**TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELEMENTS OF MOTIVATION IN AN EFL CLASSROOM – A QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY.**

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**Abstract**

*English language has always been a topic of hot discussion. Especially, in the Gulf regions, where English is taught as a foreign language, learners cannot give the required attention and importance to it primarily because most subjects are taught in Arabic and due to the ultimate importance given to core subjects like Math and Science. Students’ motivation to learn English has been debated, too. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate second language (L2) learning and later becomes the driving force that strengthens its long-term implications on learning.*

*The interest to score high and learn from the English language has significantly dropped in recent years. This low motivation could be a result of several factors like the subject materials, teachers’ attitudes towards their pupils, teaching methods and social factors like students’ interests, and preference for their mother tongue over English. English somewhere, remains in the background. This study aims to uncover some reasons for this reduced importance given to the subject along with how students’ motivation can be maintained and upscaled using different strategies. This qualitative study attempts to arrive at a rich description of the participants and their perceptions on student motivation towards EFL learning in the UAE public secondary school context.*

*Six English teachers teaching at public secondary schools in the Emirates of Sharjah and Ajman were interviewed and descriptive data were generated through semi-structured interviews which revealed that students’ motivation in learning English has seen a remarkable shift from demotivation to slightly motivated due to reasons like new and enhanced curriculum, English speaking English language teachers and the variety of strategies that teachers employ to retain their learners’ interests in English. This effect is also doubled with the English medium of instruction of some subjects and the globalized status of English as a language of communication. English is considered difficult when compared with Arabic. Teachers’ opinions and perceptions also reveal that English learners now seem to have understood the long-term implications of this language, especially in college education, studying abroad and when visiting English-speaking countries.*

*The results reveal that motivation levels have definitely increased in the last couple of years, and some common strategies are more likely applicable and used with success in most secondary schools. If motivated intrinsically, students can be encouraged to participate and excel in this language. Furthermore, teacher participants went on to agree that a variety of activities and newness in teaching strategies prompt students towards participating more and thus learn better. English language learners are more interested in classes that have motivated and understanding teachers. The data collected and interpreted, therefore suggest that motivation is instrumentally triggered in the UAE secondary educational context. Encouraging and experienced teachers also bring a huge difference to this learning process.*

**Key words:** student motivation, second-language learning, intrinsic motivation, academic performance, descriptive analysis

**Introduction**

Motivation is widely used in the context of social sciences, psychology and educational studies. It provides the primary impetus to initiate second language (L2) learning and later becomes the driving force that strengthens its long term implications on learning. Significant motivation research has actively been done within the study of second language acquisition (SLA) in the past decade. Motivation is greatly influenced by either a great joy or a creative moment or a major problem, threat or an emergency. It can simultaneously turn attitudes into many directions (Maslow 1970). A peculiar characteristic of the human organism, according to Maslow (1970) is that the domination of a certain characteristic leads the individual to extremely higher motivation levels. Swain and Burnaby’s study on parents (1976 in Dornyei and Ryan 2015) affirms that perfectionist tendencies, for example significantly correlated with L2 learning performance. Motivation to learn a second language depends on the extent or the desire to which the individual tries to learn the language. As Lucas (2010) says that learners who are intrinsically motivated in reading and speaking are also intrinsically motivated through knowledge and achievement. Once students discover advantages of the language and how learning and mastering the language can help them survive in a world full of emerging demands, the desire to learn English increases and eventually leading them to master the skill.

Effective teachers are those who constitute goals and instill the need and attitude to achieve goals in their students, that will sustain long-term involvement in learning. Ames (1990) talks about how students’ self is intricately tied up with their self-efficacy and academic progress. Given the condition, they will be willing to try and persist on difficult tasks thus boosting their motivation to perform better in their English classrooms (Ames 1990). Being motivated is to be moved to do something (Ryan and Deci 2000). A student who is motivated to learn and master skills understands the potential value of those skills and is willing to learn with the best of his intentions and interests. Students’ motivation can be triggered by the motivational strategies that teachers employ in their language classrooms. Factors like teachers’ positive behaviour, giving learners autonomy in their own learning or stimulating learning tasks can lead to positive motivation towards positive academic or worldly outcomes. In a positivistic experimental study by Alqahtani (2016) on 117 Saudi EFL teachers reveal that most EFL teachers considered factors like positive teacher behaviour, familiarizing learners with second language culture and values, pleasant classroom atmosphere and encouraging learners’ self-confidence from the many were more stimulating and motivating strategies successful with students.

Motivation in second language learning can be triggered by various other factors like context where the language is being taught, its relative importance in usage and communication, the effects of globalization on the importance of English, the place of English in the curriculum and more. Researchers like Ushioda (2011) regard globalization and the dominant status of English as a key factor in L2 motivation. Other like Murray et al. (2011) suggest that motivation is a working system in SLA and that it varies from time to time with no restrictions to the educational context The goal of teaching English in the Arab countries has been generally stated to have produced a culturally competent citizen through the ability to write, speak and understand English efficiently (Abd-el-Jawad 1987 and Al Batal 1988 as cited in Drbseh, Majed 2015). This ability impacts students’ success and failure in their learning. Mahrooqi and Denman (2014) investigated 100 Omani university students’ sources of motivation in the Omani EFL context and found that socio-cultural and school contexts and peer pressure were dominant sources of motivation whereas teachers and students’ own attitudes were major sources of their demotivation. This study primarily focuses on finding out and interpreting teachers’ perceptions of their students’ motivation and demotivation to learn English in the EFL context in the UAE public schools. English learners in the Gulf are not very motivated to learn English. They don’t intend to learn an additional language as they don’t speak the language (Khaleej Times 2013). Lack of career guidance is also one of the reasons for their demotivation. With this purpose, this study intends to find out what motivates today’s English learners and what strategies are most commonly applied in the secondary public school contexts by EFL teachers.

**Literature Review**

***English Teaching in the Arabic-speaking context in the UAE and Student Motivation***

English is a dominant language not only in the UAE but in the MENA region. Its importance in the curriculum has been immense considering its economic globalized status. It is not only the national language of many countries but also a language of communication in most parts of the world. English language education has gained a lot of progress in recent years due to the strong and growing conviction of the government that mastery in this language is vital to the country’s economic growth, especially in the international sectors. All students must learn English, says the UAE Education Ministry. Considering the struggles of the students scoring in the English language, students in the UAE are not exempted from taking English into their courses (The National, 2012). English is being embraced by educational institutes, companies and schools which has led to an increase in the proficiency levels of its users. Students who study English need to maintain their interest levels. The desire to learn English can sometimes dominate students internally as well as externally. Teachers and educators are going out of their ways to make life easier for non-English speaking students (Khaleej Times 2017). Since the later decades of the 20th century, L2 learning has been increasingly characterized by the linguistic and socio-cultural diversity of English as well as the association of the learners’ self with the language’s ethnicity. Gardener (1985) implies a psychological approach to learning English with a sincerer and a personal interest in the people and the culture of the target language. The study of student motivation in L2 in the past 50 years has taken a new direction towards understanding how teachers can heighten motivation in their students and classrooms. L2 Motivation researchers link second language learning to be much more than a communication code and more related to a person’s own identity. This theoretical shift from the notion of integrative motivation to the internal domain of self and identity is remarkably highlighted by Dornyei (2009) as the emergence of the L2 Motivational Self-System. Researchers like Norton (2000), Pavlenko (2002) and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2006) (as cited in Dornyei and Ushioda 2009) have emphasized on the integration of the language learner with the language learning context. The L2 motivational self-system emphasizes on higher levels of L2 motivation along with a stronger ideal L2 self-combined with pragmatic motives to learn and master the L2. This theory is characterized by the imaginative interplay of self-identities of the learner with the resultant purposive behaviours that mark his/her intentions to master the language. Learners feel congruent with important social identities thus empowering the role of imagination in L2 learning. Martinović (2017) and Jakovac and Kamenov (2012) (as cited in Martinovic 2017) have studied Dornyei’s motivational model to explain difference among language learners. Martinović & Poljaković’s (2010) study on English language learning and its motivation in non-language learners of a university found that motivation was mostly affiliated with positive attitudes towards the teacher and positive feelings towards the L2 learning.

***L2 Motivation and Students***

Motivational strategies according to Dornyei and Ushioda (2009), as exerted by teachers, should endure positive effects. This process can involve four aspects, namely the goal, the effort, the desire to attain the goal and a favourable attitude toward the activity of learning the language. English teachers have to deal with the stress of low motivation levels, especially with slow learners and on how to create attractive learning atmospheres for them. This low motivation could be a result of several factors like the materials, teachers’ attitudes towards their pupils, teaching methods and social factors like students’ interests, and preference for their mother tongue over English. This can affect students both intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic motivation involves an inner interest in the subject material, the challenges involved and the attitude toward accepting and conquering the challenges. It involves learning the language for the inherent satisfaction of one’s own self and curiosity. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, affects from external factors. It could be a fear of the education system, external rewards like the material benefits of the achievements due to language acquisition, or because the student has personally identified with the value of learning the language. These factors affect students in the Gulf the most than any other region mainly because students here identify more with Arabic than English and that an intrinsic attachment with the language is rare but only possible when students realize the material benefits of learning such a foreign language.

Gardener and Lambert (1972) differentiate between two kinds of motivation. Integrative motivation occurs when the learner is more culturally involved and wishes to learn more about the cultural community in an open-minded way. In contrast, instrumental motivation occurs when the purpose of language learning reflects more utilitarian values of linguistic achievement. So the drive to improve academically and to improve one’s self is instrumental motivation. The latter, in the case of this study, has been the case with the learners learning the English language. Studies have revealed a marked relationship between the utilitarian purpose of English language learning and Arab learners’ negative attitude towards English and its domains. EFL learners are more inclined and interested in learning English extrinsically and instrumentally. In a study by Gholami, Allahyar and Rafik-Galea (2012) in the Iranian, high-school EFL context reveals that instrumental integration is a dominant motivation type among 59% of the high-school EFL learners. This implies that most students are inclined to learn English and excel due to reasons such as achieving high scores, passing exams and having a better chance of getting into renowned universities. Out of the 100 EFL Omani learners who were interviewed, 49% of the learners were motivated due to their association with English from their schooling years. 25% were more extrinsically motivated to learn English as they loved learning English and also because they had to learn for academic benefits (AlMahrooqi and Denman 2014).

***Teachers’ perceptions of Students’ Motivation***

According to teachers, providing more autonomy and freedom of interest and choice to students will influence motivation to a higher extent. Teachers’ perceptions of their students’ motivation and what strategies affect their motivation is key towards understanding L2 learning and motivation. A study on 200 Hungarian English teachers was conducted by Dornyei and Csizer (1998) to understand what motivational strategies best influenced their English language learners in the classroom. Teachers perceived clear instructions, good rapport with students, encouraging self-confidence among their students along with learners’ autonomy and interest towards the subject were some crucial elements of language learning that increased learners’ motivation to learn English. Teachers as direct contributors to influencing motivation to learn English has also been studied by McCombs (1997). McCombs reveals that the teaching style and the patterns of interaction have either a positive or a negative effect on students’ motivation. Students respond positively to well-organized courses taught by enthusiastic instructors. McCombs (1991) also studies the relationship between students’ motivation, self-efficacy levels and task mastery goals towards student achievement and learning outcomes. Furthermore, with regards to learner-centered activities and its effect on students’ evaluation and assessment, McCombs further asserts that more autonomy given to students along with preference to learner-centered beliefs lead to enhanced students’ motivation and performance in assessment. Some relevant empirical studies on teachers’ perceptions of what motivational strategies are useful among their learners are those of Dornyei and Csizer (1998), Cheng and Dornyei (2007) and Alrabai (2010). In the empirical study conducted by Alrabai (2010), 119 Saudi EFL teachers were surveyed to rate motivational strategies in the order of their importance. Encouraging learner autonomy, attractive learning tasks and raising student expectations of the task outcomes were rated in the highest order.

UAE students are ambitious to study abroad as well as the desire to speak fluently in public with English speakers. Hence, their interests and reasons to learn English should be studied from this perspective. Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Spolsky (1969) found that the integrative aspect of learning a foreign language leads to higher proficiency scores. In another study by AlShehri and Etherington (2017) on Saudi EFL teachers showed that motivational strategies that fostered higher academic outcomes mainly motivated EFL learners. Lukmani (1972) demonstrated that among Marathi speaking Indian students learning English in India, instrumental motivation to learn English played a substantial role. This was because English was considered a global communicative language for the students and can be acquired successfully for international success. Al Ta’ani’s (2018) study on Emirati EFL learners’ instrumental and integrative motivation at Al Jazeera University in Dubai reveal that the students had high levels of both the motivation with instrumental motivation surpassing slightly over the other. With this theoretical background, this study further intends to investigate and understand the perceptions of expat teachers of their learners’ motivation to learn English, strategies that motivate them, instrumental and integrative motivations that play pivotal roles in the public secondary schools and how the same can be enhanced in the long-run.

***RESEARCH Questions***

The following are the questions that this paper aims to study:

1. How do English teachers perceive their learners’ motivation in EFL lessons?
2. What are some of the reasons, according to the teachers, that demotivate learners from learning English?
3. What strategies do teachers make use of to enhance or encourage their learners’ motivation to learn English?
4. How can students be kept motivated to learn English which would also help with improved academic performance?

**Methodology**

This is a qualitative descriptive study. A qualitative research is naturalistic. It interprets and makes sense of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Qualitative research also explores the problem and discovers issues underlying them thus highlighting the various dimensions and characteristics of the problem. To understand this particular social and cultural context, a qualitative methodology is most suitable as it allows for the complexities and differences of the secondary school context in the realm of English language learning to be explored and studied in good detail. Data is derived from semi-structured open-ended interviews which gave a further descriptive sketch of the instrumental and integrative motivations that encourage Arabic speaking English language learners. Another distinctive characteristic of a qualitative study is that it allows for an in-depth data analysis of the naturally shaping knowledge during the course of the study. Interactions and perspectives are diverse. There could be multiple realities based on the participants’ perspectives but in the end, a generalization could be reached which could be a representative of the larger population. As a qualitative descriptive study, this is a comprehensive summarization of specific events experienced by the participants. It is more of description of a phenomenon and less of interpretation. It is a description of the motivational strategies at play that are most used in the public secondary school contexts to motivate English learners. This study is also characterized by simultaneous data collection and analysis.

Validity and Reliability in qualitative research are the integrity in the application of the methods. It is also the precision with which the findings are presented.

This study, with the help of its chosen participants’ similarities in their teaching backgrounds and the research questions, addresses the credibility, transferability and dependability of its findings (Guba 1981 as cited in Gay, Mills and Airasian 2012). The stability and objectivity of the data were very carefully maintained by the researcher.

***Method***

Information was collected through open-ended semi-structured interviews. Teachers had opportunities to elaborate on the issues and express their experiences and feelings freely.

Qualitative research observes behaviour in everyday situations. Interviews not only ask questions but also bring out hidden motives and ideologies those held by the participants. Carolyn Baker (1982:109) (in Silverman 2001) argues that interviews are attempts to portray individual identities wherein the interviewee and the interviewer construct and represent their own versions of the world they live in. In this study the participants talk about motivation strategies that best suit the individual teachers involved along with specific reasons that lead to demotivation in their students. They are an authentic exchange of subjective experiences. The ideas expressed in interviews can have a direct impact on the knowledge that the researcher wishes to access. Hence, probing questions were asked to direct participants towards the target. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed (Appendix B).

***Participants***

Six female English language teachers who had different educational and professional backgrounds were chosen and who had at least 3 years of teaching experience in the UAE public secondary schools. They were chosen through purposeful sampling. Their UAE teaching experience was crucial for the study to have diverse interpretations of what they thought about their students’ motivation to English was and what could help them best to motivate their learners for better academic performances. They were interviewed with seven questions, five of which were open-ended. Prior consent was taken from each of the teachers. All ethical elements like the voluntary nature of the participation, withdrawal along with the purpose of the study and confidentiality of the information were considered.

**Results and Discussion**

The results from this study are presented in four sections. The results were analyzed using the motivation model as mentioned in the theoretical framework and the researcher’s own experience (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995 as cited in Marion and Kara 2017). To justify the purpose of the study, a proper way of arriving at answering the research questions was extremely important. After a careful analysis of all the answers recorded from the interviews, the following four major themes were formed.

1. Teachers’ perceptions of learners’ motivation to learn English in the UAE public secondary school context.
2. Some factors that demotivate learners to learn English as a foreign language.
3. Some positive strategies applied by teachers to motivate learners to learn English in the public secondary schools.
4. Some effective factors that can motivate students in the long run for improved academic performance.

A common pattern of students’ demotivation and the difficulty of the English language as compared to learning to speak Arabic and strategies to motivate the learners was noticed in the initial stage and were common for most of the participant teachers along with their perceptions on how this motivation can be maintained and reinforced in the long run. All the teachers agreed that English was a difficult subject and was considered not important in the school’s syllabus.

If motivated intrinsically, students could be encouraged to participate and excel in this language. Students need to realize the importance of English language in the job market and its communicative purpose. Once, determined to learn the language for a personal goal, motivation can be directed positively and thus lead students to excel academically. This implies that students who are instrumentally motivated generally score well and easily gain entry in colleges and universities.

With regards to instrumental motivation, Susan says that “When students are internally motivated, they fall into the track of developing themselves and improving themselves”. Emily, on the other hand, says that unless students are inclined to learn for assessments and school inspections, they won’t feel motivated to learn. Rachael too, explains that the incentive of getting into the best universities and getting good jobs can motivate students remarkably.

With regards to teachers’ perceptions of their learners’ motivation in learning English, all participants agreed that students were more motivated now as compared to the past. Curriculum delivery, teachers’ attitudes, teaching methodologies and activities are now varied and full of choices and cater to students’ needs and interests. As mentioned in the literature, students never felt the need to excel in English. Until the 1990s, the UAE curriculum heavily relied on Arabic as the medium of instruction with very less focus on developing English language skills. With the advent of the early 20th century and the introduction of the Rashid Smart Learning Programme, more emphasis was laid on English as the medium of instruction and developing 21st-century skills (Ridge, Kippels and Farah 2017). This has led to teachers getting away from teacher-centered methods and embedding technology in their lessons. This has impacted positively on students’ motivation for learning English.

With regards to learners’ demotivation, teachers believed that it was mostly caused by placing English as a secondary subject in the school curriculum. Passing in English was the only criteria and not excelling in it. Furthermore, English is considered as a difficult language when compared with Arabic due to the complexities in the sounds and grammar. Aisha in this context says, “I think the ***difficulty*** of the language. It is difficult for them”. Aisha says, “When they make errors, people laugh at them.” Supporting Aisha’s view, Fay has a similar opinion when she says, “…they will pronounce it wrong. So, and, they don’t like to appear between their friends that they don’t know how to read.” Not catering to students’ needs and interests is another reason for their demotivation. Mary to this relates that “When you are using the board, you know, the pen and the paper and the book only. They don’t relate to that style anymore. So, I found that a, really ***big factor***.”

To answer the third question on what strategies, do teachers apply to motivate their learners, almost all teachers agreed that if the implications of its use are global and once students understand and realize this, they can be successful in the real world. Mary says, “… What I try to do is to make the real-world applicable. If I can show them that English is not just about your grades, it’s the real world. It’s how things work. And if you don’t have it you are going to be behind in the game”. Susan convinces that if students want to excel in life, they should understand the purpose of their learning and this can only happen if students are instrumentally motivated. “… their motivation levels to learn a new language where they have not been practically using this anywhere in their life is completely low. They also ***do not see the purpose of learning*** a new language… students who are not aware of their goal, it’s a completely difficult and challenging task to make them learn a new language.” Some useful strategies like adapting materials and modifying resources attracted students to learn English. English language learners are more interested in classes that have motivated and understanding teachers. A stimulating teacher or course may also motivate EFL learners (Dornyei and Schmidt 2001). Integrative motivation also plays a substantial role in encouraging students. Aisha says that due to change in the English curriculum, teachers are now more patient, and students have become ambitious. “They dream of travelling and they want to be in different countries, in western countries.” According to Fay, “they have to learn English, so they can go to university. So, they are going to know and realise the link between the English language and their life. And the importance of English in their life”. Rachael finds that “Some students really want to go abroad and study.”

All teachers agreed that if students were motivated from within, they could master the language with good grades and this would also improve their communication. An important responsibility of the English teacher should be to intrinsically motivate their students to learn English and make them realize its communicative and global benefits. Research in the UAE suggests that English teachers go a long way to motivate their learners with respect to adapting curriculum, using innovating and interesting strategies and more (Khaleej Times 2017). With novel changes in the curriculum, new topics to learn, encouraging and understanding teachers, supporting school system have brought in big changes in students’ attitudes towards learning English. They can now be instrumentally motivated upon considering the benefits of learning the language and also the benefits in school grades.

Furthermore, certain expressions like Mary’s, “***clear academic goals***,” “***unless that’s there***,” Aisha’s, “***we do face challenges***.” “***we have limits***.” Rachael’s, “***especially in English***,” Emily’s, “won’t be ***inclined to learn that particular subject***” and Susan’s “***no exposure to the language***” express their perceptions and challenges that they face when motivating their learners. Hence data presented are also valid in their interpretation.

EFL teachers in the Gulf continue to apply motivational strategies to encourage their learners (Qashoa 2006, Khaleej Times 2017 and AL-Taani 2018). Sometimes, the results are fruitful and worth working on and sometimes change is the solution. Whatever the answers, research in this field continues to investigate how effectively this motivation in the EFL context can be improvised and be successful.

As reiterated by Dornyei’s (2009) L2 motivational self-system and Gardener’s psychological approach theory (1985), EFL teachers in this context want their learners to be motivated from within by realizing its benefits for a larger goal and feel encouraged and regard it as important a subject as the math and sciences. The participants express context-relevant and detailed statements that are apt for this setting. Not a lot has been researched on EFL motivation in the UAE region and the results from this study can be used to develop further theories for Arabic speaking learners on what actually motivates them. The results can also benefit teachers in self-reflecting on their teaching methodologies particularly in the Gulf as this is not a ‘one size fits all’ situation. Moreover, the UAE research area remains uninformed of the struggles and difficulties EFL teachers face when teaching English. This study would help in this understanding and at the same time aid EFL teachers towards adapting their approaches and strategies to better support their learners’ motivation. Teachers’ perceptions from this study can also help new EFL teachers in this region to understand the context better. Interpretations from the data can, therefore, be applied to different EFL contexts in the Gulf region.

**Conclusion**

Learners in this context require a certain amount of encouragement and motive from within to learn the language. It could be the possible benefits of learning English in the world ahead of them, the benefits at work-place and its communicative benefits or it could be to achieve different results and expectations from this learning. The results can lead the way to new researchers and can provide a path of relative possibilities and perceptions to look for. The findings here thus have some applicability and transferability. Arab learners need much more than just a new and exciting curriculum. It is suggested that this approach can be used for further research in both private and public secondary school contexts. It would be interesting to know what motivates non-Arab learners to learn English. Are they instrumentally or integratively motivated? Or is there any other approach dominant? Furthermore, school education systems should take into consideration student motivation while designing an English language curriculum. This modification could lead to new and positive changes.

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**Appendix A**

**Interview questions**

1. How long have you been teaching English in the UAE?
2. What age-group do you teach?
3. What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?
4. Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?
5. What strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English? Do they always succeed? If not, then what do try next?
6. How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What strategies can boost their motivation?
7. How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? Do you think motivation plays a key role in their academic performance?

**Appendix B - Interview Transcriptions**

**Interviewer and Mary**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me remind you that your participation completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question. So, here we go

**Mary:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been teaching in the UAE?

**Mary:** September 17th, will be the end of my 3rd year. So I am starting my 4th school year.

**Interviewer:** Okay. What age-group do you teach?

**Mary:** I teach from 16 to 18, 12th grade students.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Mary:** Amm… I find most of them are motivated to a certain degree as far as learning to speak better, but in the advanced class, I don’t generally have any troubles because they have ***clear academic goals***. But with the general students, they don’t really know where they are headed, so the motivation is a little weaker. Yeah (…)

**Interviewer**: So you do face challenges in the general class?

**Mary**: Yeah, in the general classes, ***yes***

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?

**Mary:** Ah…I think (..) that right now there is not a clear, really ***strong emphasis*** within the system of how important English is. There is still a concept that the sciences are more important, which ***they are very important i***n this country. But they are forgetting that the foundation of all of that, for future employment ***is English***. So I think that (overlap) has to change within their families, a little bit. (pauses) And also I think that there is (..) you know, I remember someone saying to me that our kids should be learning Hindi because they are exposed to so much more Indian (..) language than they are to English. You know…(pauses).

**Interviewer**: Especially, the UAE.

**Mary:** Especially, in the UAE and in Oman was the same case. So there is like a (repeats) dual track they can go on. But we have to remember that for their studies English has to be number 1.

**Interviewer:** What strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English?

**Mary:** Ahh…Well (..) I am lucky in grade 12 because I have the EmSAT\* as the motivator. I am always telling my girls that I am ***not just your English teacher*** I am also here to teach you about what happening after high school. So, trying to show you that in the work-world ***you need to have English*** if you want to do anything. If you decide to get married and have kids, your kids are going to ***need you*** to know English. So English is very important for your life. So that helps me. And I have also got this goal of, you know (..), you have to do the EmSAT. So that’s a good thing for me, you know. I am doing grade 10 Professional this year, I am not sure yet how that’s going to go. So I will see as of months go on.

**Interviewer:** And over the years, you have taught different grades. So what have been some common reasons for their demotivation? I mean they will not do EmSAT, so what challenges do you face there?

**Mary:** I think sometimes it was the material. The material wasn’t engaging enough. (..) Aah, the technology is there but the infrastructure, the support wasn’t there. So, you know they didn’t have the ability to learn the way that they learn in this generation. It’s all through technology. And so ***unless that’s there***, there is not the real motivation. When you are using the board, you know, the pen and the paper and the book only. They don’t relate to that style anymore. So I found that a, really ***big factor***.

I believe variety is number 1. (..) I have variety but also have consistency. So the girls know on certain days, we are going to do this and on other days, we are going to do that. So they prepare, they know what’s coming. It’s not all up in the air, you know. And I also try to do a lot of different variety of activities. I like to do some games, some hand outs, some more serious work and alone time and this year with LMS, I am going to have them to do self-study sessions where they can focus on their own weaknesses on LMS. So I try to give them lots of different things and keep them busy, in a way?

**Interviewer**: What if these strategies don’t work? What do you do then?

**Mary:** Well (..), I rely a lot on humour and I appeal to their human side. Really, you know. We try to make light of it and, you know, on that day that I am struggling, you know, they try to usually say that you are right and then we follow on. You know, I realise they are human beings like us. They get tired so they are demotivated may be, because they have a lot of stuff going on at home. So I have to understand that, too.

**Interviewer:** So teachers’ understanding plays again a key role.

**Mary:** I (repeats) think so. Yeah. Especially, when it comes to exam times when they are so overwhelmed with their science and maths and all of this and English sometimes tends to take a back seat. But I can say, listen, if you guys go on LMS and do that work for me, (…), then, I’ll (repeats) let you have, you know 10 minutes at the end of the lesson today and talk to your friends about physics problem or whatever. Because, you know, again it’s a community of teachers, not just me, right? So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Right! How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What can boost their motivation levels?

**Mary:** Well, I think in (..) What I’d like to do this year and what I try to do is to make the real world applicable. If I can show them that English is not just about your grades, it’s the real world. It’s how things work. And if you don’t have it you are going to be behind in the game. If I can get ***that*** through to them then I think it will affect them long term. I really do. So, I am hoping that this year in grade 12, we can take them to an actual lecture and have them sit in a classroom, listen to a professor in English and have to take notes and tell me what happened the next day. That would give them a sense of ‘this is real.’ It’s not just going to Mac Donalds and ordering a big mac in English.

**Interviewer:** Real life experience and reflection at the same time.

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? Do you think motivation plays a key role in achieving good scores?

**Mary:** Ah (..) I think (..) it’s kind of half-and-half. I think it’s obligation, need and motivation together. Because (..) they have to pass all their courses so they ***have to study*** whether they like it or not. (..) The subjects that they are personally interested in they will have more motivation with. Like I said, everyone is an individual and some girls that are very good in math will study furiously in math. If they are not so good in English then huh (…) tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, you know. So, it’s part motivation and part obligation.

**Interviewer:** Well, that’s it then. That’s the end of the interview. Thank you very much.

**Mary:** You are welcome!

**Interviewer and Aisha**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me remind you that your participation entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question. Let’s start!

**Aisha:** Yes

**Interviewer:** How long have you been teaching in the UAE?

**Aisha:** This is year 21.

**Interviewer:** What age-group do you teach?

**Aisha:** I have taught all group levels. I started with cycle 1. I taught in cycle 1 for 3 years. I didn’t teach in cycle 2 but when I first started it was a school that had all group levels. So, in those years also I taught grades 7 and 9. But later on the rest of my experience is with cycle 3.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about your students’ motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Aisha:** Okay, now in the ***past*** it was different. Students lacked motivation in a ***very horrible way*** because there was no reason for them to learn English. They always asked why should I learn English, why should I pay attention, why should I study English. I am an Arab I will study in here in university and they don’t have any reason to learn English. But recently, I found that students’ motivation has increased for several reasons. First, most of them now are very ambitious. They want to study abroad. This is one reason. They dream of travelling and they want to be in different countries, in western countries. And so many others, also a huge number of students want to study here and they want to join university and they know that even in the university, even in the UAE, they have to study in English. Plus, having other subjects being taught in English made it more interesting. Then new books also are more (…) the topics are different. It’s not about the history, it’s not about the UAE only. It’s about everything. It’s about the students’ lives. They touch the students’ interests and they ***understand*** the students better and they do understand the new generations in a better way. Students became ambitious, teachers became more understanding and more patient. Now, what was the question (laughs)?

**Interviewer:** So, what do you think about their motivation levels? You say they they have been increased.

**Aisha**: They have increased but not in the way that we desire. We still want them to work on increasing them more and more. The (repeats) motivation of students is very good in the advanced stream but not in the general stream. Especially in girls’ schools. So many of them plan to get married and they ***don’t have*** any ***future plans*** regarding their education. So they don’t’ find a reason for studying especially English. Because it is a completely different subject to the other subjects that they are studying. She can manage in any subject taught in Arabic but not in English.

**Interviewer:** So, are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Aisha:** Of course, ***we do face challenges***. Sometimes when students get bad marks, they do work hard and they get bad marks. They feel demotivated. They are not rewarded. If nobody encourages them, if they are tired, if they are (repeats) stressed with other exams and other subjects, they always prefer to study chemistry, maths. They think that these subjects are worth their effort more than studying English. Sometimes, they are not motivated enough but we can manage by rewarding, praise, reinforcement, yes. (..) Sometimes (..), marks, it makes a difference. Especially in the advanced stream, they do pay attention to the marks. They care about marks, I mean.

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English?

**Aisha:** It is difficult for them. There are so many differences between Arabic and English as languages. And not all of them are demotivated but the ones who are, I think, they lack the reason to why should I learn, why should they learn English as a second language. And may be those differences sometimes hinder their learning and (..) having no (…) understanding teachers to help and support will make the things, will make the issue worse.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. What do you think are some of the most common reasons of their demotivation?

**Aisha:** Okay, first of all, I think the ***difficulty*** of the language, if they are unaware of the differences between the two languages and how to deal with them, then they will, it will become more difficult and this will make them demotivated. An angry teacher! Impatient teacher! Having no reason to study English. They should have a reason; they should have a target. They should be motivated internally. Sometimes, parents are not aware of the importance of reinforcement and encouragement. So there is no one at home that encourages the students. So many things. Sorry, and sometimes errors. When they make errors, people laugh at them. This demotivates the students. They need an understanding community and atmosphere of learning.

**Interviewer:** What strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English? Do they always succeed? If not, then what do you do?

**Aisha:** It was much easier when I used to teach kids. Because then a small piece of candy or a small balloon can make them the happiest person on earth. But when it became to cycle 3, they care about other things. So sometimes I take them outside the classroom, say, in the playground, they don’t want to sit at a desk. We can sit on the floor; we can chat in English. I consider that speaking and it attracts them to English. We speak about personal things. I don’t mind it. You know, ***we have limits***. And sometimes we can (..), we encourage them. We tell them that, we did this last year, we took the high-achievers on a trip and they liked it a lot. And this, they were rewarded in the morning assembly and this encouraged the other students as well. We can make them play, plays, we can make plays. They can sing in English. So, if they do anything they like, but in English, then I think that they will like it. It works sometime but sometimes, honestly, we are desperate. We try everything. Especially, when students are stressed with other exams. They are not ready to accept any of our attempts to encourage them. Sometimes they are very passive.

**Interviewer:** How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What strategies can boost this long-run motivation?

**Aisha:** I am like that.If you want to be motivated in the long run, this is the reason. They should believe that, they (they) should believe that, they should be like that. They should have goals. They should set goals for themselves. ***Believing in these goals*** and finding out how to achieve these goals, how to reach them will make them have better motivation. This is the only thing I do with my students regarding long-term goals and long-term motivation. They are grade 12 and they are aware and we can discuss things and I always explain them that, I ask them about their dreams and about their goals and I help them think how to reach them and I explain to them that in order to reach these goals they have to study English. They have to have a better English competency so that they can ***communicate*** with people, they can read books, they can research, etc.

**Interviewer:** How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language?

**Aisha:** As I said, because they will be able to read different resources, they will be able to surf the net without translating because when they translate, it’s always, it’s mostly wrong translation. They will be able to talk with people. This ***will give them confidence*** and when they are confident, they can do a lot.

**Interviewer:** Do you think motivation plays a key role in their academic performance?

**Aisha:** Of course. But I think they should work on teachers’ motivation first before they work on students. If the teacher believes in the importance of motivation, she will work her best, she will do her best in motivating students. And we should know that students are different and their interests are different and the rest depends on their age, nationality, the area they live in. So, a student who lives in the city is different than a student who lives in a remote area. So understand them first. You need to understand the student first then you need to find out what are their interests and what do they like and dislike. What are the difficulties they face and this is very special about each group you teach? Then we can help them have a better motivation and parents should be part of this also and administration also.

**Interviewer:** Alright! Thank you very much. That was great.

**Aisha:** You are welcome.

**\*EmSAT – Emirates Standardised test for Grades 1, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 in the UAE. It is an entrance-based test for entry in UAE public universities**

**Interviewer and Fay**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me remind you that your participation entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question or if you feel uncomfortable. Okay. Shall we begin!

**Fay:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Okay. How long have you been teaching English in the UAE?

**Fay:** For 32 years.

**Interviewer:** What age-group do you teach?

**Fay:** Now I have taught different age-groups. Now (..) it’s from (…) 11 to 13 years.

**Interviewer:** And you have also taught cycle 3?

**Fay:** Yeah. I used to teach grade 9. That will be the age of 14 or sometimes 15 also.

**Interviewer:** Ok. What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Fay:** No, they are motivated. They don’t realise the importance of English for them and for their career. Now-a-days, may be they are more motivated, not motivated but, they realise that they have to learn English so they can go to the university and study because all subjects are taught in English in the UAE, except the Arabic subject.

**Interviewer:** Yes. And you do face challenges?

**Fay:** Yes, because they are saying that why don’t other people learn our language. Why we should learn the English language. So we have to explain to them that if you want to go to university, you have to study there in English. If you travel, you have to ***communicate*** with people in English. Now (..), they have over 250 nationalities in the UAE. So they have to communicate with them and sometimes we have to tell to them that if you go to shopping mall, of you go souks, in all these places, you have to speak in English. Aah (…) so, now they are little bit convinced that they have to study English but mostly the first answer is why not other people learn our language.

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?

**Fay:** It’s really because, they are demotivated to ***learn any subject*** and including English. (…) May be because they think it’s difficult for them, different reasons. Some students think it’s difficult to learn, (…) some (..), some reasons because, other reasons because of decoding of the language. In Arabic, we have all sounds, all letters are pronounced, they are pronounced in the same shape. So it’s clear for them. When they read any word, even if they don’t see it before, they know how to pronounce it. In English, it’s difficult for them because there are silent, many silent letters, and they have many exceptions, grammatical rules. So, (…) if they read the words and see it, the letter, they will pronounce it wrong. So, and, they don’t like to appear between their friends that they don’t know how to read.

**Interviewer:** Do you also think that their basic education from their home could be one of the reasons for this demotivation?

**Fay:** Yeah, because sometimes, they speak in their houses 2 or 3 languages. From their grandmother, mother, father, they have different languages. So, why bother learning another language. Aah (…) And sometimes, I face this long ago, that the students, they don’t know even Arabic. So if they don’t know English and they don’t know Arabic, how can you communicate with them. Especially in the young ages.

**Interviewer:** What strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English? And do these strategies always succeed?

**Fay:** Now, one of my strategies, before few years, that (…) I will let them join temporary work for several days. In these jobs they will go with their parents, they will see how they communicate with customers, for example, and they will see how importance of English and (…) also how it’s important to their study. So, it was successful and after they come back, I see the difference. They are more motivated because they realise the ***importance of English***. This is one way. (…) Sometimes, I chat with them about how can you communicate with other nationalities. And they will go back to English. It’s easier when they have older sisters or brothers because they are studying in universities and they will them, no, you have to study English. Now, (…) one of the cases, the parents aren’t willing to let students to learn English. Because they think it’s not important and if they go to institute ***for 1 or 2 months***, they will learn English. So, if the parents don’t care and they don’t encourage their children to learn, we will face a huge problem in schools.

**Interviewer:** How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What can boost their motivation levels?

**Fay:** Now, the ***main problem*** that they have struggled from the primary stages. So, I try to start from the beginning. I will (…) step by step, when they see themselves that they are improving, they are motivated by themselves. But mostly it happens, for me it happens outside the classroom. (…) Before the assembly, or break time, for 5 minutes, when I have one-to-one conversations with students. (…) One other reason they don’t care about English; they don’t care about their mistakes. They always think they are right. (…) ***Smart learning*** is a good way, because when I used to teach grade 9, they used to write on their laptops and we can display their answers on the board. So (…) most of the times they didn’t see their mistakes. But when I focus their attention on their mistakes, they say yeah, it’s wrong and they quickly try to correct it. Now, one strategy that I’m using recently that I won’t tell the students what is the meaning of the word in English or in Arabic but I will ask her to find out the words that she doesn’t know and she has to go and look for it, for the meanings and put it in a sentence so that she can understand. In this way, they are picking the words that they don’t know and they will go and find the meanings and they can, and I think in this way, they are not going to forget it. Aah (…), we have this problem, may be, if you tell them, we used to tell them the meanings in Arabic or English or give it readymade or printed the words and their meanings. In this way, they won’t even read it. And this is only a load on the teacher. So, (…) specially this year, I am going back to old-fashioned teaching to read and write in their copy-book. I think (..), from these few days, it will work. And even for the low achiever students, I told them to write anything, even a few words. But I told them to show me that they understood. And if they learnt only 2 or 3 words a day, it’s ok.

**Interviewer:** How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? And so you think motivation plays a key role in academic performance?

**Fay:** Because if they are not motivated whatever a teacher do in the classroom, they are not going to pay attention, they are not going to learn. So they are going to know and realise the link between the English language and their life. And the importance of English in their life. And may be (…), this project of the ministry, the Ambassadors, that they go outside the UAE will motivate them because they have to learn English, they have to know how to speak English when they go outside the UAE to communicate with other people. And some of them they want to travel. So I told them that if you want to travel you have to learn English. For some students I think ***this*** is a motivation. So we try to motivate our students in different ways according to their level.

**Interviewer:** Well, that’s it. That is the end of the interview. Thank you very much!

**Fay:** Thank you!

**Interviewer and Rachael**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me also tell you that your participation entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question. Shall we begin?

**Rachael:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been teaching English in the UAE?

**Rachael:** It’s almost 17 years.

**Interviewer:** What age-group do you teach?

**Rachael:** It’s mostly 14-18 or 19 year olds.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Rachael:** Yeah, definitely we face ***challenges***. The first problem is most of them are much exposed to the English language. If you just look at their social media or the movies or whatever they are watching is their own mother tongue. So the exposure to English is just the 45 minutes with their teacher in the class. So, that is actually a bit difficult for the teachers because cannot follow the teachers or perceive the same way as they do in their mother tongue.

**Interviewer:** So, how do you get away with those challenges if you see that the students in those 45 minutes are not actually motivated? What do you do?

**Rachael:** Well, I give them ***interesting work***. Like, ask them to watch some movies, ***especially in English*** and the next they come and narrate the story or I ask them to write, depending on their understanding. So yeah (…) these strategies have helped me lot specially with those reluctant ones who don’t read or participate in class but they love watching movies.

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?

**Rachael:** Yeah, the first thing they don’t have to learn a new language because everything is available in their own language which is Arabic. So, the question they keep asking is why we are learning a foreign language when they get everything, they can communicate to anybody in Arabic. So, that’s the first thing. Also, I feel that it’s also the educational background they come from. Because if the parents are educated then we can definitely we can see a difference in the child’s motivation level. They know what it will be like if they are educated and what if they are not educated.

**Interviewer:** Like the future importance of learning English.

**Rachael:** Yes. Some students really want to go abroad and study. For those students, ***yes, definitely*** the motivation levels will be high in English because they wanted to study. But those who don’t feel the need and who only intend to join the National army or police, they question the importance.

**Interviewer:** True. So what strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English? And do these strategies always succeed? If not, then what do you do next?

**Rachael:** Yeah. There are students who are really enthusiastic to learn English. So what I do is, I give them some work, some ***leadership work***, which they are really enthusiastic to do. So I will be asking more of those jobs from them. This could include explaining in a competition at school. They should go around the school and explain some rules and procedures in English and Arabic at the same time. Yeah, that’s one of the things. So they learn and they come and ask me for more words and terms in English which they can use when they are speaking.

**Interviewer:** How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run considering English as a global entity now in the long-run? What can boost their motivation levels in the long run?

**Rachael:** One, showing them the benefits if they learn English. Definitely. And I normally, I show them real life examples of people from their own country who are really in English and where they are now. And of course, their books are adjusted according to this context so they see examples from the UAE.

**Interviewer:** How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? Do you think motivation plays a key role in academic performance?

**Rachael:** Yes, definitely. (..). Specially, now we can see the EmSAT scores, ***EmSAT*** plays a very important t role in learning English because if they can get a certain score like 1600 or above, they can go to one of the best universities. That is something we can motivate them with. Also the jobs they can get by studying in one of top universities of the UAE can also motivate them. That is what normally, I do and my teachers also.

**Interviewer:** Well, that’s the end. Thank you very much for participating and for your answers.

**Rachael:** Thank you.

**\*EmSAT – Emirates Standardised test for Grades 1, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 in the UAE. It is an entrance-based test for entry in UAE public universities**

**Interviewer and Emily**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me also tell you that your participation entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question. Shall we begin?

**Emily:** Yes

**Interviewer:** How long have you been teaching in the UAE?

**Emily:** It’s been 7 years. I started in 2012.

**Interviewer:** What age-group do you teach?

**Emily:** Normally, the students are between 14 to 18 years old.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Emily:** Obviously, we face challenges. It’s not their first language. They study most of the subjects in Arabic and recently, in the past two three years they have started studying subjects in English medium. (..) So, yes, we certainly face challenges, lots of challenges as far as motivation is concerned.

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?

**Emily:** One (..), I just mentioned that (aah) (…) since they don’t study English as a ***first language***, then some of, in the past few years, the English teachers were Arabic speaking teachers and even now in some schools we have Arabic speaking English teachers and most of the times they speak in English, in Arabic, with their students and the students respond to them in Arabic. That’s one reason, Id’ suppose. Then (..) yes, I guess they don’t give the subject that much of importance, though it is a category A subject, it is a major subject. But still there are certain other concerns, like mostly the Arabic subjects are taught by local teachers. The English subjects are taught by foreigners. So, initially, the students would look at them (..) really respectfully but they won’t pay them, may be, that much of respect as they would pay to a local teacher. So, that also is one concern, I guess.

**Interviewer:** What strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English? And do these strategies always succeed? If not, then what is your next step?

**Emily:** Well, normally, we do ***peer activities***, group activities, ***interactive learning activities*** (..), we show them videos (..), and obviously, there is some sort of elicitation of new words so that we introduce them nicely the new vocabulary, all sorts of fun activities, field trips, assembly, morning assembly presentations, and if one thing doesn’t work we obviously move on to another type of activity. (..) And one more concern can be bigger number of students in classroom. Like we have 30 to 35 girls in one class. Obviously, the age group is such that they become very talkative, very loud, so obviously we have to keep on trying. If one doesn’t work, then we have to move on to another one.

**Interviewer:** How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What strategies can boost their motivation for that?

**Emily:** I suppose, aah (…) giving them marks, telling them that they will be taken to field trips. Like there was one instance when most of my students had not gone to Burj Khalifa and I was stunned that they live in this county and they have never been to Burj Khalifa. So I kind of bribed them into it. I said, if everybody in the class secure 80% marks in English then we will take you on a field trip, an educational study trip to Burj Khalifa. And obviously, that turned out to be a big booster. It kind of ***boosted their morale***. And even otherwise, at time you have to tell oh them that I am going to talk to your parents about this concern, about this issue you are not studying well, you are not doing your homework or your assignments, you are not completing the projects, so at times a bit of a threat, I guess. Sometimes, some incentives definitely help.

**Interviewer:** So, a mixture of both.

**Emily**: Exactly!

**Interviewer:** How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? And do you think motivation plays a key role?

**Emily:** Mmm (..) I suppose that if somebody is not motivated they won’t be ***inclined to learn that particular subject*** and since it is a second language and the teachers are all foreigners, so in order to, and then these inspections, school inspections, for that reason we have to have the assessments, the attainment and the progress and all these things, we have to keep all these things in mind. For that unless the students are not motivated I guess, we won’t be able to achieve the attainment and progress levels that are required.

**Interviewer:** Right. True! Well, that’s it. That’s the end of the interview. Thank you very much.

**Emily:** You are most welcome!

**Interviewer and Susan**

**Interviewer:** This is Suchitra Verma, EdD student at the University of Exeter. Thank you for participating in my short study. This study is on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Elements of Motivation in an EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. Let me also tell you that your participation entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time during the interview should you wish to not answer any question. Shall we start?

**Susan:** Yes, please.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been teaching in the UAE?

**Susan:** (Amm) If I can give you a number, I have been teaching in the UAE since last 14 years. From the year 2005 until now.

**Interviewer:** What age-group do you teach?

**Susan:** Currently I am teaching secondary school students, so the age range or the age-group is almost from 10 to 15 years old.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about their motivation levels when learning English? Are they always motivated or do you face challenges?

**Susan:** (Mmm) (…) I will be very honest with you here. We face a lot of challenges while teaching students English in regards with that they have ***no exposure to the language*** and that their motivation levels to learn a new language where they have not been practically using this anywhere in their life is completely completely low. So English teachers when teaching students particularly in the UAE, when they do not have a clear idea of what they want to do in life. They also ***do not see the purpose of learning*** a new language. So, as an English teacher I feel (…) (pauses) having students who are not aware of their goal, it’s a completely completely difficult and challenging task to make them learn a new language.

**Interviewer:** Why do Arabic speaking English language learners feel demotivated to learn English? What are some of the most common reasons?

**Susan:** According to me, the most common reasons why Arabic speaking English learners feel demotivated to learn English language, in particularly talking about English is that (..) they (repeats) do not communicate in English at home. They do not communicate in English outside their homes. And the only exposure, they do not watch English movies, or series (..) so, you know, these students they do not feel the requirement to use the English language because they are hardly using the language in their everyday life. So when the requirement is absent(..) so the learners will automatically ***be demotivated*** to learn anything given to them. So, (..) it’s a similar case, when, any human being you don’t feel the requirement for having something or getting something, you feel demotivated as well. So same is the scenario with Arabic speaking English language learners.

**Interviewer:** And what strategies do you apply to keep your learners motivated to learn English?

**Susan:** (Mmm) To be very very specific, the motivation strategies that we apply in our class change every single day. Sometimes, a verbal appreciation works, sometimes a written appreciation works, sometimes a star on the board works, sometimes a gift from the teacher works, sometimes fear appreciation works. So there are lot of strategies, you know, that you have to ***keep changing***, ***adapting, improving***, developing according to the needs of your classroom. So, if there is not one single strategy that works all the time, so we have to keep adapting according to the needs of the classroom.

**Interviewer:** But do these strategies, always succeed? If not, then what do you do?

**Susan:** (…) Sometimes these strategies do not work at all because sometimes you are dealing with, may be, literacy level student who has no idea of English language. So even if you appreciate them, even if you give them a verbal appreciation, a written appreciation, that doesn’t mean anything to them. So, sometimes it doesn’t work so we have to keep ***adapting***. So sometimes you can draw a picture on the board, you have to keep finding new ways to motivate them to learn English. And sometimes you have to, (..) probably, sometimes I do work on adapting my materials to the level which is comfortable for my learners so that I can give them opportunities to succeed and then I can have more opportunities to appreciate them and motivate them to learn.

**Interviewer:** How can you keep your learners motivated in the long run? What can boost their motivation levels?

**Susan:** (…) Basically, I feel, when they see improvement in their own work whether it is writing of English or reading of English, or speaking in English to someone or may be their ability to listen properly to somebody and comprehend or understand some simple basic instructions. When they start (…) developing these abilities and skills, that helps learners to stay motivated in the long-run. Because once they see, Oh, I can do this, you know, I have a word to (..) express myself. These things itself, help them remain motivated to learn and then apart from that when they see their own improvement or when they see that they are doing better others in the class a teacher’s appreciation also works hand in hand with that. So, it’s not just ***self-reflection***, it also a lot of push from the teacher to keep doing well, to keep doing better that keeps them motivated in the long-run.

**Interviewer:** Finally, the last one. How do you think high motivation levels would lead to improved academic performance in the English language? Do you think motivation plays a key role in improving academic performance?

**Susan:** (Ahh) (..) I do feel, motivation plays a ***big role*** in how we learn and perform in any given subject in our life. So, motivation is not only external, it’s also intrinsic. When students are ***internally motivated***, to achieve something, that goes hand-in-hand with external motivation given by the teacher. And once these, these levels of motivations are achieved, the students fall into the track of developing themselves and improving themselves on their own speed. So, then the teacher’s challenges and hurdles are out of the way and they can focus on developing those skills and abilities in students. But yes, if the students are motivated, half of the challenges of the teachers will be, like, taken care of.

**Interviewer:** Well, that’s it. That is the end of the interview. Thank you very much.

**Susan:** Thank you so much.