of achieving this, it is necessary to evaluate the current situation of teachers' motivational practices in Saudi EFL classes and to assess to what degree such practices influence learners' motivation.

Materials and Methods

Objectives of the study

The chief goal of this study is to evaluate the motivational teaching practices in Saudi EFL classes by exploring teachers' beliefs and learners' perceptions about these practices.

Participants

A sample of 36 volunteer male and female EFL instructors and their students (N=826) from King Khalid University, King Abdulaziz University, and two secondary schools from Jeddah and Riyadh took part in this study. The sample population of teachers had a wide range in ages, qualifications, teaching experience, and regional backgrounds; they taught students studying at

different levels with different FL proficiencies, ranging from beginner to advanced. Some statistics about participating teachers is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information for participating EFL teachers (N = 36)*

Gender				Highest qualification						EFL teaching experience (in years)						Age (years old)					
Male		Female		BA		MA		PhD		5-10		10-15		Over 15		25-40		40-50		Over 50	
FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
21	58.33	15	41.67	6	16.67	18	50	12	33.33	8	22.22	19	52.78	9	25	16	44.44	14	38.89	6	16.67

Note. FQ = frequency.

The sample population of students ranged in age from 15 and 25 years, and had a range of EFL learning experience from as little as 5 years to over 15 years. More statistical information about the participating learners is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Demographic information for participating EFL learners (N = 826)*

Gender				School level				EFL learning experience (in years)						Region of origin					
Male		Female		High school		University		5-10		10-15		Over 15		CC		WR		SR	
FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
448	54.24	378	45.76	387	46.85	439	53.15	222	26.88	573	69.37	31	3.75	261	31.6	273	33.05	292	35.35

Note. FQ = frequency, CC = Capital city, WR = Western region, SR = Southern region.

Instruments

The study developed two questionnaire surveys: one to investigate teachers' beliefs of their motivational practices in language classes, and the other to measure learners' motivation as an estimated outcome of such practices.

Teachers' survey

Participating teachers were required to rate their actual frequency of use of 58 motivational techniques in motivating learners in the EFL classroom based on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from "Hardly ever" to "Very frequently" . Rating options have been assigned the following numerical values: "Hardly ever" = 1, "Rarely" = 2, "Occasionally" = 3, "Frequently" = 4, "Very frequently" = 5; with high scores indicating more frequent use of the given technique by participating teachers.

The 58 sub-techniques that came out in the primary version of this instrument were selected based on the hypothesis that they could be of positive effect on learners' FL motivation if utilized properly in the teaching practices of EFL teachers. These sub-techniques were clustered under different scales/techniques (see Table 3) so as to measure a variety of aspects of teacher motivational practices: *developing a positive relationship with students*; *promoting group cohesiveness*; *familiarizing learners with the target language culture and related values; presenting learning tasks in stimulating ways*; *promoting learner's realistic beliefs, goals, and needs*; *making learning tasks stimulating*; *reducing learners' language anxiety*; *promoting learners' self-confidence*; and *promoting learners' autonomy*.

Learners' survey

To evaluate learner motivation, a survey (N of items=67) was employed to target some learner motivational variables, such as *motivational intensity, linguistic self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, attitudes towards the English teacher, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, group cohesiveness, learner autonomy,* and *language anxiety*. These variables were selected based on the anticipation that they would be positively affected by the utilization of motivational techniques in foreign language classes. They were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" with the following values assigned to the rating options: "Strongly disagree" = 1, "Disagree" = 2, "Neither agree nor disagree" = 3, "Agree" = 4, "Strongly agree" = 5. High scores designating high levels of learner motivation (with the exception of the *learner anxiety* variable, where high scores indicate low levels of learner's motivation and vice versa). Numerous sources were consulted when constructing this instrument (e.g., AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2011; Al-Shammary, 1984; Chang, 2005; Clément & Baker, 2001; Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 2010; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Guilloteaux, 2007; Horwitz et al., 1986; Pintrich & Groot, 1990; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This tool was administered in Arabic, the learners' native language, to eliminate the risk that the limited English competency of some respondents would affect their ability to respond to all questions.

Procedures
Piloting

The questionnaires used in this study were piloted to ten EFL teachers and 86 learners from four institutions in Saudi Arabia. Both the learners and teachers represented a population similar to that of the main study sample, but were not included in the main study. Responding teachers in the pilot study recommended rewording some items in the teachers' survey such as item 30 to be '*Find out your students' needs, goals, and interests and build them into the **lesson***" instead of '*Find out your students' needs, goals, and interests and build them into the **teaching curriculum***' as to make it more applicable to the Saudi EFL context, where teachers usually teach English using a ready-made curriculum. These items were reworded accordingly in the final version of the questionnaire survey.

The wording of certain items in the student questionnaire was also modified based on learners' responses.

Data collection

As to satisfy research ethics requirements, institutions' approval and participants' own consent were sought and granted before the commencement of the study.

The main study was conducted over two semesters of the Saudi academic year (September 2012 - June 2013). On the day of the questionnaire administration, thorough information about the study as well as detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaire was presented to participants. Each respondent was asked to fill out a demographic information sheet about himself/herself including gender, age, and teaching/learning experience before completing the questionnaire.

Teachers were recruited first. Due to the fact that the majority of those teachers are typically non-native speakers of English, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic to eliminate the risk that foreign language competence would affect participants' responses. Teachers were provided with the English version and the translated Arabic version of the questionnaire and were asked to respond to either of the two. It took them from 30-40 minutes to finish responding to the whole questionnaire items.

The learner motivation questionnaire was administered next. The researcher administered the questionnaire to students directly in the absence of school teachers/ administrators whose presence might affect students' responses. Learners were assured that their responses remain entirely confidential and anonymous. The learners required 40-60 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire.

Data analysis
Preliminary data analyses

The out-of-range and missing values in both the teachers' and learners' data were checked for and amended as a first step in preliminary analyses. The 51 sub-techniques in the teacher final survey were initially grouped under 9 scales based on their content similarities. This initial grouping followed Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Dörnyei (2001b), and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998). The internal consistency of the 9 scales was tested by means of a reliability analysis (alpha). For the reliability test, the researcher went in line with what has been suggested in the literature (e.g. Dörnyei, 2001a) that indices with alpha values of .60 and greater are considered reliable. Scale #5 'increase learners' positive goals, realistic beliefs, and needs' ,which comprised four items, had an alpha score of.48, and consequently was excluded from main analyses.

An item analysis test was then conducted, revealing the need to discard the following items: *'encourage learners to personalise the classroom environment according to their taste,'* from scale # 1 (see Table 3); *'encourage students to apply their English language proficiency in real-life situations'* from scale # 3; and *'personalize learning tasks'* from scale # 5 because they were found to decrease the alpha coefficients of their scales, if included. Scales with discarded items are marked with ^ in the final version of the survey.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was finally conducted on teachers' data to identify the underlying components of the scales. The results derived from the factor analysis revealed that all the items in the final version of the survey loaded highly on the scales under which they were initially grouped. The final set of sub-techniques/items along with their techniques/scales is presented in the teacher's survey in Table 3.

Table 3. *Final rank order and descriptive statistics of the techniques/scales and their constituent items/sub-techniques*

Scale/ item	Develop a positive relationship with your students ^ $\alpha = .66, M = 3.69,$ SD= .59	Mean	SD

Scale/item		Mean	SD
1	Show students that you care about their progress.	3.90	.35
2	Show students that you accept them and care about them.	3.84	.39
3	Pay attention to your students and listen to each of them.	3.81	.49
4	Create a supportive classroom climate that promotes risk-taking and tolerates learners' mistakes.	3.70	.61
5	Show students that you value teaching English as a meaningful experience.	3.67	.59
6	Avoid making social comparison between students.	3.66	.80
7	Try to have natural and informal conversations with the students in class.	3.49	.70
8	Share with your students your own personal interest in the English language.	3.41	.76
Scale/ item	**Familiarize learners with the target language culture and related values** α =.79, M = 3.64, SD= .57	**Mean**	**SD**
9	Remind students of the benefits of mastering the English language.	3.86	.34
10	Increase the amount of English language you use in the class.	3.81	.45
11	Encourage students to use English language outside the classroom.	3.75	.52
12	Promote students to contact with English language speakers and cultural products.	3.58	.72
13	Encourage students to explore the English language community through the internet.	3.48	.67
14	Familiarize students with the cultural background of the target language.	3.45	.69
Scale/ item	**Promote learners' self-confidence** ^ α =.76, M = 3.41, SD= .78	**Mean**	**SD**
15	Recognize students' effort and achievement.	3.72	.64
16	Give students positive feedback and appraisal of their work.	3.56	.69
17	Show students that you have high expectations for what they can achieve.	3.51	.72
18	Make sure that grades reflect students' effort and hard work.	3.45	.78
19	Teach various learning strategies and help students to design their learning strategies.	3.30	.83
20	Celebrate your students' success and accomplishments.	3.22	.89
21	Give students other rewards besides grades.	3.13	.94
Scale/ item	**Make the learning tasks stimulating** α =.89, M = 3.36, SD= .82	**Mean**	**SD**
22	Highlight and demonstrate aspects of English language learning that your students are likely to enjoy.	3.57	.68
23	Select tasks which require involvement from each student.	3.35	.83
24	Make tasks challenging to involve the students.	3.31	.81
25	Make the learning tasks more attractive by including novel, humorous, and fantasy elements.	3.20	.97

Scale/ item	**Present learning tasks in stimulating ways ^** α =.61, *M* = 3.34, SD= .82	**Mean**	**SD**
26	Provide the students with clear instruction and appropriate techniques about how to do the task.	3.54	.66
27	Guide and assist students until they perform the learning task(s) successfully.	3.46	.72
28	Make sure students receive sufficient preparation before you start the lesson.	3.44	.73
29	Break the routine of the classroom by varying the presentation format and learning tasks.	3.44	.82
30	Explain the goal of each learning task.	3.31	.88
31	Use an interesting activity to start the class.	3.25	.89
32	Raise the students' expectations of the task outcomes.	3.22	.90
33	Summarize the lesson outcomes at the end of each lesson.	3.03	.94
Scale/ item	**Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms** α =.80, *M* =3.21, SD= .88	**Mean**	**SD**
34	Encourage students to interact, cooperate and share their personal information and thoughts.	3.45	.71
35	Explain to the students the importance of the class rules and the consequences for violating them.	3.34	.89
36	Include activities that lead to the successful completion of whole group tasks.	3.30	.88
37	Divide students into small groups and ask them to work toward a shared goal.	3.19	.91
38	Allow students to suggest other class rules.	2.79	.99
Scale/ item	**Reduce learners' anxiety** α =.75, *M* =2.95, SD= .91	**Mean**	**SD**
39	Design tasks that are within the limits of students' ability.	3.42	.69
40	Deal properly with learner's anxiety-provoking beliefs/misconceptions	3.21	.90
41	Reduce students' fear of negative evaluation.	3.13	.94
42	Reduce students' communication apprehension.	2.97	.94
43	Promote cooperation between students instead of competition.	2.91	.98
44	Reduce fear of language test in learners.	2.08	1.02
Scale/ item	**Promote learners' autonomy** α =.82, *M* =2.91, SD= .91	**Mean**	**SD**
45	Encourage students to adopt, develop, and apply self-motivating techniques.	3.40	.65
46	Adopt the role of a facilitator of learning rather than the controller of the class.	3.26	.88
47	Involve students in classroom discussions.	3.08	.85
48	Allow students to assess themselves.	2.84	.92
49	Give students as much choices as possible about their learning by allowing them to give ideas and involving them in planning and running their course program.	2.71	.96
50	Give students the choice to choose the due dates of course	2.58	1.04

	assignments and exams.		
51	Let students have a say in deciding on some of the norms (rules) that run their classroom.	2.51	1.07

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach alpha coefficient, ^ items were discarded from this scale due to low (<.30) item-total correlations.

The students' data was also subjected to preliminary statistical analyses, including the internal consistency Cronbach's alpha, item analysis, explanatory factor analysis (EFA), and normality tests. The final-version instrument suggested that its data was reliable, and normally distributed in all constructs.

Main analyses

The collected data was subjected to descriptive analyses including mean and standard deviation, which were computed to identify teachers' beliefs and learners' perceptions about the motivational teaching in Saudi EFL classes. Teachers' beliefs were identified using the final rank order of the scales/techniques that were rank-ordered based on the participating teachers' responses in descending order of the mean. Learner motivation was assessed based on learners' responses using the mean scores of the motivational variables examined in this study.

Results

Teachers' data findings

Based on the findings derived from the analyses, we used the following classification criteria to categorize teachers' use of motivational techniques: techniques with a mean value of more than 4 were perceived as frequently used techniques in the classroom; techniques with mean value of 3 to 4 were considered occasionally used techniques; techniques with mean value of less than 3 were considered rarely used techniques. The full classification of techniques is available in Table 4.

Table 4. *Perceived frequency of use of motivational techniques by teachers*

Frequency of use		Techniques	Mean
Frequently used techniques		None	_____
Occasionally used techniques	Most occasionally used techniques	Develop a positive relationship with your students.	3.69
		Familiarize learners with L2 related values.	3.64
	Least occasionally used techniques	Promote learners' self-confidence.	3.41
		Make the learning tasks stimulating.	3.36
		Present learning tasks in stimulating and enjoyable ways.	3.34
		Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms.	3.21
Rarely used techniques		Reduce learners' anxiety.	2.95
		Promote learners' autonomy.	2.91

The mean value of the techniques/scales in this study ranged between 2.91 (out of 5) as a minimum value to 3.69 as the maximum value. This indicates that the frequency of motivational techniques used in Saudi EFL classes ranged from rare (techniques with overall mean scores under 3.00) to occasional (techniques with overall mean scores of 3.00 to 3.69). The occasionally used techniques categorized into two categories: the most occasionally used techniques (M=3.50 to 3.69) and the least occasionally used techniques (M= 3.21 to 3.50). Table 3 shows the final rank order, the descriptive statistics of the techniques/scales, and the constituent sub-techniques of each.

Participating teachers reported that they most occasionally utilize the following two motivational techniques in their EFL classes:

Develop a positive relationship with your students (*M=3.69, SD=.59*) was found to have the highest score of any technique. Participating teachers assumed that they most frequently demonstrate four aspects of teacher motivational behaviour in their EFL teaching practice: the teacher's commitment toward his/her students' academic progress (item 1), showing personal warmth, respect, and acceptance to students (items 2, 3, and 7), the teacher's passion and enthusiasm for teaching English (items 5 and 8), and creating a relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere (techniques 4 and 6).

Familiarize learners with the target language culture and related values (*M=3.64, SD=.57*) was ranked as the second most occasionally used technique by respondents. It is interesting to notice that informants reported on their use of techniques that target three different sorts of L2 values. Techniques that promote learners' instrumental values (items 9 and 11) were the ones most occasionally used by teachers, followed by intrinsic values techniques (item 10). Techniques that promote integrative values (items 12, 13, and 14) were the least utilized by teachers due, possibly, to the lower amount of contact that Saudi EFL teachers usually have with the target-group community and culture, which made teachers less interested in techniques that target this domain of values.

Scales 3-6 represented the second group of techniques. Participants perceived that they occasionally utilize these techniques in their classes, but not as most occasionally as techniques 1 and 2, nor as rarely as techniques 7 and 8.

Promoting learners' self-confidence (*M=3.41, SD=.78)* was perceived by participating teachers as the third occasionally used technique in their EFL classes. The seven sub-techniques in this scale are reflective of four very fundamental aspects of foreign language learner's self-confidence. These aspects were recognizing students' accomplishments (items 15, 18, 20, and 21), providing learners with positive motivational feedback (item 16), setting high expectations of students and showing faith in their abilities (items17), and helping students design their own learning strategies (item 19).

Make the learning tasks stimulating (M=3.36, SD=.82) was ranked by teachers as the fourth highest-scoring technique in their classes. Participants in the current study acknowledged that they usually make use of different individual techniques to design stimulating and enjoyable learning tasks for their students. These techniques include highlighting and demonstrating aspects of English language learning that students are likely to enjoy (item 22), selecting tasks that require involvement from each student (item 23), making learning tasks challenging (item 24), and making the content of the learning tasks attractive by including novel and humorous elements (item 25).

The fifth rank-ordered technique in this study was *presenting learning tasks in stimulating ways* (M=3.34, SD=.82). Teachers acknowledged the importance of keeping learners

motivated throughout the lesson: at the start of the lesson (items 28, 30, and 31), while working on learning tasks (items 26, 27, 29, and 32), and at the end of the lesson (item 33); items 26 and 27 attracted much of teachers' attention.

Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms (M=3.21, SD=.88) was ranked sixth, as the least occasionally used by the participating EFL teachers. Participants reported paying less attention to factors of group dynamics such as group cohesion (items 34, 36, and 37) and group norms (items 35 and 38) in their classes.

Scales 7 and 8 came at the bottom of the ranking list as the rarely used techniques in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia with overall mean scores under 3.00.

Reducing language anxiety is a very crucial issue to learner motivation, as numerous studies' findings have revealed that more anxious students tend to be less motivated to learn English (see, e.g., Alrabai, 2011; Clément et al., 1994; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Hao, Liu, & Hao, 2004; Liu & Huang, 2011). This technique has been reported by EFL teachers as rarely used in their classes *(M=2.95, SD=.91)*. Teachers assumed that they often try to minimize learning tasks difficulty to learners' ability limits (item 39), and sometimes find ways to deal with the beliefs and misconceptions that learners usually link to learning a foreign language (item 40). Other very important sources that evoke learners' anxiety in language classes like fear of negative evaluation (item 41), communication apprehension (item 42), competition (item 43), and language test (item 44); appeared, however, to be frequently ignored in participating teachers' practices. Item 44 '*reduce fear of language test in learners*,' (M=2.08, SD=1.02) achieved the lowest mean in the whole survey, reflecting the fact that EFL teachers might regard this technique as not incorporated in their teaching practice.

Despite the importance of promoting learners' autonomy to increase their motivation (see Brophy, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2000), *promote learners' autonomy* (M=2.91, SD=.91) was ranked as the most rarely used technique to enhance learners' motivation in Saudi EFL classes. Participants recognized that they sometimes encourage students to adopt, develop, and apply self-motivating strategies (item #45), but it seems that crucial autonomy-supporting practices such as adopting the role of learning facilitator (technique #46) and involving students in discussions that take place in the classroom (item #47) did not receive high scores from respondents in this study. There are also many other important aspects of learner's autonomy that appear to be disregarded in teacher's classes, including allowing students' self-assessment (item 48), providing learners with some choices and freedom about learning (items 49 and 50), and allowing students to have a say in decision-making in their classes (item 51).

Students' data findings

Based on their responses, students' motivational variables could be classified into three levels: the highly rated variables with mean scores of above 4, the moderately rated variables with mean values of 3 to 4, and the low rated variables with mean values under 3. The ratings of these variables are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Students' ratings of motivational variables

Level of rating	Variables	Mean
Highly-rated variables	Instrumental orientation	4.18
	Integrative orientation	4.02

Moderately-rated variables	Intrinsic motivation	3.68
	Attitudes towards English language teacher	3.67
	Group cohesiveness	3.60
	Linguistics self-confidence	3.51
	Motivational intensity	3.14
Low-rated variables	Learners' language anxiety.	2.88
	Learners' autonomy.	2.85

Instrumental orientation (M=4.18) and *integrative orientation* (M=4.02) have been highly rated by students, indicating that participating students possess substantial reserves of these orientations (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics for the motivational variables in students' questionnaire and their items*

Variable/ item	Instrumental orientation α =.83, M = 4.18, SD= .77	Mean	SD
1	Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	4.32	.69
2	Studying English is important because I need it to pass English exams and graduate from the school/college.	4.22	.65
3	Studying English is important because I will be able to search for information and materials or chatting with people in English on the internet.	4.14	.82
4	Studying English is important because I like to travel to countries where English is used.	4.14	.82
5	Studying English is important because it will help me to continue my studying in the future in an English-speaking country like America, Britain, or Australia.	4.08	.86
Variable/ item	Integrative orientation α =.86, M = 4.02, SD= .85	Mean	SD
6	Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.	4.38	.64
7	Studying English is important because I will be able to know the life of the English-speaking nations.	4.02	.89
8	Studying English is important because it will allow me to have English-speaker friends.	3.93	.92
9	Studying English is important because it will allow me to better understand and appreciate English art and literature.	3.73	.96
Variable/ item	Intrinsic motivation α =.79, M = 3.68, SD=. 74	Mean	SD
10	My goal of learning English is far more than just	4.04	.73

	passing exams.		
11	I wouldn't study English if I didn't have to.	4.03	.71
12	Learning English is a boring activity for me.	4.01	.71
13	I would like to continue to learn English even after I leave this school/college.	3.86	.76
14	I would study English even if it were not required by this school/university.	3.83	.76
15	I am enjoying learning English this semester.	3.61	.73
16	When English classes end, I often wish they would continue.	2.40	.77
Variable/ item	**Attitudes towards English language teacher** α =.88, M = 3.67, SD=.76	**Mean**	**SD**
17	My English teacher criticizes me when I give wrong answers in the classroom.	4.00	.78
18	My English teacher is hesitant and unconfident.	3.91	.67
19	If I do well in English this semester, it is because of the efforts and the fascinating teaching style of my English teacher.	3.79	.74
20	My English teacher is insincere.	3.77	.80
21	My English teacher is helpful.	3.72	.80
22	My English teacher encourages and inspires me to give my best efforts to learning.	3.70	.74
23	I rely a lot on my English teacher to do learning tasks.	3.66	.73
24	My English teacher is considerate.	3.64	.78
25	My English teacher compliments me when I give a correct answer in the classroom.	3.60	.71
26	My English teacher tolerates his students' mistakes.	3.54	.77
27	My English teacher is approachable.	3.53	.81
28	My English teacher is linguistically competent.	3.51	.80
29	The teaching style of my English teacher is unclear and confusing.	3.49	.82
30	My English teacher believes in my abilities to succeed in this course.	3.49	.66
Variable/ item	**Group cohesiveness** α =.84, M = 3.60, SD= .91	**Mean**	**SD**
31	My classmates show respect to each other.	3.89	.89
32	My classmates are friendly.	3.75	.82
33	My classmates cooperate with each other in class.	3.69	.96
34	My classmates are inconsiderate.	3.65	.90
35	I believe that we represent a coherent group of learners in English class.	3.51	.92
36	I rely on my classmates when doing learning tasks.	3.39	.96
37	I feel that learners in our class are stimulated to learn English.	3.30	.91
Variable/	**Linguistics self-confidence**	**Mean**	**SD**

item	α =.77, M =3.51, SD=.65		
36	I often experience a feeling of success in my English classes.	3.83	.62
39	I feel I am making progress in English.	3.69	.66
40	I believe I will receive good grades in English.	3.65	.68
41	I am worried about my ability to do well in English this semester.	3.47	.75
42	In English lessons, I usually understand what to do and how to do it.	3.36	.63
43	I can master hard learning tasks in English class.	3.09	.71
Variable/ item	**Motivational intensity** α =.64, M =3.14, SD=.76	**Mean**	**SD**
44	I have been working hard to learn English this semester.	3.74	.73
45	I have been paying close attention to and actively participating in the class discussion.	3.27	.73
46	I have been spending a lot of time at home working on my English assignments and preparing for the coming lessons.	2.97	.79
47	I haven't spent sufficient time working on my English homework.	2.96	.79
48	I haven't been participating enough in discussions that take place in our English class.	2.75	.78
Variable/ item	**Learners' language anxiety** α =.80, M =2.88, SD=.89	**Mean**	**SD**
49	I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my English language class this semester.	2.42	.89
50	I feel worried about the consequences of failing my language class this semester.	2.68	.91
51	I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class this semester.	2.84	.89
52	I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English this semester.	2.84	.83
53	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class this semester.	2.88	.96
54	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	2.91	.91
55	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in any other classes this semester.	2.93	.92
56	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class this semester.	2.94	.83
57	I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.	3.12	.89
58	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make in class this semester.	3.25	.90
Variable/	**Learner autonomy**	**Mean**	**SD**

item	*α* =.71, *M* =2.85, SD= .75		
59	I set clear goals for myself for learning English this semester.	3.61	.72
60	I set clear strategies for myself for achieving my goals of learning English this semester.	3.50	.76
61	The ideas and suggestions I offer in English class are usually welcomed by my English teacher.	3.04	.66
62	I usually take part in choosing the activities that we do in English class this semester.	2.69	.69
63	I easily express my own ideas and participate in the discussions that take part in our English class this semester.	2.68	.78
64	Most students don't participate in the discussions that take place in our English class this semester.	2.63	.76
65	I take part in deciding due dates for assignments and exams in our English course this semester.	2.62	.83
66	I feel that other students take part in English class discussions much more than me.	2.56	.74
67	I take part in deciding on the content of our English course this semester.	2.31	.79

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach alpha coefficient.

As can be seen in Table 6, *intrinsic motivation* (M = 3.68), *attitudes toward English language teacher* (M = 3.67), *group cohesiveness* (M=3.60), and *linguistic self-confidence* (M=3.51); achieved moderately high rankings as components of learner motivation. *Motivational intensity* (M=3.14) which denotes the efforts learners exert in learning the L2 was a low moderately-ranked motivational component.

The figures in Table 6 show that the concepts of *learner anxiety* (M=2.88), and *learner autonomy* (M=2.85) achieved the lowest ratings as components of learner motivation.

Discussion

Teachers' perceptions of their motivational practices matched student's beliefs of their actual motivation in most variables in this study. Teachers perceived having positive relationship with learners, the technique they most occasionally utilize for motivating language learners (M = 3.69). Learners, on the other side, demonstrated moderate positive attitudes toward their language teachers (M = 3.67). These quite consistent ratings of both teachers and learners of this variable indicate that the positive behaviours teachers demonstrate to learners usually have positive impacts on their motivation. This finding is in line with the findings of most of previous studies like that of Chambers (1999), Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), and Dörnyei's (2001b, p. 120) who confirm that "[a]lmost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students, which makes teacher behaviour the most powerful motivational tool."

Teachers have ranked familiarizing learners with the values associated with language learning as the second most occasionally used technique in their classes (M=3.64) which matches the high ratings that learners assigned to instrumental and integrative orientations (M=4.18, 4.02; respectively). Previous research has demonstrated that familiarising learners with L2 culture and

related values does have a positive motivating effect on learners (see, e.g., Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; among others).

Many previous studies that investigated the role of L2 motivation in the Saudi EFL context (e.g. Al-Otaibi, 2004; Alrabai, 2007; Al-Shamary, 1984) found that Saudi EFL learners are instrumentally motivated in the first place. This fact was confirmed by the high mean values that this variable scored in this study. It appears that participating teachers used to reinforce the originally-existing high values of this variable in their learners, which resulted in high levels of instrumental motivation for participating students. The relatively higher ranking of instrumental than integrative motivation generally supports the view that the 'instrumental motivation' type plays a more prominent role in foreign language contexts where learners have little or no interest in the target-language culture, and few or no opportunities to interact with its members than the 'integrative' type (Ellis, 1994).

Teachers perceived that they least-occasionally utilize other techniques like promoting learners' self-confidence, making learning tasks stimulating, presenting tasks in stimulating ways, and promoting group cohesiveness and norms.

Participating teachers recognized the importance of promoting learners' self-confidence and assumed integrating it into their teaching practice. This recognition is in line with what is established in literature that students' perceptions of their own abilities has a fundamental effect on the amount of effort they exert on learning (see e.g., Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Good & Brophy, 1994). Teachers further went in line with what is well-emphasized in many different areas like psychology and education (see Dörnyei, 2001b; Raffini, 1996) that making learning tasks stimulating is a vital method for inspiring learner motivation.

It has been increasingly recognized in literature (e.g. Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) that learner groups can be a substantial source of motivation to learn an L2; and that group-based motives such as group cohesion and group norm usually influence learners' motivation considerably. There are, however, many challenges that confront creating a cohesive group of EFL learners in the Saudi context. Teachers in this context typically work under the pressure of the density of the pre-scribed EFL curriculum that generates their fear of not being able to cover the whole syllabus on time. This forces them to follow the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (Al-Maini, 2006) and to ignore communicative teaching; which in turn eliminates the chances for creating cooperative learning among learners. Another barrier for generating cooperating learning and therefore cohesiveness among learners in the Saudi EFL classes is the phenomenon of overcrowded EFL classes. Tinto (1998) emphasized that large classes have been linked to a decline in learner motivation for studying because students in these classes feel as if they have been discouraged from asking questions, communicating with other students or approaching their teachers.

There was a large drop in the mean score of the "promoting group cohesiveness" scale because of the low mean of item 38 in teachers' survey, '*Allow students to suggest other class rules*' (M=2.79, SD=.99). Teachers reported that they very rarely use this technique due to the fact that in such a controlled environment as the Saudi EFL setting, the rules used to run classrooms are normally imposed by education institutions, which is a real barrier that would make it inapplicable for the EFL teachers to effectively utilize this technique in the Saudi context.

The ranking of the above least occasionally utilized techniques matches the moderate ratings learners assigned to some of their motivational variables that could be an output of utilizing these motivational techniques like intrinsic motivation, group cohesiveness, linguistics self-confidence, and motivational intensity.

The ranking that teachers provided to reducing learners' anxiety (M=2.95), and promoting their autonomy (M=2.91) as rarely used techniques in their classes largely matches learners' high levels of language anxiety (M=2.88) and low autonomy levels (M=2.85).

The reasons behind the high level of anxiety held by Saudi learners of English as a foreign language are multifaceted. This phenomenon could be attributed to several causes, including the misconceptions usually linked to learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Other contributing factors could be the threatening classroom atmosphere in which learners' errors are not tolerated (Tanveer, 2007); the lack of the learners' involvement in class discussion and decision-making; the competitive atmosphere for learning, where learners work against each other instead of cooperating; the overcrowded EFL classes, which generate a real obstacle to the proper involvement of learners; the ready-made EFL curriculum that often cares for the quantity rather than the quality of the content; the strict classroom rules imposed by schools in Saudi Arabia, which do not allow learners to experience sufficient freedom and therefore evoke feelings of anxiety. All of these obstacles generally limit the teachers' opportunities to expose their students to anxiety-reducing techniques in their classes.

The very low mean score attained by item 44, '*reduce fear of language test in learners*' (M=2.08, SD=1.02), could be ascribed to the fact that teachers themselves have no choice but to follow the typical assessment procedures in Saudi EFL context that primarily depend on written tests to evaluate the learners' progress in the English language (Tanveer, 2007). These procedures place great pressure on teachers to deal with learners' fears about their assessments, which appeared a difficult task for most participating teachers to handle.

There are many reasons that could justify the rare utilization of techniques that promote learners' autonomy as perceived by teachers in this study. Benson (2000) and Good and Brophy (1994) assumed that students in formal school setting are usually provided with very few opportunities to exercise autonomy in the practice of learning and that schools could not be therefore considered the best place to support learners' autonomy. Warden and Lin (2000) furthermore have argued that a teacher is not seen as a facilitator of learning but as a presenter of knowledge in countries with a history of obedience to authority. This is true in the Saudi context where the teacher there is regarded as an autocratic and authoritarian figure who is seen as the main source of knowledge and the ultimate controller of the class rather than a democratic leader and facilitator of learning (see Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 159-162) for explanations about these two leadership styles). As a result of the EFL teacher's authoritative personality in the Saudi context, many aspects of student's autonomy are usually ignored in the process of learning and learners in that context are most often regarded as passive and merely observers in class. In his conclusions about the teacher-student interaction in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia, Arishi (1984) clarified that students are rarely asked to bring in their own ideas in the target language and teachers rarely use students' ideas extensively. Al-Otaibi (2004) explained that Saudi EFL learners have no choices about the content that they study, as it is prescribed by a rigid curriculum. It is no surprise then that under such conditions in the Saudi EFL context, it is probably hard for techniques concerning learner autonomy to be implemented properly in that context.

The teachers' ranking of techniques for reducing learners' anxiety and promoting autonomy contradicts their ranking for other techniques like developing a positive relationship with learners and promoting learners' self-confidence, which they perceived as occasionally utilized in their teaching practices. Beside language anxiety being a component of learner's self-confidence (Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1996), it is well-acknowledged that having a friendly

relationship with students and supporting their self-confidence for learning usually results in diminishing their apprehension of language learning and greatly enhances their autonomy to learn. This contradiction could be attributed to the possible subjectivity of teachers' responses to some of the survey items. The same inconsistency appears in learners' ratings when they reported having a positive view of their teachers while reporting high levels of anxiety and low levels of autonomy at the same time. As previously mentioned that Saudi students are accustomed to adhering to authority, it could be that it is a cultural value for students to report a positive attitude toward any authority figure, in this case a teacher, and that such a cultural value inherently created a systematic issue in learners' survey results. In this regard, one limitation for the current study to be acknowledged concerns the lack of triangulation, as the only instruments used to collect data were self-report questionnaires. Using classroom observations seems necessary to validate teachers' claims that they do use specific motivational techniques in their classes, and also to evaluate learners' in-class motivation. Another significant limitation is that the findings of this study remain unrevealing with regard to how teachers' use of motivational techniques would affect learners' actual achievement in the foreign language. This could be in fact an interesting future point of research to investigate. A third limitation of this research is that it focuses entirely on frequency of utilizing motivational techniques, and overlooks other important factors such as intensity and extent of these techniques. For example, a teacher may spend the first minute of the class doing an icebreaker game and categorize that as one action in the "reduce learner's anxiety" technique, however that teacher may need to spend a few minutes rather than just one minute to break the ice before a student in a speaking class feels comfortable speaking in front of the group. Thus, while we believe that the methodology that solely considers frequency is valuable, the results of a research of this kind cannot be generalized across the other areas, and that further research into other important areas like intensity and duration of implementation of motivational techniques could be beneficial.

Conclusions, implications, and recommendations

Motivational techniques have been found to be occasionally or rarely used by participating EFL teachers in this study. Teachers assumed that they most occasionally demonstrate behaviours in class by which they try to develop positive relationships with their students and as well employ a variety of techniques to familiarize learners with the values and culture of the target language and its community. Respondents indicated that they least occasionally make use of some techniques to find ways to promote learners' self-confidence, make learning tasks stimulating and enjoyable to students, attempt to present learning tasks in inspiring ways, and promote learners' cohesiveness in the language classroom. Respondents have, on the other hand, showed that they rarely utilize motivational techniques that reduce learners' feelings of language anxiety and support their autonomy in language classes. Participating students reported high levels of instrumental and integrative motivations, and moderate levels of intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, positive attitudes toward their English teachers, and motivational intensity. They, conversely, reported low levels of autonomy and high levels of anxiety when learning English.

The current study appears to be of particular value to the EFL learning/teaching environment in Saudi Arabia. It contributed in identifying some of the aspects of learners' motivations that teachers usually care for in their teaching practice, and, on the other side, the other motivational aspects that are usually ignored in current pedagogy. These implications might improve teachers' motivational practices, which could enhance learners' motivation, and

thus improve learning outcomes for an EFL cohort notorious for its lack of motivation and success.

This study suggests a number of recommendations for EFL teachers, EFL learners, EFL curriculum designers, and academic institutions in Saudi Arabia. The study recommends that EFL instructors should care for their students' motivation by demonstrating proper personal and teaching behaviours in the classroom. Teachers have to pay special attention to students' autonomy by granting them more control over their learning and involving them in decision-making like determining their test dates and the dates that their assignments are due. They should support their students rather than be controlling or demanding. Moreover, teachers should go beyond the fixed curriculum and the traditional methods of EFL teaching, and involve as many motivational techniques as possible in their teaching.

This study advises that Saudi EFL learners should be aware of the feelings and beliefs they experience when learning English. In this regard, learners have to recognize their irrational beliefs, fears, and feelings in order to be able to interpret them in more realistic ways. They have to talk openly with their teachers about the nature of these feelings and beliefs and to be aware that most learners usually feel uncomfortable, uneasy, and apprehensive in FL classrooms and that such feeling are common in most of the language learners and they are not associated with any particular individual.

This study advises that curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia are to design the EFL curriculum in ways that allow for the utilization of motivational techniques to take place in language classes. EFL curriculum content should be built on what students see as important, not on what designers think is important. In this regard, there should be clear and effective ways to connect the content of learning tasks to students' interests, needs, goals, experiences, daily life activities, and real-world situations. In addition, learning tasks should contain novel, attractive, and humorous elements that arouse students' curiosity to learn. The designed tasks should be within students' limits of ability in order to reduce their anxiety of failure and instead boost their confidence in successful completion of these tasks. There should be tasks into the curriculum that encourage cooperative learning where students work collaboratively and exchange personal experiences and knowledge. The quality rather than the quantity of the curriculum content should be cared for when designing the curriculum. Designers should try to reduce the density of the EFL curriculum content in a way that diminishes fears that teachers will not be able to cover the whole content on time and provide them with sufficient chances to make use of motivational techniques in their classes.

Academic institutions in Saudi Arabia have to grant both teachers and students freedom to run classes using their own ways in order to eliminate the strict institutional norms they usually impose. These institutions are strongly encouraged to find practical solutions for the phenomenon of overcrowded EFL classes as to enable teachers to properly integrate motivational techniques in their teaching practices. Institutions should involve teachers in pre-service and in-service training programs in which they are exposed to extensive instruction on how to use motivational techniques in the language classes.

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