

The Dynamics of Motivation in the EFL Classroom

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UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Nikolina Šadić

**The Dynamics of Motivation in the EFL Classroom:
Teacher Perspectives and Practices**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. in English Language
and Literature and Art History at the University of Rijeka

Supervisor: Assistant Professor Jakob Patekar, PhD
Co-supervisor: Professor Irena Vodopija-Krstanović, PhD

Rijeka, September 2024

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is essential for effective learning, impacting both students and teachers. To enhance student engagement and improve classroom management, teachers employ various motivational strategies. Understanding how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perspectives on their role as motivators evolve requires considering factors such as classroom environment, curriculum, student engagement, institutional support and diverse student needs. This thesis explores how the mentioned factors affect EFL teachers' views of their motivational role and analyzes how they adjust their motivational and classroom management strategies in response to changing classroom dynamics and student needs. To gather insights, detailed observations were conducted in two EFL classes using a structured observation sheet, along with semi-structured interviews with five participants, featuring open-ended questions. The participants were EFL teachers with teaching experience ranging from 6 months to 34 years, who have taught at different educational levels. The findings emphasize the critical role of motivation in enhancing teaching effectiveness and provide valuable insights into optimizing classroom management and teaching practices. Teachers adapt their strategies flexibly to meet diverse student needs and changing classroom dynamics by prioritizing motivation, classroom management and a supportive and positive environment.

KEYWORDS

motivation, classroom management, motivational strategies, student engagement, EFL (English as a Foreign Language), classroom dynamics

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INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, motivation is listed as one of the main factors in the process of learning. For the learning to be successful, the student needs to be externally and internally motivated. If the students possess elements of intrinsic motivation, they will enjoy the learning process more and see the reward in the form of positive emotions. However, not all students are intrinsically motivated as they do not feel personal satisfaction due to a lack of a clear understanding of their goals or values. Some students need to be extrinsically motivated with tangible or intangible rewards. In the classroom, the teacher is the one who can use different motivational strategies to increase the students' motivation. By fostering a sense of success and achievement in learning, the teacher can impact the students' intrinsic motivation and help them to learn and grow.

The teacher, as the most responsible participant in the learning process, is the one who both controls the students' learning but allows them to have the control over the process by choosing different motivation strategies and constantly improving classroom management. When Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), besides teaching grammar and vocabulary, the teacher has to motivate students to learn English but other school subjects as well.

For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the stakes are high. English language as a lingua franca is the first door of many opportunities the students will have in their life, and teachers have the responsibility to introduce the language and everything that it offers to the students. It is the teacher's job to encourage the development of language learning and enhance the learner's motivation. For an educational approach to be effective and successful, the teachers need to be as motivated as students. Personal development, love for teaching, intrapersonal relationships with other teachers, students, parents, contribution to the society are all possible reasons why a person could choose to be an educator. On the other hand, teachers may be extrinsically motivated by factors such as the salary, vacations days, positive working environment and similar. By achieving balance between the described

two motivations, the teachers can provide effective instructions and enhance the quality of their teaching.

The present research was conducted to explore how different elements of the classroom impact the EFL teachers' views on their motivational role as well as the teachers' approach to motivation and classroom management.

This research aims to explore how different factors shape EFL teachers' views of their motivational role and to examine how they adjust their motivational and classroom strategies in response to changing classroom dynamics and student needs. The research begins with a theoretical framework discussing the role of motivation in EFL classrooms, its influence on classroom management, and various motivational strategies employed by teachers. It then reviews existing literature on classroom management styles, the teacher's motivation to teach, and factors that influence motivation and classroom management. The research methodology, including aims, research questions, methods and participants, is described. Finally, the research concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an insight into the theoretical background of the role of motivation in the EFL classroom management. It focuses on the effects that motivation has on classroom management and explores different factors that influence the students' and teacher's motivation.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is widely recognized as a critical factor in the success of language learning and education in general. As H. Douglas Brown (1994) states "it is easy to figure that success in a task is due simply to the fact that someone is *motivated*", but what remains unclear is the nature of this motivation, how it can be created, fostered and maintained. As an abstract term that cannot be numerically measured, motivation is often thought of as the amount of eagerness one possesses to succeed at something. Everything teachers do or do not do in a class can motivate or demotivate the students.

There have been various studies done on motivation since the 1970s and they have been mostly focused on the importance of learners' motivation for successful language learning. Ur (1997) mentions that the learners to whom a language comes easily are not automatically those who are the most successful language learners, but rather those who show specific characteristics related to motivation. Furthermore, Ur (1997) lists positive task orientation, ego-involvement, need for achievement, high aspirations, goal orientation, perseverance and tolerance of ambiguity as those characteristics. Personality traits may also play a part in achieving better results, but various studies on this topic have not been conclusive. When it comes to young foreign language learners, they possess distinct motivational traits that require unique approaches. Positive attitudes and motivation were viewed as causes of achievement of foreign language learning, but newer research suggests they might be outcomes of successful early learning experiences. Understanding the complexity of young learners' motivation is essential for developing effective teaching strategies (Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2012).

The teacher's motivation to become a teacher has not been a subject of many studies, as most of research done on the topic of motivation included students as the participants. Berger and Girardet (2020) investigate the relationship between teachers' motivation to teach, their sense of responsibility, and their classroom management styles. Their research explores the tendency for teachers to adopt classroom management strategies that align with their perceived responsibilities. Furthermore, the research suggests that if teachers do not feel a strong sense of responsibility for student motivation, they may invest less effort into engaging students in the learning process. Key findings reveal that teachers who view teaching as a significant community service feel a heightened sense of responsibility. However, those who regard teaching as personally important exhibit an even greater sense of responsibility. This enhanced sense of responsibility positively impacts classroom management, with more responsible teachers demonstrating greater effectiveness in managing their classrooms.

By using different motivational and management strategies, the teacher chooses how much they want to influence the learners' motivation and how responsible the learners must be for their own learning. By adopting different motivational and management strategies, teachers can control the extent to which they influence learners' motivation (Weimer, 2013). If the classroom is focused on a learner-centered approach, the teacher may seem like a guide and a material provider, as the learner needs be responsible for their own motivation and performance (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). On the other hand, there has been research stating that the approach to teaching should vary depending on the age group of learners, as well as their previous knowledge, preferences and many other factors, which is why teachers usually naturally accept their roles as motivators (Tomlinson, 2005).

Therefore, motivation plays a vital role in the educational process for both students and teachers. While numerous studies have emphasized the importance of student motivation in achieving academic success, the motivation of teachers themselves also significantly impacts classroom dynamics and learning outcomes.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Effective classroom management is considered to be a cornerstone of successful teaching and learning. The relationship between classroom management, student and teacher motivation has been the subject of extensive research, highlighting the impact of various management styles on students' engagement and success. The following literature explores how classroom management influences motivation, drawing on both teacher and student perspectives.

Using different motivational strategies allows the teacher to manage the learning atmosphere, the students' behavior and the students' learning process as well. There have been many studies done on the effects of different classroom management styles and motivational strategies, that provide insight into both the teacher's and the students' perspectives (Maulana, Helms-Lorenz, Klassen, 2023). Teacher motivation plays a crucial role in shaping instructional practices that the teacher uses (Urduan, 2014). Therefore, research on teacher motivation suggests that it is highly relevant to consider motivation a key factor that influences classroom management styles.

Dipolog's research (2022) investigates the factors that affect students' motivation in language learning, with a particular focus on classroom management. Furthermore, it examines how different levels of classroom management impact classroom behavior, teaching techniques, and student motivation. The findings reveal that effective classroom management significantly enhances students' ability to focus during language lessons, thereby increasing their motivation. The research establishes a notable relationship between classroom management and language motivation, suggesting that improvements in classroom management can lead to better language learning motivation.

In their research, Thi, Thuong, and Nguyen (2021) investigate the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the role of classroom management in enhancing students' motivation to learn English. The research aims to identify exactly which classroom management styles are employed by teachers and assess how these styles influence students' motivation and academic achievement in English. Furthermore, the research categorizes classroom management styles into four types: authoritative,

authoritarian, indulgent and permissive. By exploring students' perspectives on these management styles, the authors find that the authoritative management style is the most effective in positively influencing students' motivation and academic performance. The research also highlights that teachers' willingness to engage with students positively affects their motivation, whereas a lack of control over classroom activities can negatively impact students' motivation. This approach was more focused on specific management styles and their effects, rather than Dipolog's approach, which emphasizes the general impact of effective management on language motivation.

Understanding the dynamics between diverse student needs, learning environments and classroom management strategies can help teachers refine their approaches to maximize the effectiveness of their work.

TEACHER'S MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

Teachers use a variety of motivational strategies to motivate their students but to sustain their motivation as well. Dörnyei (2001) outlines and explores a range of motivational strategies that can be applied in the classroom to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. A teacher should focus on fostering a successful language learning experience by using strategies that include creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial interest, sustaining and fostering motivation over time, building intrinsic motivation, encouraging effort and persistence, creating a motivational environment and addressing sources of demotivation in individuals.

Furthermore, for the motivational strategies to be effective, certain foundational conditions must be met in the classroom. Teachers need to create a supportive and engaging learning environment, build strong relationships with their students and ensure that the activities and materials are relevant and appropriately challenging to their students. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) offer a comprehensive explanation of motivation in language learning, particularly emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment. Additionally, they argue that a teacher's passion and enthusiasm for teaching can significantly influence students' attitudes and motivation toward learning. To create a supportive classroom environment, the teachers should set clear

and attainable goals, offer constructive yet positive feedback and encouragement, allow students to have a degree of control over their learning and use content that is relevant to students' lives but interesting enough to enhance their motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Pašalić's research (2023) investigates the connection between teachers' motivational behaviors and students' motivation within EFL contexts. The research aims to identify which specific motivational strategies employed by teachers most effectively enhance students' motivation to learn English. It indicates the importance of the teacher's ability to adapt motivational strategies based on the students' needs and engagement. Additionally, it agrees with Dörnyei's (2001) idea that motivational strategies are ineffective without proper conditions in the classroom. Moreover, Pintrich's research (2003) discusses the importance of the classroom context, as he highlights the role that teachers, classroom environment and instructional practices have in shaping student motivation.

The teachers' motivational strategies play a significant role in fostering a positive learning environment. Creating supportive classroom conditions is necessary to maximize the effectiveness of the motivational strategies. Teachers adapt and tailor their approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MOTIVATION AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

As previously presented, motivation and classroom management are fundamental components of effective teaching and learning. Both are closely intertwined, as the motivation of both teachers and students impacts the classroom environment and learning outcomes. Central to this dynamic are several other factors such as student engagement, classroom environment, institutional support, professional development opportunities and teacher well-being.

Student engagement is a complex concept that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements. When students are actively engaged in learning, teachers

experience higher levels of motivation. Engaged students tend to participate more actively, show interest in the discussed topics and exhibit positive behavior, which makes classroom management easier (Hiver et al., 2024). On the other hand, low student engagement can lead to increased teacher stress, burnout and challenges in maintaining discipline. Disruptive behavior, which is often more complex than mischief, sometimes requires special interventions such as social skills training. To address those issues, teacher training programs need to include classroom management and support structures (Patekar, 2007). Teachers may try to prevent student misbehaviors by preparing their lessons and materials in detail and adapting their teaching strategies (Bayhan et al., 2014).

A positive classroom environment is marked by clear expectations, engaging teaching methods, strong teacher-student relationships, which leads to a better persistence in academic tasks and higher motivation. Stressful or unsupportive environments can result in lower student engagement and diminished academic performance. To create an effective classroom environment, there needs to be a rapport between the teacher and the students that can be supported by flexible seating arrangements that provide students with autonomy and choice (Aziz, 2024). For the teachers to ensure an adaptable and supportive classroom environment, they need to be encouraged by their institutions.

Institutional support can provide resources such as conference funding, teaching aids, professional development opportunities, administrative and technological support and similar. It is a crucial factor in helping teacher address the diverse needs of their students, stay updated with educational trends and maintain their motivation and job satisfaction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Moreover, a curriculum that teachers find engaging and meaningful can boost their motivation to teach, especially when it is aligned with the teachers' goals and beliefs. However, when it comes to changes of the curriculum, challenges can arise due to factors such as limited resources, time constraints or differences in the teaching approach (Kagama, 2018).

Teacher's motivation is often influenced by the opportunities for ongoing professional development that their institution offers. Opportunities for growth and supportive work environment significantly impact teachers' effectiveness and allow them

to exchange knowledge with their colleagues (Urdan, 2014). Furthermore, many teachers lack sufficient pre-service training in classroom management, which emphasizes the need for effective in-service professional development. These programs often consist of didactic instruction, coaching and performance feedback and offer valuable insights for designing more effective teaching (Wilkinson et al., 2021).

Besides the mentioned factors, teachers may start struggling with mental health issues and burnout over time. If the job satisfaction, which mediates the relationship between burnout and motivation, is not high, the teachers are likely to experience a decreased motivation for teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). The emotional and psychological well-being of teachers may be neglected by themselves in favor of providing the best possible lessons and care for their students.

A supportive classroom environment, reinforced by institutional support and opportunities for professional development, is crucial in fostering both teacher and student motivation. However, challenges such as the risk of teacher burnout underscore the need for ongoing support and resources.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview on the methodology of this research. Firstly, it describes the main aim and poses four research questions. Next part presents the information about instruments, procedure and sample of this research.

AIM

The aim of this research was to investigate how various factors influence EFL teachers' perspectives on their motivational role and examine how they adapt their motivational and classroom management strategies in response to dynamic classroom situations and student needs.

The particular factors that are discussed in this research are the importance and role of motivation in the EFL classroom, various motivational strategies, student engagement, classroom environment, institutional support, professional development, different student needs, curriculum requirements and challenges teachers may face in their career.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EFL teachers' perspectives on their role as motivators in the language learning process evolve in response to various factors such as classroom environment, curriculum, student engagement, institutional support, and diverse student needs?
2. How do EFL teachers adapt their motivational strategies to meet different student needs and in what ways do they remain flexible in their approach to motivation and classroom management, adjusting strategies in real-time based on student responses, feedback, and evolving classroom dynamics?

3. What specific motivational strategies do EFL teachers find most effective for successful classroom management and how do they implement them to sustain both student engagement and their own motivation to teach?

4. What challenges do EFL teachers face in maintaining student motivation over time, and how do contextual factors such as classroom environment, curriculum requirements and institutional support impact their ability to address these challenges effectively?

INSTRUMENTS

To achieve the aim of this thesis, two research methods were used; observations of two different EFL classes and five interviews. The observations involved the use of detailed observation sheets (see Appendix 1) designed to capture various aspects of classroom dynamics. The observation sheet was divided into eight sections. The top bar provided information about the date and time of the observation, location where the observation took place (school), name of the teacher, grade of the students, number of the students, motivational strategies that the teacher used with explained context and the students' reception of the motivational strategies. The last section was left for additional comments or further explanations regarding classroom interactions and teaching methods.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed for both predetermined questions and flexibility to explore responses in depth. The questions (see Appendix 2) were open-ended, and the researcher had the opportunity to ask additional questions depending on the participants' answer. The guide was divided into two main parts. The first part comprised questions about the participants' teaching backgrounds, including their duration of teaching experience, the levels of students they have taught, the types of institutions where they have worked, and their educational qualifications. The second part of the interview included seventeen questions organized into eight thematic sections (see Figure 1): the importance and role of motivation, motivational strategies, student engagement, the classroom environment and institutional support, professional development, understanding student needs,

curriculum impact, and challenges and solutions. This format provided a structured yet flexible approach to exploring the teachers' perspectives and experiences.

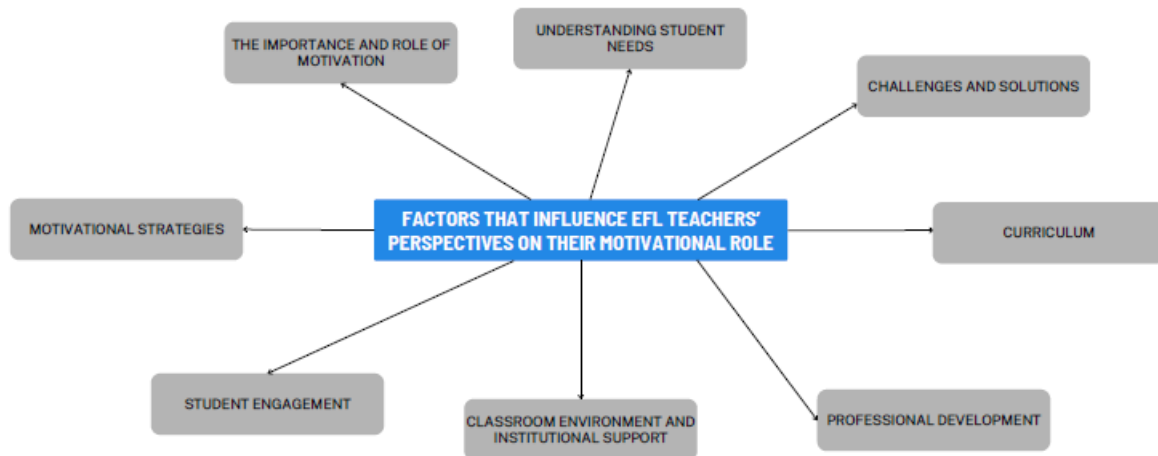


Figure 1: Eight thematic sections of the interview questions

PROCEDURE

The research was carried out between March and August 2024 and involved three phases: observations, a pilot study and interviews.

The observations were conducted prior to the interviews, providing a foundational understanding of the classroom dynamics, teaching methods and student engagement. This observational data offered contextual insights that allowed for a richer interpretation of the participants' responses. This research method allowed for collection of non-verbal cues, classroom interactions and teaching strategies in a natural setting, which were then cross-referenced with the verbal data obtained during the interviews.

A total of twelve classes were observed in the period from March to June 2024. Six classes were observed in one primary school in Rijeka, and the remaining classes were observed in one secondary school in Rijeka. Two of the participants who were observed during the described period were also included in the interview portion of the study, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of their teaching practices.

Before the interviews were conducted, a pilot study was carried out with three students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka who had completed their pre-service training. The aim of this pilot study was to evaluate the clarity of the interview questions and ensure that participants could understand and respond to them as intended. During the pilot study, the participants did not receive the questions in advance, which led to difficulties in formulating responses on the spot. As a result, the decision was made to provide the interview questions to participants a few days before the interviews to allow for better preparation and detailed answers.

Following the pilot-study phase, the qualitative approach consisted of gathering and recording interviews, transcribing them and analyzing in detail to present different perspectives of the participants. This approach allowed for the data to be approached with greater consideration and to be discussed in greater detail.

The interviews were conducted online, through Google Meet, from May to August 2024. The participants scheduled the time of the interview according to their free time. Each participant was individually interviewed, and the audio was recorded with the participant's consent. The participants were addressed by email with information about the interview, which was conducted in English. Each interview lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. All participants gave their informed consent to participate in the interview and allowed the audio recording of the interview as well for the parts of the transcript to be included in the thesis.

The participants received the interview questions several days before the interview so that they could prepare accordingly. After the interviews, participants were provided with a copy of their consent form, as well as the audio recording and the transcript of the interview. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in questioning and deeper exploration of the participants' responses.

The purpose of the interview was to explore the teacher's perspective and opinion and to provide the teacher with an opportunity to speak about their experience with motivational strategies and the role of motivation in classroom management. The interview consisted of two parts. The first part included four teaching background questions, and the second part was comprised of seventeen questions divided into eight

sections: importance and role of motivation, motivational strategies, student engagement, classroom environment and institutional support, professional development, understanding student needs, curriculum and challenges and solutions.

The first part of the interview comprised the questions about the participants' teaching background, that is, the duration of their TEFL career, the different student levels that they have taught (primary, secondary, university or adult learners), the types of institutions where they have taught (public schools, private language schools, universities) and their educational qualifications, including possible specific training or certifications related to TEFL.

The second part of the interview included three questions about the importance and role of motivation (the teacher's view on the importance of motivation, perception of the motivator role in the EFL classroom, the impact of the motivator role on classroom management), three questions about the use of motivational strategies (the integration of motivational strategies into the classroom management, the most successful motivational strategies for classroom management, examples of the use of motivational strategies), one question about student engagement (whether it impact the approach to managing the EFL classroom and motivation to teach), two questions about classroom environment and institutional support (the influence of classroom environment on the teacher's motivation, the impact of institutional support on motivation strategies), one question about professional development (attendance of any trainings or workshops focused on motivation and classroom management), one question about understanding student needs (differentiation of motivational needs of students), two questions about the impact of curriculum (the balance between the curriculum and the students' motivation, the balance between the curriculum and the teacher's motivation to teach), and four questions about possible challenges and solutions (long-term strategies to sustain student and teacher's motivation, biggest challenges for maintaining motivation to teach and the ways to address them).

The interviews were transcribed, and the data was examined in detail to find patterns and shared topics. The data from observations and interviews were integrated to offer a comprehensive understanding of EFL teachers' motivational strategies and classroom management practices.

SAMPLE

There were two participants in the observation part of this study. Both participants teach in public schools: one in a primary school, and the other in a secondary school. They are both mentors for pre-service students. Furthermore, participants were included in the interview part of this research as Participant A and E.

There were five participants in the interview part of this research. To facilitate clarity in the further text, the participants will be referred to as A, B, C, D and E. All five participants are Croatian speakers and are or were at some point of their career EFL teachers.

Participant A has been teaching EFL for 19 years and has taught all levels of learners at all types of institutions, including kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, university and private language school. This participant holds a Master of Arts degree in English Language Teaching and attended a lot of teacher training, mainly at conferences, and has been actively holding lectures, workshops and teacher trainings.

Participant B has been teaching EFL for 17 years and has taught all levels of learners. They have worked at a primary school, secondary school, college and private language school. This participant holds a Master of Arts degree in English Language Teaching and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Language Teaching (Glottodidactics), and they have attended numerous professional development courses on early language learning and assessment.

Participant C has been teaching EFL for 6 months and they have taught students in a primary and secondary school. They hold a Master of Arts degree in English language teaching, and they have not yet attended any specific trainings or workshops.

Participant D has been teaching EFL for 2 years and they have taught students in a primary school. They hold a Master of Arts degree in English language teaching, and they have not yet attended any specific trainings or workshops.

Participant E has been teaching EFL for 34 years and they have taught students in a primary school. They hold a degree in English language teaching, and they have continuously worked on their professional development by attending numerous conferences, seminars and webinars.

RESULTS

The research findings are analyzed within the framework outlined in the literature review. The first part of the results includes the results and an analysis of the observations, and the second part includes results of the interviews, which are analyzed in accordance with the eight sections. Observational data will be compared to the findings obtained in the interviews to identify patterns, consistencies and any notable differences. The last part of this chapter will specifically cross-reference the observational data of the two participants who were both observed and interviewed. This comparison will provide a deeper understanding of how their observed teaching practices align with or diverge from the insight they shared during the interviews.

OBSERVATIONS

The focus of this research method was put on motivational strategies that the teacher uses, student engagement and classroom environment. The primary school classes, specifically third and eighth grades, included from 15 to 23 students, and the secondary school classes, specifically third and fourth grades, included from 15 to 19 students.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

At the beginning of each class, Participant E greeted all students warmly and briefly reviewed what had been covered the previous week, along with an overview of what would be addressed in the current and upcoming weeks. To ensure clarity and minimize misunderstandings, the teacher first communicated in English and then briefly repeated the key points in Croatian, the students' first language. This bilingual approach helped reinforce understanding among students.

To enhance student engagement, the teacher frequently employed open-ended questions, encouraging students to think critically and participate actively. If a lack of

concentration was noticed, the teacher would ask students in Croatian if they were focused and then ask the entire class to repeat what had been said, ensuring that everyone understood the task. This method of collective response served as an effective check on student comprehension and engagement. Moreover, the teacher encouraged student participation by soliciting their opinions on various topics, fostering a more interactive and inclusive classroom environment.

One observed class featured a short student presentation. The teacher displayed patience and support for each presenter, offering calming strategies such as breathing techniques or focusing on repeating specific questions, if the presenter appeared nervous. After the presentations, the teacher invited the class to give feedback, structured in a way that requires students to offer one positive comment and one constructive advice. This strategy created a positive atmosphere and encouraged constructive peer interaction and feedback. Once a few students have given their feedback, the teacher provided their own feedback, further reinforcing a positive learning environment where the students could make mistakes without fear of harsh judgement. Creating a such learning atmosphere increased student confidence, allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge without the anxiety of negative repercussions.

To manage classroom behavior, the teacher used a variety of non-verbal cues and direct interventions, such as making eye contact, walking around the desks, using a 'no-no' finger gesture, clapping hands, or calling students by their name to remind them to quiet down. These strategies effectively maintained classroom order without disrupting the flow of the lesson.

Additionally, the teacher's influence on classroom dynamics was evident through their consistent use of praise, positive reinforcement and an overall enthusiastic approach to teaching. This positive reinforcement strategy and excellent time management skills not only motivated students but also contributed to a well-managed and disciplined classroom environment. Despite the rigorous academic work, the atmosphere remained calm and non-stressful, as evidenced by the students' relaxed body language at the end of the class. The students did not appear fatigued but rather comfortable and engaged.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

At the beginning of each class, Participant A greeted all students warmly and initiated a brief discussion by inquiring about their well-being and commenting on current events in their lives and the school, such as the prom. This approach fostered a relaxed and open atmosphere, encouraging students to freely share their opinions, thoughts and advice with one another. The warm-up activity for the class often emerged organically from this initial discussion.

To further enhance student engagement, Participant A frequently asked open-ended questions, drew comparisons to real-life situations, used smart ways to solicit knowledge from students and provided examples of how English is useful in everyday contexts. By asking students to express their own opinions, the teacher boosted their confidence but also facilitated language learning in an interactive and inclusive environment. The mutual respect between the teacher and students contributed to a highly engaging classroom dynamic.

One of the observed classes was focused on writing skills. The teacher began by asking students to brainstorm synonyms for several action verbs, which were then listed on the board. The class collectively selected six or seven of their favorite synonyms, which the teacher underlined. Students were then tasked with writing a short paragraph using these words. During this activity, the teacher walked around the classroom, offering personalized advice and engaging in brainstorming and writing sessions with the students. The atmosphere remained comfortable and supportive, with students eagerly participating in the creative process. When it was time to share their stories, the teacher first invited volunteers to read aloud. After each reading, the teacher facilitated a session of constructive peer feedback before offering their own evaluation of what was successfully completed and what could be improved.

To manage classroom behavior, the teacher relied mostly on non-verbal cues, such as making eye-contact and walking around the classroom. The students appeared genuinely interested in the activities and were eager to participate and share their

thoughts. The teacher also provided students with choices regarding different activities or approaches to problem-solving, further empowering them in their learning process.

Digital technologies were often integrated into the lessons, with tools like quizzes being used to increase student enthusiasm and concentration. The teacher also incorporated authentic materials, such as YouTube videos, which were discussed in class to connect with the learning material to real-world contexts. Each class concluded with a brief recap of what had been covered and a preview of the next lesson.

Another notable observed class was a project-based lesson, where the entire class was dedicated to a single topic collaboratively chosen by the teacher and students. The students were visibly excited about the project, as indicated by their body language, and they actively participated in all the activities. This enthusiasm and engagement demonstrated the effectiveness of including students in the decision-making process and tailoring lessons to their interests.

INTERVIEWS

The focus of the interview part of this research was on the teacher's perspectives as was described in the chapter "Research methods."

IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF MOTIVATION

This section explores the key aspects of the role of motivation in an EFL classroom. By examining the teachers' view their role in the classroom as a motivator, their opinion on whether motivation has an impact on classroom management and the dynamics of the classroom, the questions delved into different areas, connected by motivation, classroom management and educational experiences.

All participants agreed that motivation plays a significant role in the EFL classroom, but the degree of its importance varied. Participant A believes that students are intrinsically motivated to study English as it is greatly important for their future. In contrast, Participant B acknowledges motivation as a key element of the EFL classroom

but notes that it is highly influenced by various other elements that are present in the learning environment. Participants C, D and E emphasize the teacher's role in fostering motivation, with Participant C highlighting "*I think that we as teachers are the first step into creating their (students') motivation, internally, and also externally.*" By mentioning the direct impact of motivation on the students' ability to learn and engage with teaching materials, Participants C and E suggest that a lack of motivation may contribute to ineffective classroom management.

Furthermore, all participants acknowledge the role they have as a motivator in the EFL classroom, but their focal points and approaches differed. While Participant A primarily uses projects to effectively motivate their students, Participants B and C focus on the sense of responsibility to create a teaching and learning environment that sustains motivation. Participants D and E mentioned the importance of motivation across all school subjects and stressed the importance of teacher enthusiasm and personalized approaches to meet different student needs and Participant E elaborates on this by saying "*Not just EFL teachers but all teachers can inspire students by creating engaging and relevant lessons, setting achievable goals, providing consistent positive feedback.*"

Another topic the participants agreed on was the significant impact a teacher's role as a motivator has on classroom management, which ultimately leads to a more positive learning environment that enables the teacher, as well as the students, to be more creative, productive and engaging. By choosing topics which are more interesting to students, Participant A influences classroom dynamics and student participation. This participant also noted different types of classroom silences they have experienced in their teaching career, as there are silences motivated by the teacher, when the students are not engaged in the class, and those when students are genuinely engaged. Participant B and C mention the relationship between student engagement and student disengagement, as the students are less likely to show signs of disruptive behavior if they enjoy participating in different activities. Teacher's enthusiasm is perceived as an important factor in managing the classroom according to Participant D, who observed that "*when the students see that I am eager to teach them something that they are more disciplined.*" Additionally, Participant E discusses the relationship between cooperation,

mutual respect and motivation as an important aspect needed for effective classroom management.

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

This section discusses how teachers incorporate motivational strategies into their classroom management plans, identifying the specific strategies they find the most effective, and exploring examples where they used motivation to resolve classroom management issues.

Personalization of motivational strategies goes a long way. Participants A, D and E emphasize the value of selecting relevant and engaging content, with Participant E noting that they integrate motivational strategies into their classroom management plan *“by incorporating engaging and relevant content that connects with students’ interests and goals, then I set clear, achievable objectives, provide regular positive feedback and praise, definitely, to acknowledge students’ efforts and progress.”* Participants B and D mention the use of positive reinforcement, such as spontaneous rewards and verbal praise. Additionally, Participant D highlighted the importance of giving students choices in their learning activities and described their flexible teaching style, which adapts to different student needs: *“I try to research every lesson before the lesson itself and I try to find something that will interest each student and then I target their interests by showing them my types of lessons.”*

In real-life situations, participants tailored a variety of motivational strategies to meet their students’ needs and interests. All participants agreed that positive reinforcement is a crucial tool for building students’ confidence and reducing unwanted behavior. Participant B shared their approach to rewards: *“in terms of positive reinforcement, something that I’ve read 20 years ago, and I stick to it today is that rewards and awards are great when they come unannounced.”* Moreover, Participant B also focused on setting clear goals and expectations, providing a structured environment with predictable consequences to support their classroom management plan and ensure that their students understand boundaries. Utilizing contemporary educational practices

such as digital tools and collaborative learning allows the students of Participant C to improve their learning with the use of technology and group work.

A personalized approach allows the participants to address each student's motivational needs. Traditional motivational tactics, such as immediate response, remain valuable in contemporary classrooms. Participants A and B reduce disruptive behavior in their classrooms by emphasizing the relevance of the materials to exams or future needs, and they also use humor to engage students. Participant A also noted: *"When you notice the students are not into the task, if it's taking too long, then you just do something else that you think will be more fun and then you leave the first task for homework."* Participant D involves students directly in lesson planning, incorporating their interests into teaching materials. Participant E highlights the importance of project-based learning, which help students see how important learning is, which leads to increased engagement.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

This section examines the relationship between student engagement, the teacher's approach to managing the EFL classroom, and the teacher's motivation to teach. The participants offered various perspectives on how student engagement influences their teaching experiences.

Participant A prefers to engage students through personal interaction, by asking specific questions to refocus their attention. They noted: *"I try to positively enforce them, so I ask them a question or come close to them, or sometimes when I see they have a double lesson of something, which they think is difficult, before English, I just come directly to them and ask if it was a difficult day and then I ask them if they can concentrate on something for 15 minutes."* This proactive approach allows the participant to feel more motivated when students are engaged.

Participant B views student engagement as crucial but acknowledges the pressure it puts on them as a teacher and they stated: *"I have this problem where I really care about student engagement and I hate to see the students being bored and that puts a lot of pressure on me to be fun, to find things they want to do, to find short activities, it's kind of*

stressful if you have that in mind – to keep things fun and engaging, it’s not easy.” Therefore, to maintain engagement, the participant feels driven to find and create fun and engaging activities that will capture the students’ interest.

Participant C compares the experiences of teaching motivated versus unmotivated students. While they feel more validated when their students are engaged, teaching less motivated students requires extra effort that sometimes leads to frustration, especially if the lesson plan did not go as expected. Despite this challenge, the participant believes that there is always at least one attentive student in each class. They reflected: *“When I worked with some challenging classes, who were not motivated and I had to work twice as hard because you are at home, preparing a lesson and you’re trying to think of all ways how to make the lesson interesting while still teaching them something. You get so excited because you are going to use all of these methods you’ve learnt at college and everything, and then it kind of fails, it doesn’t happen, and that’s life, you can’t really plan everything.”*

Participant D tries to not let the student engagement overly influence their teaching methods. Instead, they maintain a positive attitude and continue working on student engagement without letting it dictate their approach as they shared: *“...if I see that their engagement isn’t as positive as I want it to be, I do feel a bit demotivated with my other lessons, but I try to stay positive and consistent.”*

Participant E pointed out that high student engagement leads to better classroom management, as it reduces the need to discipline the students. They stated: *“High levels of engagement create, in such a way, a dynamic and directive learning environment, which energizes and motivates me as a teacher.”* This participant feels more motivated when their students actively participate, as it creates a positive teaching atmosphere. Consequently, this motivates them to continue developing creative and effective teaching strategies.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

This section studies the relationship between the teaching environment and the external support the teachers receive. Both social and physical elements of the

classroom are crucial in shaping teacher motivation and effectiveness. Additionally, this section explores how the physical and emotional atmosphere of the classroom influence teachers' enthusiasm and the impact of institutional support on their work.

All participants agreed that the classroom environment affects their motivation to teach. Participant A is particularly influenced by the social dynamics of the classroom, especially by student engagement and behavior. In contrast, Participant B is unaffected by physical environment, as it does not impact their teaching approach. Participant D expressed a preference for non-traditional classroom settings, as they find conventional arrangements limiting in certain teaching situations, *"The typical classroom setting can be a bit demotivating, because it limits a lot – you can't take them out into nature to exemplify something, but because the classroom setting offers a lot of digital tools, I can bring them closer to certain topics, so it has its ups and downs."* Participant C has faced multiple difficulties with technology, which disrupt lesson plans and affect classroom management as a result: *"If I planned my lesson, and I didn't know which classroom I would be working at, it would take a lot of time for me to try to connect, and if I couldn't then some things that I wanted to show the children that day would not happen, so I had to think of other ways and I had to improvise on the spot. That kind of, I would not say demotivates me, but it makes it harder for me to do the lesson that I've planned."* Participant E discussed the importance of both the social and physical aspects of a classroom but emphasized that finding creative solutions encourage them to work in a negative environment, and that supportive atmosphere significantly boosts their motivation.

Regarding institutional support, the participants' responses varied depending on their teaching experience. However, all participants acknowledge the lack of financial incentives and the crucial importance of supportive colleagues. Participant A and B shared that their motivation is primarily internal and driven by student interactions. Participant C and D indicated that a supportive work environment, especially helpful colleagues, is beneficial to them as beginners, which influenced their motivation to work.

Participant E underscored the importance of institutional support, especially in providing access to modern technology and professional development opportunities, *"...if the school administration provides extensive professional development*

opportunities and access to modern teaching resources, like technology or maybe applications, school pays for some teaching applications, it definitely enhances my ability to implement innovative teaching methods and diverse engaging motivational strategies, such as technology integrated lessons and collaborative projects, which greatly enhances students' engagement and learning outcomes." Despite limited institutional support, teachers can maintain their motivation by focusing on the positive aspects of their work environment and on their students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section examines the impact of training and workshops focused on motivation and classroom management on teachers' instructional practices. It explores how attending different professional development sessions shaped or influenced their teaching approach and addresses the importance of consistent professional development in maintaining and improving teaching effectiveness and motivation over time.

Not all participants have had the opportunity to attend any relevant workshops or trainings but are hopeful that future professional development will allow them to gain new and helpful insight. Participant A, who has attended multiple workshops focused on classroom management, highlights the importance of learning from others' experiences in such settings. Their classroom management skills were enhanced by workshops on non-verbal communication and positive reinforcement. Participant B has attended workshops related to motivation and classroom management and they view any professional development as a valuable learning opportunity; *"any kind of professional development, even if it is a bad one, you learn something, or you find something that you didn't know before, so I benefited from all of them."* Furthermore, Participant E has attended many training sessions on motivation and classroom management. These experiences have improved their teaching effectiveness and student engagement as they have provided insight into practical strategies for creating a positive classroom atmosphere with different teaching methods.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT NEEDS

This section analyzes how teachers address varying motivational needs of their students to effectively engage and support them in the EFL classroom. By employing a combination of different strategies, such as observation, direct feedback and student feedback, teachers can tailor their approach to meet individual student needs. Furthermore, by understanding student needs, teachers can improve student motivation and overall learning outcomes.

Most participants prioritize observing their students' behavior before implementing specific motivational strategies. Participant A relies on non-verbal cues and the emotional state of their students, adapting their lesson plan based on the students' mood and external factors like previous classes or students' stress levels. Participant B observes their students' behavior and gestures before adapting activities to suit different interests and offering a variety of tasks for both motivated and unmotivated students. They emphasize that *“there are some students that want to be there and want to learn, and there are some students that don't want to be there and don't want to learn and you see it from their behavior or gestures and then you adapt and try to find activities or if a range of activities in which they are not going to enjoy the first one, but they are going to enjoy the second one and so on.”*

While Participant C focuses on getting to know students and understanding their “vibe” in the classroom, Participant D believes that identifying and understanding student's needs takes time. They also mentioned using personal experience, empathy and gradually adjusting teaching strategies. They express that *“time is everything – getting to know them takes time and just letting the time pass is important, but also trying to engage them, trying to engage everyone equally during the first class especially, just to see where they are at, what level are they, and then learning about them so that I can target their interests.”*

Participant E adopts a comprehensive approach that includes a combination of observations, assessments and direct communication. This process includes taking notes on student behavior and participation, conducting formal and informal assessments, engaging in open discussions and surveys. By gathering insights into

students' personal interests, goals and external factors that may influence their motivation, Participant E tailors their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs.

CURRICULUM

This section discusses how teachers manage the dual pressures of adhering to a curriculum while also maintaining student and personal motivation. It examines the strategies teachers use to integrate the mentioned aspects effectively, ensuring that both educational requirements and motivational needs are met, despite the pressures of educational standards.

The participants employ a range of strategies to balance curriculum requirements with student motivation. Even though they are all focused on creating an enjoyable learning environment for their students, it is clear from the answers that experience has an impact on this aspect of teaching EFL.

Participant A makes challenging content seem easier by making it more accessible and therefore making students feel more confident and motivated. They explained: *“when something is rather challenging, I tell them right away, you know, what we are supposed to cover today is not that easy, but if you listen there is a trick. So just pay attention to the trick. Once you get it, you will see that everything will be easy.”*

Participant B suggests that fun and learning activities can go hand-in-hand with achieving educational goals. Participant E regularly adjusts their methods based on student feedback which makes their strategy more student-centered. They describe, *“I use many instructional methods, such as interactive games, team and group work, real-life applications to make learning more dynamic and relevant, so flexibility in lesson planning allows me to adjust the pace and introduce supplementary materials that will spark interest without deviating from core objectives of the curriculum.”*

On the other hand, Participant C explained that they adapt a teaching style that naturally integrates student motivation and the need to cover the curriculum, while Participant D admitted that they still struggle with managing classroom behavior while trying to cover the curriculum.

When it comes to balancing the needs to cover the curriculum with maintaining their own motivation to teach, the participants shared the personalized strategies that they use. Participant A and B maintain their motivation by prioritizing curriculum content that is important for students long-term understanding and exam preparation. They make conscious decisions about what to emphasize and what can be given less attention and therefore ensure that their teaching is meaningful and useful. They also allow their students to make choices and take the lead when it comes to different activities. Described approach allows them to feel personal satisfaction and to foster a positive classroom environment. Participants C and D, who consider themselves new to teaching, are primarily focused on student engagement and fulfilling the curriculum requirements, rather than their own interests. Participant E incorporates personally rewarding elements into their teaching, as they engage in professional development, set personal goals and find motivation through communication with students and other colleagues. They mention: *“Engaging with students and seeing their progress provides a strong motivational boost, reminding me of the impact of my work. Additionally, connecting with fellow educators, with other English teachers and sharing experiences helps maintain a sense of community and also support for each other.”*

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

This section examines difficulties teachers face in maintaining both student and personal motivation over an academic year, as well as the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. Participant shared the strategies or techniques they implement to stay motivated. By managing the ebb and flow of motivation, both for themselves and their students, teachers address the obstacles that arise with time and offer practical solutions.

To sustain student motivation throughout the academic year, participants emphasized the importance of maintaining engagement, providing feedback and creating a positive and relevant learning environment. While teaching experience often leads to more refined strategies, even less experienced participants have developed their own strategies to keep their students motivated.

For instance, Participant A incorporates projects and creative writing tasks in their teaching to engage students in real-life situations that are relatable to students' lives. Participants B and D regularly solicit feedback from students and provide individualized responses to emphasize progress and encourage continuous improvement. Participant D noted: *"I ask for feedback. After every month or two months, depending on the lessons, I also like to give everyone some feedback, recommendation to work harder."* They also use responsive teaching and positive reinforcement to acknowledge student efforts. With classes that show more behavior issues, Participant C implements a classroom management system that involves rewards and penalties. By maintaining order and disciplining students, Participant C establishes clear expectations and rewards positive behavior effectively. Participant E combines goal setting, varied activities and real-life relevance to address the diverse factors that influence student motivation. They stated: *"...I set clear, achievable goals, I regularly monitor progress to give students a sense of accomplishment and direction."*

When it comes to sustaining their own motivation to teach, participants discussed a range of approaches, from setting clear goals and practicing self-care to pursuing professional development. For example, Participants A and C feel more motivated when their planned classroom activities succeed, while Participants B and E rely on intrinsic passion and continuous professional development to stay motivated. Participant A's motivation is closely tied to external validation and the visible success of their teaching methods, while Participant C's motivation is also closely linked to positive classroom experiences, *"I feel like I am the most motivated when the lesson I have planned for that day goes really well and I see them having fun and I also see them learning."* In contrast, Participant B's motivation is strong and rooted in a genuine passion for teaching. Participant E stresses the importance of self-care, setting personal goals and maintaining a balanced life. Participant D highlights the value of learning from both challenges and successes as part of a continuous drive towards improvement; *"In my lesson plans, after every lesson, I like to write down the reception of the lesson, whether it was good or bad and then for the next lessons I know where to improve, and then if I run into a slump and I see that I had a few lessons that just weren't as engaging, I look at those that were*

engaging and tell myself I can always go back and there is always a next lesson as a chance to improve.”

The biggest challenges teachers face in maintaining their motivation to teach throughout the academic year include administrative burdens, external responsibilities and the need to continuously adapt and learn. The pressure of bureaucratic responsibilities often reduces the enjoyment of teaching. Newer teachers, Participants C and D, noted that the discovery of non-teaching responsibilities can be a source of demotivation, suggesting that mentoring could help new teachers adjust in such situations. Managing workload and stress is crucial to avoid burnout, and participants tend to avoid it by using proactive strategies, such as breaking challenging tasks into smaller ones. Participant E mentions the need to keep learning and adapting to students' needs, which adds to the complexity of the teaching profession and underscores the importance of staying current with educational trends.

By focusing on positive experiences, setting boundaries, improving time management and attending opportunities for professional development, participants offer a way to navigate the complexities of their profession while sustaining their passion for teaching. Learning to say “no” or “maybe” to avoid being overwhelmed and leaving work-related stress at school is what helps Participant A effectively reduce stress, *“when you’re at your lowest point, do not worry, the only place you can go is up.”* Participant D concentrates on their successes and rewarding aspects of teaching. Maintaining a highly structured approach that involves detailed planning and effective time management allows Participant E to handle varying levels of stress: *“I set specific times for grading and lesson planning, I set hours each week exclusively for administrative duties which helps prevent burnout, so you have to plan your week, not just the lessons you do at school.”* The need for personal discipline, reflective practices and ongoing learning are key elements in overcoming the challenges of teaching EFL.

DISCUSSION

This discussion delves into the findings related to the four research questions posed in this thesis.

RQ1. How do EFL teachers' perspectives on their role as motivators in the language learning process evolve in response to various factors such as classroom environment, curriculum, student engagement, institutional support, and diverse student needs?

The responses underscore the critical importance of motivation as an aspect of an EFL classroom. Although the participants employed different strategies to foster motivation, they all recognized it as a crucial element in a well-managed classroom. The results also suggest that teacher enthusiasm and student engagement are two key factors that enhance motivation and consequently positively influence the classroom environment. Participants recognized the influence of factors such as classroom environment, curriculum, student engagement, institutional support, and diverse student needs on both their own and their students' motivation, though their approaches varied.

The relationship between student engagement and teacher motivation is complex. While some teachers found direct interaction and student engagement to be significant motivators, others were aware of the pressure that comes with sustaining student interest. Nonetheless, student engagement was seen as crucial not only for effective classroom management but also for enhancing teachers' motivation and satisfaction in their work.

Both the classroom environment and institutional support impact teachers' motivation and effectiveness. The responses suggest that the social dynamics within the classroom influence the teacher's motivation more than the physical aspects. Institutional support, particularly access to technology and professional development opportunities may enhance teaching quality, but in the absence of such support, teachers rely on internal motivation and a positive classroom atmosphere.

Participants A and E emphasized intrinsic motivation and the importance of real-life relevance of learning English, which aligns with the belief that student engagement increases when classes are personally relevant or challenging. In contrast, participants B, C and D highlighted the role of the teacher in creating an engaging learning environment as they were more focused on positive reinforcement, enthusiasm, flexibility and integration of technology and collaborative learning. The variability in approaches reflect how different factors can either enhance or constrain motivational efforts, with each participant adapting their motivational strategies to address the specific demands.

RQ2. How do EFL teachers adapt their motivational strategies to meet different student needs and in what ways do they remain flexible in their approach to motivation and classroom management, adjusting strategies in real-time based on student responses, feedback, and evolving classroom dynamics?

The challenges teachers face in maintaining both student and personal motivation are as varied as the strategies they use. Participants indicated that teaching experience helps develop more effective motivational techniques, though even less experienced teachers can adopt strategies that successfully engage students. Key to sustaining motivation is the ability to adapt approaches based on student behavior and engagement levels, highlighting the crucial role of flexibility in effective teaching.

When adapting strategies to meet diverse student needs, EFL teachers emphasize personalization and flexibility in their motivational strategies. Participants A, B, and C demonstrated a proactive approach through personal interaction, responsive teaching, and positive reinforcement. They stressed that the ability to adjust strategies in real-time, based on student feedback and behavior, is vital.

Effective identification of motivational needs involves a blend of different strategies such as observation, personal engagement and systematic assessment. Teachers who use these strategies are better equipped to engage their students and provide a supportive learning environment. Overall, maintaining student engagement and overcoming motivational challenges requires a blend of formal and informal assessments, alongside a dynamic teaching approach that adapts to students' evolving needs.

RQ3. What specific motivational strategies do EFL teachers find most effective for successful classroom management and how do they implement them to sustain both student engagement and their own motivation to teach?

The third research question delves into the effectiveness of motivational strategies and the participants find it is closely linked to classroom management and sustaining both student engagement and teacher motivation.

Participants identified different motivational strategies that empower their students and improve their learning environment. Besides positive reinforcement, offering flexibility and choice, the participants personalize their teaching materials and engage their students through various activities. The participants employ many motivational strategies tailored to their students' needs and interests to enhance their classroom management and boost student engagement. Participant D finds the role of teacher enthusiasm significant as they believe it contributes to a more positive classroom atmosphere, which could impact and reduce disruptive behavior and increase student engagement.

Observational data reveal different approaches to motivational strategies and classroom management. In the primary school setting, the observations highlighted that the teacher's ability to acknowledge and respect each student's individual needs was a key factor in maintaining student motivation and fostering a positive classroom environment. The structure of each class was consistent, beginning with a review of previous lessons and an outline of upcoming content, followed by the main instructional segment, where the teacher successfully held the attention of most students. The class concluded with a recap of the day's activities and a review of homework assignments. Participant E's teaching style presented a well-organized and student-centered approach that effectively balances educational requirements with a supportive and positive classroom atmosphere. By creating an environment where students could focus on learning without feeling overwhelmed, mistakes were viewed as learning opportunities and the classes were productive and enjoyable for students and the teacher.

Cross-referencing of interview insights with observational data from Participant E confirms a strong consistency between their described teaching style and their actual

classroom practices. Their focus on motivation as a key element of effective teaching is clearly reflected in their practical approach. Their belief in motivation as a crucial part of the EFL classroom is seen in their encouragement of student participation and creation of an interactive classroom environment. This comparison not only validates the effectiveness of Participant E's approach, but also highlights their commitment to fostering a positive, motivating and well-managed learning environment. The educational experience that Participant E demonstrates is engaging and supportive, leading to improved student outcomes and satisfaction.

Similarly, in the secondary school setting, observations of Participant A showed a successful combination of structure and flexibility, creating a positive learning environment in which students felt valued and motivated. Participant A's ability to maintain a relaxed, yet focused atmosphere, along with the use of varied instructional strategies, ensured that the students remained engaged and enthusiastic about their learning.

Cross-referencing the observational data with the interview insights for Participant A also reveals a consistent approach to motivation and classroom management, reinforcing their self-reported practices. Participant A demonstrates a coherent teaching approach centered on motivation, student engagement and a balanced approach to classroom management. Their ability to reflect on and adapt their strategies ensures that their classroom is always a dynamic and supportive learning environment, effectively aligning with their described teaching style.

Overall, the cross-referencing of observational data with interview insights for both participants highlights a strong alignment between their expressed teaching approaches and styles and their classroom practices. This correspondence emphasizes their commitment to fostering motivating, engaging and well-managed learning environments.

RQ4. What challenges do EFL teachers face in maintaining student motivation over time, and how do contextual factors such as classroom environment, curriculum requirements and institutional support impact their ability to address these challenges effectively?

Maintaining student motivation over time presents several challenges that are influenced by both internal and external contexts of the classroom. Managing curriculum demands and dealing with institutional constraints, technology disruptions are as challenging as adapting to varying classroom dynamics. Moreover, the answers indicate the participants' need to develop effective motivational strategies that are helpful in balancing curriculum and motivation. Less experienced teachers may find troubles with this aspect, as they are more focused on fulfilling external demands rather than own motivation. With time and practice, teachers become more successful at creating a fulfilling and productive classroom environment for both their and students' motivation.

Attending professional development opportunities enhances teaching effectiveness, as it positively impacts classroom management and motivation strategies. While not all participants have had the chance to attend such workshops or trainings, those who have report noticeable improvement in their teaching practice. These shared experiences highlight the importance of ongoing professional development, as investing in training helps teachers refine their skills and adapt to the evolving needs of the classroom.

Participants noted that while internal factors such as personal passion and enthusiasm play a crucial role, external factors such as lack of support can hinder their efforts to keep students motivated. Challenges such as administrative tasks, unexpected workload and the necessity to stay updated with the latest educational strategies suggest that intrinsic motivation to teach plays a significant role to sustain long-term motivation. Balancing these challenges requires teachers to employ adaptive strategies and seek professional development opportunities to adapt to the evolving needs of their students and teaching environment.

LIMITATIONS

The qualitative nature of the data collected through observations and interviews limits the generalizability of the findings. Despite this limitation, the research provides valuable insights into EFL teachers' experiences, strategies, and motivations, contributing to a deeper understanding of their role and practices in classroom management and motivation.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of motivation in enhancing teaching effectiveness in EFL classrooms and its impact on classroom management. It confirms that motivational strategies, effective classroom management and supportive teaching practices are essential for creating engaging and productive learning environments.

The alignment between interview insights and observational data highlights the validity of the teachers' approaches and demonstrates the impact of various factors that contribute to a motivating classroom. Teachers who prioritize and effectively foster motivation, through both intrinsic and extrinsic strategies, cultivate more engaging and productive learning environments. Specific strategies such as personalized content, positive reinforcement, project-based and student-centered learning are pivotal in maintaining student interest and engagement, as well as maintaining teacher motivation.

Effective classroom management is intricately linked to the mentioned motivational strategies. Teachers who nurture a supportive environment are better equipped to manage classroom behavior, as they balance their enthusiasm, non-verbal cues and responsiveness to student feedback. Institutional support, including access to technology and professional development opportunities, plays a significant role when it comes to enhancing teaching effectiveness. Teachers engaged in ongoing professional development report better classroom management and motivational practices. However, experience comes with time, and personal motivation and a positive classroom atmosphere remain crucial for overcoming challenges.

This research affirms that fostering motivation is not only about employing specific strategies but about creating a dynamic and supportive teaching and learning environment. Different classroom variables, such as the environment, curriculum, institutional support and diverse student needs, significantly impact EFL teachers' views on their motivational role. Nevertheless, EFL teachers demonstrate flexibility in their approach to motivation and classroom management, adjusting their strategies in real-time, based on student responses, feedback and the classroom dynamics.

While this research provides valuable insights into the role of motivation in EFL classroom management, there are several limitations that need to be considered. A relatively small number of participants was included, and they do not represent all EFL teachers. Therefore, the limited sample size did not fully capture the diverse range of teaching practices and challenges faced by many other EFL teachers. The research is focused on teachers working in Croatian EFL classrooms, so the results may not be applicable to EFL context in other countries or regions. Even with a structured observation sheet, the data may be subject to the researcher's interpretation as it can be influenced by the observer's perspective. Similar limitation can be found in the interview data, as it relies on teachers' self-reports, who may report practices they believe they use rather than their actual behaviors.

Building on the insights from this research, several areas offer promising avenues for further exploration. The generalizability of the findings could be improved with a larger sample size and the ability to cross-reference more data. Another promising further research could be focused on teacher development, that is, a longitudinal study of how teachers' motivational strategies and classroom management evolve with experience and ongoing professional development.

In our ever-evolving world, teaching may seem challenging, but the true measure of being a teacher lies in the capacity to ignite curiosity, foster enthusiasm and cultivate an environment in which all members can thrive.

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APPENDIX 2 – Interview questions

TEACHING BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?
2. What levels of students (e.g., elementary, secondary, adult learners) have you taught in your EFL career?
3. What types of institutions (e.g., public schools, private language schools, universities) have you worked in as an EFL teacher?
4. Can you describe your educational background and any specific training or certifications you have in teaching EFL?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF MOTIVATION

1. Can you describe your view on the importance of motivation in the EFL classroom?
2. How do you see your role as a motivator in the EFL classroom?
3. Do you think that your role as a motivator has an impact on classroom management? Can you provide examples?

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

4. How do you integrate motivational strategies into your classroom management plan?
5. What specific motivational strategies do you find most effective for managing the EFL classroom?
6. Can you provide an example of how you used motivation to resolve a classroom management issue? What were the outcomes?

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

7. How does student engagement impact your approach to managing the EFL classroom and your motivation to teach?

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

8. Does the classroom environment influence your motivation to teach? How?
9. Does institutional support (or lack of it) affect your motivation strategies? Can you describe a situation where it affected your teaching effectiveness?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

10. Have you attended any training or workshops focused on motivation and classroom management? If you have, how have they influenced your teaching?

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT NEEDS

11. How do you identify the different motivational needs of your students?

CURRICULUM

12. How do you balance the need to cover the curriculum with the need to keep the students motivated to learn?
13. How do you balance the need to cover the curriculum with the need to keep yourself motivated to teach?

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

14. What long-term strategies do you employ to sustain student motivation over the course of an academic year?
15. What long-term strategies do you employ to sustain your motivation to teach over the course of an academic year?
16. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in maintaining your motivation to teach throughout the academic year?
17. How do you address these challenges? Can you give any examples?