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ESP teachers' use of motivational strategies: A classroom-oriented view of Estonian university teaching

Abstract. Research on L2 motivation and English for specific purposes (ESP) is quite scarce. This study explores Estonian ESP teachers' use of motivational strategies (MotS) and whether their students see them motivating. It also seeks to identify the MotS that teachers use most as well as highlight any differences between teachers' self-reported use of MotS and their motivational practice. Teachers and students at an Estonian university were asked to answer a questionnaire that follows Keller's (2010) ARCS model. Class observations were conducted for in-person and online classes using Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) scheme. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. The findings show that teachers use confidence-building strategies the most.

Keywords: ARCS model, motivational strategies, language learning motivation, English for Specific Purposes, Estonian higher education

1. Introduction

Motivation is considered as a key individual difference variable (such as anxiety, aptitude, age, etc.) in studies of second language acquisition (SLA). According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), motivation represents the primary drive that triggers the language learning journey and then the impelling cause to master the second language (L2). In other words, motivation acts as the main factor behind succeeding in the L2 learning journey (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006). Moreover, students' achievements depend on their teacher's performance. In fact, numerous studies have concluded that the teacher's style positively influences learners' L2 attainment (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Maeng & Lee 2015). Keller (2010) goes as far as to argue that teachers can either kill or enhance their students' motivation. In this context, teachers could use motivational strategies (MotS) to promote their students' motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Lee and Yi (2017) suggest that students' motivation should

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be considered besides examining teachers' use of MotS. Despite the importance of language motivation research, studies within the Estonian university context remain scarce according to the Estonian research information system[2]. In this regard, the present paper aims to examine students' perception of their teachers' use of MotS in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes at an Estonian university as well as exploring teachers' implementation of MotS through questionnaires and class observations.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. L2 motivational strategies

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) define L2 MotS as the instructional techniques that teachers deploy "to consciously generate and enhance student motivation, as well as maintain ongoing motivated behavior and protect it from distracting and/or competing action tendencies" (p. 103). Research on MotS has stressed the role of teachers in stimulating students' motivation (Lamb 2019). These studies have used various theoretical frameworks. Dörnyei (1994) put forward a framework to develop L2 students' motivation that consists of teaching strategies. It falls under three categories: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) suggested 10 commandments that teachers should abide by to motivate their students. Their research was based on survey data with Hungarian teachers of English and resulted in a set of macro-strategies that teachers can use to enhance their students' motivation. Based on these findings, Dörnyei (2001) proposes a process-oriented framework of motivational teaching with four main goals: (i) creating the basic motivational conditions; (ii) generating initial motivation; (iii) maintaining and protecting motivation; and (iv) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) argue that "most students' motivation can be 'worked on' and increased" [emphasis in original] (113).

2.2. The ARCS model

Keller's (2010) ARCS (attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction) model provides teachers with motivational strategies that can be easily implemented in their teaching. Attention-getting strategies seek to maintain learners' interest while learning. They include perceptual arousal, inquiry arousal, and variability. Relevance-producing strategies include language or examples that are relevant to learners' needs. They are divided into goal orientation, motive matching, and familiarity. Confidence-building strategies aim to promote learners' positive expectations for success through giving clear learning objectives, success opportunities and personal control. Satisfaction-generating strategies focus on the reinforcement and conditioning of learning, such as intrinsic reinforcement, extrinsic rewards, and equity. This model bridges the gap between L2 motivation theories and practice; it also offers a comprehensive view of motivation involving

2 https://www.etis.ee

both teachers and students (Maeng & Lee, 2015). The ARCS model has proven to be effective in improving students' motivation in EFL classes (Li & Keller, 2018) as well as in teachers' professional development (Maeng & Lee, 2015; Karimi & Zade, 2019).

2.3. ESP Teaching

ESP is defined as an approach to English language teaching that designs the course content and method according to learners' goals (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP classes focus on a specific register related to a field of expertise such as business, finance, medicine, engineering, and aviation, among others.

Research on motivation of ESP students is still scarce within the area of L2 motivation research. In a review study by Rahman (2015), he stressed the importance of needs analysis for ESP researchers and teachers since ESP students have specific goals to reach. In the same vein, Mauludin (2021) explored the MotS that undergraduate ESP students liked most in Indonesia. Students were asked to rank MotS that teachers used and results showed that they rated a good rapport with their teacher as well as a good classroom atmosphere as the most motivating. These strategies did not relate to the lesson content per se as much as they focus on the teacher's role in creating a pleasant learning environment. In addition, Ngo et al. (2017) compared students' motivation to learn English for both English and non-English majors in Vietnam. Their findings contradicted the widely held assumption that non-English majors only seek to meet course requirements. In fact, ESP students were found to be intrinsically motivated. In the Saudi context, Altalib (2019) used Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) second language motivational self system (L2MSS) model to compare the motivation of Saudi ESP and EGP (English for general purposes) university students. He concluded that ESP students reported a more significant ideal L2 self than EGP students. In addition, ESP students had a more positive L2 learning experience than that of the EGP group.

In connection to previous studies, this paper contributes to the burgeoning field of ESP motivation research through a comparison of students' views to teachers' reported use of MotS. Teachers of English at Estonian universities do not have any training in any of the specialized areas (Meristo & López, 2020). It is still important to investigate teachers' efforts to keep their students engaged since Estonian students are deemed to have a high proficiency level in English according to PISA results (Tire, 2021). It should be noted that the Estonian education system is deemed one of the best in the European Union[3].

3. Methodology

Based on the reviewed theoretical background, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which motivational strategies do teachers use most in ESP classes in Estonia?
2. What is the relationship between students' perception of MotS and their teachers' use of MotS?

3 European Commission (2017). Education and training monitor 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017-country-reports_en.pdf

3. How different are teachers' self-reported use of MotS from their observed motivational practice?

3.1. Participants

The present study focused on 127 students from various majors at Tallinn University (education, law, journalism, political science, and information technology). Their ages were between 19 and 56 years old. Most student participants identified themselves as female (80%). A total of 14 ESP teachers were also recruited with ages between 28 and 62 years old and different years of teaching experience (3-37 years). In the fall semester of 2021, ESP teachers at Tallinn University were contacted via email to schedule class observations and to share questionnaires with their students as well as answer their own questionnaires. Due to the COVID pandemic measures in Estonia during the data collection, university teachers could choose to teach either in-person or online. Ten teachers (3 male and 7 female) were available for classroom observations. Two observations were scheduled for each teacher. Observations were conducted for both in-person and online classes.

3.2. Instruments

Keller (2010) designed the instructional materials motivational survey (IMMS) questionnaire that assesses teachers' implementation of the ARCS categories. This study relied on Min and Chon's (2021) adapted IMMS, which includes two complementary versions of the questionnaire designed for teachers and students. It follows a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree' and 5 indicating 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire items were stated randomly with a total number of 40. The IMMS teachers' version asks them to report their MotS (e.g. Do you give students problems to solve during class?) while the students' version requires students to evaluate their teacher's use of MotS (e.g. Teacher gives us problems to solve during class). The first part of the questionnaire collects the demographic data of participants.

Classroom observations were carried out through the motivational orientation of language teaching (MOLT) scheme, designed by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008). This observation scheme is based on Dörnyei's (2001) motivational framework as well as Spada and Fröhlich (1995) observation scheme. It records minute-by-minute teachers' motivational practice through 25 MotS that are grouped under four categories: encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, activity design, participation structure, and teacher discourse. Students' motivated behavior is recorded in terms of their alertness, volunteering, and engagement. For every participating teacher, two class observations were conducted for a total of 20 classes. The average of each MotS used was calculated for every teacher. Half of the classes were observed in-person while the other half were observed online via Zoom. In this study, a real-time coding of teachers' MotS was recorded; however, students' behavior was not documented since online classes were not convenient to observe students who had their cameras off.

3.3. Data analysis

For the analysis of the questionnaire data, descriptive and inferential statistical tests were computed. A factor analysis was first run then more statistical analyses were carried out to calculate descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviation) on the four categories of MotS for both students and teachers. Independent samples t-tests were also calculated to identify any significant difference between students' and teachers' perceptions of MotS. Repeated measures one-way ANOVA was later conducted within the teacher group to identify differences among the ARCS categories.

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted with principal axis factoring (PAF) to check the validity of the questionnaire items. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(780) = 2924.026$, $p < 0.001$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) 0.86, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The number of items with factor loadings above 0.4 on the 4 categories of the ARCS model is 29. The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.924, with each factor demonstrating high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > 0.8) as indicated in Table 1. Detailed factor loadings for each survey item are provided in Appendix A.

Table 1. Factor loadings of the ARCS strategies

ARCS strategies	**Confidence-building Strategies**	**Attention-getting Strategies**	**Relevance-producing Strategies**	**Satisfaction--generating Strategies**
Items loaded	10	10	7	2
Explained variance	15.03%	12.05%	8.95%	6.16%
Cronbach's alpha	0.87	0.85	0.82	0.93

The first factor accounted for 15.03% of the variance in the data and included 10 items labelled as confidence-building strategies. The second factor was labelled as attention-getting strategies, which included 10 items. It accounted for 12.05% of the variance in the data. The third factor, accounting for 8.95% of the variance, had 7 items that were labelled as relevance-producing strategies. The fourth element accounted for 6.16% of the variance with 2 items that were labelled as satisfaction-generating strategies.

As to observation data, they were first analyzed qualitatively then quantitatively. Following Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), teachers' motivational practices were recorded every minute during the class observation by marking the box that corresponded to that motivational practice. Since some classes varied in the starting or ending times, the frequencies were divided by the number of minutes of each class and then multiplied by 100 to have comparable scores

(Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991) and then the marks indicating minutes were added up into an SPSS file. For each observation, the average frequency for each teacher's motivational behavior was calculated. Then, these averages were summed to obtain a composite score. These scores were converted to standardized Z-scores and were later compared with standardized Z-scores from questionnaire results (see Kouraichi & Lesznyák, 2022 for more details).

4. Results

4.1. Questionnaire results

To answer the first research question about the strategies that teachers adopt, mean values were computed through SPSS version 25. Teachers' mean scores indicated that confidence-building strategies were the most frequently used followed by attention-getting strategies, then relevance-producing strategies. Satisfaction-generating strategies were used least frequently (see Table 2).

Table 2. Teachers' use of the ARCS MotS

Frequency Rank	Motivational Strategies	Means	Standard Deviation
1	Confidence-building	4.35	0.86
2	Attention-getting	3.96	1.04
3	Relevance-producing	3.48	1.25
4	Satisfaction-generating	3.46	0.83

A repeated measures one-way ANOVA test was conducted to check whether there was any significant difference in the use of MotS within the teacher group. The results ($F(3, 39) = 123.56$, $p < 0.001$) indicated a significant difference between strategies, except for the difference between satisfaction-generating strategies with relevance-producing strategies and attention-getting strategies.

As to the second research question, an independent samples t-test was run. Students' mean scores were compared to their teachers' reported results. Mean scores for teachers and students were quite in agreement. Teachers' answers were confirmed by their students. There were significant differences between students and teachers mean scores only for attention-getting strategies (see Table 3).

Table 3. Independent samples T-test results: teachers' and students' perspectives on ARCS motivational strategies

ARCS Strategies	Teachers (N=14)	Students (N=127)	T-test		
	M	M	t-value	df	p-value
Attention	3.96	4.23	3.15	139	0.002*
Relevance	3.48	3.55	1.90	139	0.60
Confidence	4.35	4.30	1.98	139	0.50
Satisfaction	3.46	3.78	1.61	139	0.11

*p<0.05

These results indicate that teachers' use of MotS is aligned with their students' perception of the employed strategies. Indeed, the mean scores of student and teacher participants are only significantly different for attention-getting strategies.

4.2. Observation results

For the third research question, teachers' questionnaire results were compared with their classroom observation. Following Kouraichi and Lesznyák (2022), the MOLT categories were categorized following the ARCS strategies then compared through Z-scores. Attention-getting strategies included social chat, arousing curiosity, and creative elements. Relevance-producing strategies were seen in terms of signposting, stating purpose, establishing relevance, and promoting instrumental values. Scaffolding, promoting cooperation, pair work and group work were categorized as confidence-building strategies. Satisfaction-getting strategies included neutral feedback, process feedback, self or peer correction, effective praise, and class applause. Some MOLT categories were not employed at all, namely: promoting autonomy, promoting integrative values, tangible rewards, intellectual challenge, tangible task product, individual competition, and team competition. The observation results are shown in Table 4 according to the employed MOLT items.

Table 4. MOLT observation results

MOLT Variables	Mean (mins)
Group Work	6.3
Stating purpose	2.2
Self/peer correction	1.8

MOLT Variables	Mean (mins)
Effective praise	1.5
Signposting	1.4
Pair work	1.3
Referential questions	1.2
Class applause	1.1
Process feedback	1
Social chat	0.4
Establishing relevance	0.2
Arousing curiosity	0.2
Creative element	0.2
Neutral feedback	0.2
Scaffolding	0.2
Promoting cooperation	0.1
Personalization	0.1
Promoting instrumental values	0.1

According to the MOLT average scores, teachers use confidence-building strategies most often (M=7.9), followed by relevance-producing strategies (M=5.2), then satisfaction-getting strategies (M=4.6), and attention-getting strategies (M=0.8). In both their questionnaire answers and their class observations, teachers focus most on confidence-building strategies. The other ARCS categories reported in the observations ranked differently than the questionnaire results. According to the questionnaire mean scores, confidence-building strategies were the most frequently used followed by attention-getting strategies, relevance-producing strategies and satisfaction-generating strategies.

These results were entered into SPSS to calculate standardized z-scores to make a comparison between the MotS means of the class observations and the teachers' questionnaire results (see Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of Z-scores

Teachers	Observation Z-scores	Questionnaire Z-scores
Teacher 1	-0.38	0.03
Teacher 2	-1.24	-1.31
Teacher 3	-0.57	0
Teacher 4	-1.34	-1.75
Teacher 5	-0.19	-0.35
Teacher 6	1.15	1.78
Teacher 7	1.53	0.38
Teacher 8	-0.48	0.3
Teacher 9	0.57	0.78
Teacher 10	0.96	0.12

Teacher 1, 3 and 8 scored below the mean during the observation while having a score above the mean for the questionnaire. This result indicates that teachers' employment of MotS during the observations were not the same as those reported in the questionnaire. Teachers 2 and 4 scored negatively for both the classroom observation and the questionnaire. Their negative Z-scores could indicate how they negatively estimated their motivational practice. Teacher 7 and teacher 10 have higher observation results, which indicates that they used more MotS during the observed classes than they usually do.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to contribute to the limited research on L2 motivation and ESP in a less researched context. The first objective of the study was to identify the motivational strategies ESP teachers in Estonia employ. The second aim of the paper was to identify whether students' perspective is aligned with their teachers' reported use of MotS. The study also explored teachers' use of MotS through a comparison of their questionnaire results and their classroom observation results.

Teachers' IMMS questionnaire results reveal that teachers employ confidence-building strategies the most, followed by attention-getting strategies, relevance-producing strategies, and satisfaction-generating strategies. The findings of the present study are different from those identified by Kouraichi and Lesznyák (2022) in the Hungarian context where high school teachers focused on satisfaction-generating and attention-getting strategies. Indeed, studies from diverse educational and cultural settings could yield different results since the use and effect of MotS

may also vary according to the learning environment and cultural context (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Lamb, 2017; Wong, 2014).

Students' questionnaire results confirmed their teachers' reported MotS. As proposed by Min and Chon (2021), students' perception of MotS attests to the effectiveness of teachers' motivational instruction. Teachers' adoption of confidence-building strategies could be correlated with the general assumption that university students in Estonia have a high English language proficiency level. Through the use of confidence-building MotS, teachers present learning requirements in a clear way, promote learners' success opportunities, and encourage them to take personal control of their learning process. These MotS would result in boosting learners' expectations for success. Confidence-building strategies could also be connected to students' self-regulation and self-efficacy.

More focus on relevance-producing strategies could prepare ESP students for their future career. Kálmán (2022) explored ESP teachers' role in motivating adult learners working for corporations. ESP teachers' motivational effort is important even after university. The use of motivational practices can also be introduced in teacher training so that novice teachers can incorporate them in their classes. ESP lessons will then become more relevant to students' needs after graduation.

The importance of comparing teachers' questionnaire results with their observation results lies in the differences it highlights. Some teachers may underestimate their efforts or undervalue the strategies they are using, while others try their best but are faced with classroom challenges and have to adapt their lesson plans. This comparison provides further evidence as both results indicate that teachers put more emphasis on confidence-building strategies.

The MOLT findings echo previous studies in that some strategies are underused (Ruesch et al., 2012; Guilloteaux, 2013). It should be noted that in previous studies, the MOLT observation scheme was used in high schools (Guilloteaux, 2013; Hsu, 2020; Kouraichi & Lesznyák, 2022). It is indeed more suited for high schools rather than ESP classes at university level since many strategies are not applicable. Promoting integral and instrumental values, for instance, are more relevant in ESL classes. The same applies for individual and team competition, which are often used with students of a younger age group. University students only used the class applause item following a student's presentation.

Participating teachers had a high English proficiency level and never used Estonian in any of the classes observed. This factor could also be important in interpreting teachers' employment of MotS (Maeng & Lee, 2015). Teachers' classroom motivational practice was reported from the researcher's perspective. My presence may have affected teachers' use of MotS and the findings. During online class observations, I switched off my microphone and camera to minimize the influence of my presence on the natural unfolding of classes. Still, one teacher had her camera off and expressed how nervous she was that I was present in her class. Some teachers introduced me at the beginning of the lesson and explained the reason of my presence. Other teachers did not do that until the lesson ended and talked to me only when all students left the classroom

or the meeting. Yang and Sanchez (2021) used post-lessons stimulated recall interviews with teachers to allow teachers the opportunity to reflect on their use of motivational strategies in a particular lesson. Teachers' reflections were beyond the scope of this study but would have been insightful in understanding their choice of specific strategies.

6. Conclusion

The present study focused on ESP teachers' use of MotS at an Estonian university following Keller's (2010) ARCS model. Teachers' and students' perceptions of motivational teaching were examined through a mixed-method approach. The findings demonstrate that teachers tend to employ primarily confidence-building strategies and the MotS used were recognized by students, except for attention-getting strategies.

Some limitations of the study should be noted. First, the research context is very narrow since it involved participants from one university. As a matter of fact, the results may not be applicable to other universities in Estonia. Second, although the MOLT observation scheme has yielded good results that could be compared to teachers' questionnaire answers, it could not be applied to students' behavior, namely for online classes. Students' motivational behavior is quite problematic for online classes. Further research is needed to examine the correlation between teachers' use of MotS and ESP students' motivated behavior and to develop new ways to enhance students' motivation in ESP classes. In addition, post-observation interviews with teachers represent an opportunity for participating teachers to reflect on their motivational practice. Due to time limits and teachers' availability, I did not want to overburden the teachers. They were already in a hustle trying to adjust to Covid-19 measures of switching some or all their classes online.

The findings of this study offer pedagogical and theoretical contributions. On a pedagogical level, this paper provides teachers with reliable data as to how motivating their teaching is perceived and how ESP teaching could be developed. Theoretically, it contributes to the limited research on language learning motivation in the Estonian higher education context through combining different theoretical frameworks. Future studies could focus on the relationship between university teachers' use of motivational strategies and students' motivated behavior through observational data.

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Appendix A: Factor Loadings

	Factor Loadings			
	Attention	**Relevance**	**Confidence**	**Satisfaction**
1. Teacher uses different visual or auditory materials.	0.522			
2. Teacher uses pictures that show tables and flowcharts.	0.450			
5. Teacher asks a lot of questions and takes care in providing answers to my questions.			0.646	
6. Teacher gives us problems to solve during class.			0.545	
7. Teacher varies teaching materials or presentation style, when necessary.	0.627			
9. Teacher uses a variety of teaching methods (E.g., singing in English, cooperative learning, project word, discussions)	0.515			
11. Teacher explains how each lesson is going to benefit us.	0.600			
12. Teacher explains what can be learnt from the course.	0.627			
13. Teacher explains in detail how successful learning is going to help me.	0.615			

	Factor Loadings			
	Attention	**Relevance**	**Confidence**	**Satisfaction**
15. Teacher provides a learning context where cooperative learning is used.	0.575			
16. Teacher organizes pair and group work that requires cooperation.	0.522			
17. Teacher uses anecdotes and stories s/he knows during the lessons.		0.413		
19. Teacher clearly tells me how the new course content is related to what we know.		0.510		
20. Teacher explains course objectives and how the course is going to be run.	0.423			
22. Teacher provides opportunities for me to talk or write about what I want to learn.		0.443		
23. Teacher tells us about what I will be able to do after successfully completing the lesson.		0.525		
24. Teacher presents materials that are not so difficult.				0.823
25. Teacher provides tasks and assignments that are not so difficult.				0.849
26. Teacher presents materials in an explicit and easy-to-follow way.			0.591	
27. Teacher allows us to control the pace of learning.			0.501	
28. Teacher encourages us to study on our own.			0.509	
29. Teacher helps us to review and recycle parts of what we have learnt, when needed.			0.657	

	Factor Loadings			
	Attention	**Relevance**	**Confidence**	**Satisfaction**
31. Teacher provides positive response to assignments and problems that I've completed.			0.657	
32. Teacher allows me to help peers when I've completed my work.			0.458	
33. Teacher sympathizes and understands the difficulties we face while learning.			0.742	
34. Teacher compliments us when we provide the correct answer.			0.603	
35. Teacher rewards us when we win games or activities.		0.621		
36. Teacher shows personal interest when I work hard or when I complete an assignment successfully.		0.479		
37. Teacher provides symbolic rewards for students who have successfully completed activities.		0.677		

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