

Research Articles

*Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of
L2 Motivational
Strategies: A Situated Analysis
in a Japanese EFL Context*

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In an investigation of students and teachers of various languages, Ruesch and colleagues (2012) discovered that the two groups held different perceptions regarding the effectiveness of motivational strategies (MSs). However, considering learning environment significantly influences MSs (Dörnyei, 2001), situating students and teachers in a more specific environment is recommended when comparing their perceptions. This study examines the perceptions of students and teachers sharing the same learning environment to identify any differences in perceptions regarding the effectiveness of MSs. The participants included 316 students of English at a Japanese technical college and six non-native English teachers. Statistical analyses on questionnaire data collected showed that both groups perceived the overall effectiveness of motivational strategy (MS) similarly, which is inconsistent with Ruesch and colleagues (2012). One possible interpretation for this discrepancy is that the current study was situated in a single second language (L2) learning environment—specifically English—whereas Ruesch and colleagues (2012) conducted their study in multiple L2 learning environments. Therefore, the teachers in this study had a better and more accurate understanding of how to motivate students. Additionally, no significant differences were found in students' perceptions of MSs across groups with different L2 proficiency and motivational intensity.

Introduction

Motivation has always been at the center of the discussion on L2 learning (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Lee & Pun, 2021). To date, extensive research in the field of L2 motivation has considered various theoretical frameworks, such as integrative and instrumental motivation in Gardner and Lambert's (1972) socio-psychological approach (e.g., Gardner, 1985), intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory (e.g., Agawa & Takeuchi, 2017; Noels et al., 2000; Yashima et al., 2009), ideal and ought-to self in Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self-system (e.g., Fukui & Yashima, 2021; Taguchi et al., 2009; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2013), and directed motivational currents (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2015). Although these studies used different frameworks for different research purposes, as Lee and Pun (2021) mention, "there is widespread consensus that motivation plays a [sic] important role in language learning" (p. 2).

Another well-known aspect of language education is that language teachers are largely responsible for maintaining and enhancing their students' motivation (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Considerable attention has therefore been given to teachers' MSs¹, that is, techniques used to motivate students. Since the late 1990s, a variety of MSs have been identified (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998), and research on MS has continued to grow.

Research on MSs has confirmed that those used by teachers are effective (Arabai, 2016; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Moskovsky et al., 2013; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Sugita, 2009; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010; Sugita-McEown & Takeuchi, 2014). However, "to make L2 motivation research more useful to education," (Lamb, 2017, p. 304) researchers need to provide L2 teachers with knowledge that is "straightforward and unambiguous, along the lines of 'If you do this, you will get this'" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 23). One sure way to offer concrete pedagogical implications is to bear in mind Dörnyei (2001) important reminder: "not every strategy works in every context." (p. 30) This highlights the powerful and influential role of the learning environment in the effectiveness of MS.

Despite the extensive research on MSs, a gap remains in understanding how these strategies work within a specific educational context, particularly in the context with a single set curriculum for L2 classes. Considering the above mentioned Dörnyei's statement, addressing

this gap is crucial for providing L2 teachers with “straightforward and unambiguous” pedagogical implications.

Therefore, this study explores the MSs perceived to be effective by both students and teachers within a specific learning environment wherein there is a single set curriculum for L2 classes. By doing so, we aim to provide concrete pedagogical implications that are tailored to this particular educational setting.

Literature Review

Definition and Effectiveness of MSs

MSs are commonly referred to as “instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 57). Specifically, MSs are defined as techniques that teachers use “to consciously generate and enhance student motivation, as well as maintain ongoing motivated behavior and protect it from distracting and/or competing action tendencies” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 103).

Research interest in MSs in L2 learning emerged in the late 1990s, partly in response to Gardner and Tremblay (1994), and researchers wanted “to make L2 motivation research more useful to education” (Lamb, 2017, p. 304). While many practical recommendations were seen as potentially valuable, scholars argued that “from a scientific point of view, intuitive appeal without empirical evidence is not enough to justify strong claims in favor of the use of such strategies” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 56).

Research on MSs began with developing a list of techniques used by teachers to motivate students. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), for example, in their pioneering quantitative study of MS, examined Hungarian L2 teachers' use of techniques to motivate their students and identified “Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners.” More recently, Dörnyei (2001) theoretically expanded Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) study and proposed a comprehensive framework of 102 MSs. Its clarity and comprehensiveness, as well as its close association with the process model proposed by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), make it readily adoptable in classroom settings (Lee & Pun, 2021).

In the 2000s, research interest in MS shifted from a list of techniques to examining the extent to which teachers' use of MSs influenced students' motivation through intervention and observation. For example, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) study in Korea found that teachers' use of MSs influenced students' motivated behavior and motivational state. These findings were later supported by studies conducted in different language learning environments (e.g., Alrabai, 2016; Moskovsky et al., 2013; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Sugita, 2009; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010; Sugita-McEown & Takeuchi, 2014; Wong, 2013). In addition, recent studies have shown that the impact of teachers' MSs extends beyond the classroom, affecting students' learning behavior outside the classroom as well (Lee et al., 2020).

While the effectiveness of MSs on students' motivation has been confirmed, several studies have shown that the extent to which MSs are effective can vary according to students' individual differences (Sugita, 2009; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010; Sugita-McEown & Takeuchi, 2014). For example, inspired by the findings of Noels and colleagues (1999) and Sugita and Takeuchi (2010), which indicate that students' English proficiency and motivational intensity influence their perceptions of teaching style, Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi (2014) investigated the effectiveness of MSs on student groups categorized by these two factors. Through their four-month intervention, they found that the two variables influenced the perceived effectiveness of MSs. A total of ten MSs, accounting for more than half of the 17 MSs adopted in the study, showed positive or negative correlations only in one of the groups.

Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of MSs

Around the same time that research on the effects of MSs on students' motivation began, several studies also investigated the perceptions of language teachers and students in different contexts. Studies based on Dörnyei's framework (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998) found that while some MSs are perceived as important across contexts, others are culturally conditioned (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Ruesch et al., 2012; Tavakoli et al., 2016). Also, it appears that some MSs are underutilized relative to their perceived importance by teachers (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux, 2013). Wong and Wong (2017), who examined the relationship between students' evaluations and teachers' use of MSs, attribute this underuse to

the heavy workload faced by teachers. In addition, Lee and Lin (2021) found that the predominant factor leading to the use of specific MSs is their feasibility, which is influenced by various internal and external factors within the teachers' working ecology (Lee & Pun, 2021; Ye & Hu, 2024). These findings highlight the need for further research focusing on a specific learning environment to better understand of MSs.

Moreover, Ruesch and colleagues (2012) examined student and teacher perceptions of the importance of MSs to investigate the differences in their views. This was in response to Brown (2009), who found that students' and teachers' perceptions of effective L2 instruction often do not align. In a questionnaire survey with students of different languages and teachers responsible for each language classroom in the United States, Ruesch and colleagues (2012) found a general tendency among students and teachers to perceive the importance of MSs differently.

What We Know About MSs

The results described above suggest that the effectiveness of MSs is context-dependent; that is, their effectiveness varies depending on where MSs are used (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Ruesch et al., 2012; Tavakoli et al., 2016). In addition, students' L2 proficiency and original motivational intensity are powerful determinants of how effective MSs are perceived to be (Sugita, 2009; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010; Sugita-McEown & Takeuchi, 2014). Furthermore, there appear to be differences in perceptions of MS effectiveness between teachers and students (Ruesch et al., 2012). Thus, the MSs perceived as effective by teachers are not necessarily perceived similarly by students. Consequently, it would be informative to focus mainly on the following factors when examining the effectiveness of MSs in future studies: students' learning context, differences in perceptions between students and teachers, and individual differences among students.

The Present Study

Accordingly, this study formulates the following two research questions by focusing on “learning environment,” “students' and teachers' different perceptions,” and “students' L2 proficiency and motivational intensity.” The research question (RQ) is as follows:

RQ1: What MSs do students and teachers who share the same learning environment perceive as effective? Are there any differences between the two groups?

RQ2: Are there differences in the perceived effectiveness of MS among students with different levels of L2 proficiency and motivational intensity?

Regarding RQ1, the current study is considerably different from Ruesch and colleagues (2012) in the following three aspects: First, this study used Dörnyei's (2001) framework of MSs, whereas Ruesch and colleagues (2012) used that of Dörnyei and Csizérs (1998). As mentioned earlier, Dörnyei's (2001) framework of MSs is an expanded version of that of Dörnyei and Csizérs (1998), with each MS theoretically underpinned and readily adoptable in classroom settings (Lee & Pun, 2021). Second, the concept of students' individual differences was considered in this study based on the findings of Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi (2014)—that the effectiveness of MSs could depend on learners' proficiency in their target languages and their initial motivational intensity levels. Lastly, and this is the major characteristic of this study—we collected data from students and teachers that share the same language learning environment. In other words, this study was situated in a specific environment in the sense of Lave and Wenger's (1991) "situated learning" (for situated L2 acquisition studies, see Gao, 2007; Groves et al., 2016; Hwang et al., 2014). This approach is in direct contrast to that of Ruesch and colleagues (2012), who targeted students and teachers of a variety of languages in various classes. Specifically, the current study attempted to examine the perceptions of both teachers and learners of the same language (English), who share the same curriculum in the same institution. This focus contrasts with previous research that often reviews general trends involving teachers and students from various languages and classes. This situational approach is consistent with Dörnyei's (2001) argument that "not every strategy works in every context" (p. 30), noting that the learning environment is a powerful factor that influences the effectiveness of MSs.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study included 316 English as a foreign language (EFL) students and six English teachers at a technical college in Japan,

all of whom are non-native English speakers. The school offers five years of engineering education and accepts junior high school graduates at age 15. Upon graduation from the technical college, students earn associate degrees in technology and almost all of them either find jobs or transfer to another four-year college for the purpose of obtaining a bachelor's degree. All of the students who participated in this study were enrolled in a second- (151; 47.8%) or a third-year (165; 52.2%) English elective course. They had already studied English for more than four years at the time of data collection. The six English teachers each had at least one year of experience teaching some of the student participants when this study was conducted; thus, they were familiar with the students and their learning environment.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of two questionnaires (one administered to both students and teachers; the other only to students) and a test as an indicator of students' L2 proficiency. English translations of the original Japanese questionnaires used in this study can be found in Appendices A and B.

Questionnaire Items Regarding MSs (For both Students and Teachers)

This study used a questionnaire on 65 MSs provided by Sugita (2009). This list was adopted because it is based on Dörnyei's (2001) list of 102 MSs and compressed to 65 items to better suit the Japanese EFL environment. In this study, students were asked to rate how effective they thought those MSs were at motivating them to learn English, while teachers were asked how effective they thought those MSs were at motivating their students to learn L2. Each item was rated by both students and teachers using a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "Not effective in the least" to (6) "Very effective." (see Appendix A) A six-point scale was used in this study because Japanese respondents tend to select the midpoint on odd-numbered scale, such as a five-point scale, which can neutralize the overall ratings (Sugita-McEown & Takeuchi, 2014).

Questionnaire Items Assessing Motivational Intensity (For Students Only)

A total of 12 questionnaire items assessed students' motivation intensity levels. All the items were taken from Yashima (2002); six items assessed

motivational intensity, and the other six assessed desire to learn English; both of these are considered important subscales of motivational intensity. Students were asked to rate the degree to which each statement matched their state of mind on a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “not true at all” to (6) “very true.”

Proficiency Test (For Students Only)

Students' English proficiency was measured using the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Bridge Listening & Reading Test (hereafter referred to as TOEIC Bridge test), with a maximum score of 100. The TOEIC Bridge test is a measure of students' English proficiency at the beginner to lower intermediate level (Educational Testing Service, 2023). Powers and colleagues (2013) showed that TOEIC Bridge test scores were moderately correlated with teachers' assessments of their students' English proficiency (for listening $r = .58$, for reading $r = .57$). Furthermore, research conducted by Powers and Yan (2013) in Korea and Japan showed that TOEIC Bridge test scores for reading and listening were highly correlated in both samples ($r = .73$ and $.67$, respectively) and that TOEIC Bridge test scores were modestly correlated with participants' self-assessments of their English proficiency ($r = .26$ to $.40$ in the Japanese sample). Thus, we can assume that the TOEIC Bridge test has high to moderate reliability in assessing students' EFL proficiency.

Students at this technical college take the TOEIC Bridge test once a year, in mid-December, to confirm their English proficiency levels. In the present study, participants' total scores for the listening and reading sections were used.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the university to which the authors belong. The survey of students was conducted in class in April 2021. In each class, the first author explained the survey and their rights to voluntary participation and confidentiality.

The students who agreed to participate in this study were asked to complete the questionnaire. The TOEIC Bridge test scores of the

participating students were obtained, with their consent, from the English Department of the Technical College.

A teacher survey was administered during the same period as the student survey. Before conducting the teacher survey, the participating teachers were fully informed of their rights and their written consent to participate was obtained. Both questionnaires were completed in their native language, Japanese, to eliminate any possible language impairment.

The data obtained from both the students and teachers were then subjected to statistical analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. There was a difference in the numbers of teachers and students simply because the current study was situated in an environment wherein the teacher-to-student ratio in regular classes was approximately one to forty. For this reason, a different statistical approach was employed from that of Ruesch and colleagues (2012), where the number of participating students was 126, while that of the teachers was 30.

Preliminary Analyses

We performed cluster analysis to identify the extent to which students' English proficiency levels and original motivation intensity influenced their perceptions of the effectiveness of MSs. Because we did not know how many groups of student participants could be identified, we first employed the hierarchical approach with Ward's method and squared Euclidean distance. Next, based on the dendrogram obtained and the k-means method, we identified two specific clusters: (1) students with lower English proficiency and lower motivational intensity (Cluster 1: $n = 158$) and (2) students with higher English proficiency and higher motivational intensity (Cluster 2: $n = 157$). Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for each cluster.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of TOEIC Bridge Test Scores and Motivational Intensity of Student Clusters 1 and 2

	<i>n</i>	TOEIC Bridge test mean (SD) ^a	Motivational intensity mean (SD) ^b
Student cluster 1	158	56.2 (7.16)	3.02 (0.84)
Student cluster 2	157	75.6 (8.16)	3.43 (0.85)

^a The maximum possible score is 100.

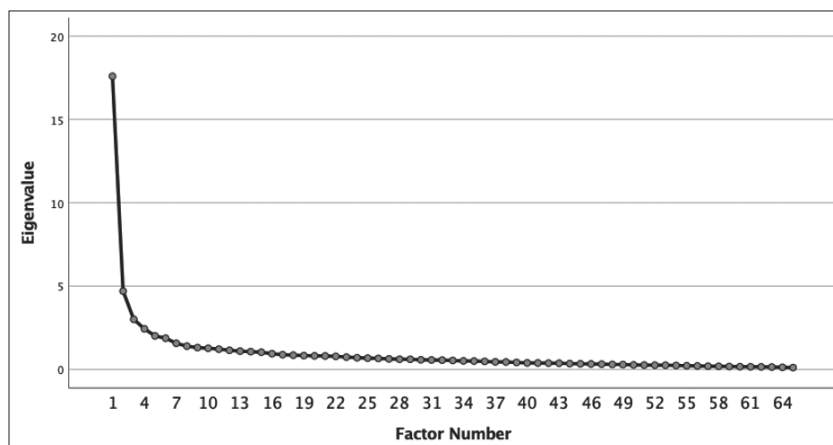
^b Six-point Likert scale.

Results

RQ1: What MSs Do Students and Teachers Who Share the Same Learning Environment Perceive as Effective? Are There Any Differences Between the Two Groups?

As mentioned earlier, we used the questionnaire items from Sugita (2009), which is a revised version of Dörnyei's (2001) list, to fit the Japanese EFL environment. Sugita's (2009) study focused on how effective the 65 MSs were perceived to be by teachers and, therefore, did not consider the latent variables behind the MSs used in the study. In contrast, Ruesch and colleagues (2012) adopted Dörnyei and Csizérs' (1998) items, which comprised 17 macro strategies, and compared the students' and teachers' perceptions of each macro strategy. To determine whether there were any differences between students and teachers, as suggested in Ruesch and colleagues (2012), we needed to categorize the items adopted from Sugita (2009).

Figure 1. Scree Plot with Kaiser-Guttman Criterion Obtained from Exploratory Factor Analysis Using the Maximum Likelihood Method and Promax rotation on MS Items to Which Students Responded



For the above-stated reason, exploratory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method and promax rotation was performed on the MS questionnaire data collected from the students. Based on the scree plot (see Figure 1) and Kaiser-Guttman criterion, the structure of the MS

questionnaire used in this study consisted of five factors². The data obtained from the teacher participants were not included in the factor analysis because, based on the results of Ruesch and colleagues (2012), we recognize that students and teachers might have perceived the effectiveness of MSs differently. Furthermore, the number of teacher participants in the present study was clearly insufficient compared to the sample size of 100 that Takeuchi and Mizumoto (2014) suggest as a guideline for factor analysis.

The first factor was labeled "Incorporating student-centered activities" because the MSs included in this factor mainly related to the activities where students work with others, as represented by words and phrases such as "leadership," "work together," and "involvement from each participant." Some examples of MSs with high factor loadings in this factor were as follows (in the order of factor loading value): "Hand over as much as teachers can of the various leadership or teaching roles and functions to students" (item 53), "Set up tasks in which teams of learners are asked to work together toward the same goal" (item 50), and "Assign students to a small group during class to provide opportunities for all students in the group to interact" (item 10).

The second factor was labeled "Supporting student autonomy," based on Benson (2011a, 2011b). The factor is constructed by the MSs relating to teachers' support for students in many aspects of L2 learning. The following are some example items contained in this factor: "Encourage learners to explain their failures by the lack of effort" (item 57), "Raise students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation" (item 54), and "Make sure that students receive sufficient assistance" (item 21).

The third factor was labeled "conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment," as the items in this factor were associated with the teachers' willingness to help their students feel a sense of achievement through classroom activities. Selected examples of items in this factor were as follows: "Adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students' abilities" (item 38), "Provide regular feedback about the areas on which students should particularly concentrate" (item 59), and "Keep the class goals achievable" (item 23).

The fourth factor was called "Stimulating students' interest" because the MSs in this factor were mainly related to activities that teachers use to stimulate their students' interest in learning English. Some items in this factor were: "Include a socio-cultural component in language class,"

(item 15). “Share teacher’s personal interest in the L2 learning (e.g., in learning strategies or target culture) with students” (item 1) and “Highlight and demonstrate aspects of L2 learning that students are likely to enjoy” (item 14) in the order of factor loading value.

Based on Ryan and Deci (2000), the fifth factor was labeled “Promoting students’ extrinsic motivation” because the MSs in this factor relate to the emphasis on English as a necessary tool. Some examples are: “Reiterate the role the L2 plays in the world, highlighting its potential usefulness both for students and their community” (item 18) and “Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of the L2 is instrumental to the accomplishment of the valued goals” (item 17).

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of students’ data for each of the factors described above, and Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics of teachers’ data according to the factors obtained from students’ data on MSs. The factor with the highest mean in both groups was the third factor, “conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment.” The only difference between the two groups was that the second and third places in the teachers’ perception rankings were swapped with those in the student rankings.

Table 2. Means of MS Factors Perceived as Effective by All Students

Rank	All students	Mean (SD)
1	Conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment	4.65 (0.68)
2	Stimulating students’ interest	4.28 (0.72)
3	Promoting students’ extrinsic motivation	4.18 (1.19)
4	Incorporating student-centered activities	4.14 (0.87)
5	Supporting student autonomy	3.86 (0.77)

Table 3. Means of MS Factors Perceived as Effective by Teachers

Rank	Teachers	Mean (SD)
1	Conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment	4.32 (0.43)
2	Promoting students’ extrinsic motivation	4.08 (0.58)
3	Stimulating students’ interest	4.07 (0.35)
4	Incorporating student-centered activities	3.78 (0.27)
5	Supporting student autonomy	3.69 (0.51)

In addition to the descriptive statistics, we used Spearman’s rank correlation to examine the relationship between student and teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the factors of MS, resulting in a score

of $r_s = .90$, which shows a strong correlation between student and teacher perceptions of the efficacy of the MS factors. Based on this finding, we can conclude that there is no difference between the two groups in terms of perceived MS effectiveness.

RQ2: Are There Differences in the Perceived Effectiveness of MS Among Students with Different Levels of L2 Proficiency and Motivational Intensity?

Looking at the mean of each MS factors for clusters 1 and 2 (Tables 4 and 5), the rankings of the factors for both groups were the same as those for all students (Table 2). In addition, Spearman's rank correlation regarding perceptions of the effectiveness of the MS factors between each group of students and teachers yielded a result of $r_s = .90$ and $r_s = .90$, respectively.

Table 4. Means of MS Factors Perceived as Effective by Students with Lower English Proficiency and Lower Motivational Intensity (Cluster 1)

Rank	Students in Cluster 1	Mean (SD)
1	Conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment	4.64 (0.75)
2	Stimulating students' interest	4.24 (0.73)
3	Promoting students' extrinsic motivation	4.21 (1.12)
4	Incorporating student-centered activities	4.13 (0.93)
5	Supporting student autonomy	3.86 (0.77)

Table 5. Means of MS Factors Perceived as Effective by Students with Higher English Proficiency and Higher Motivational Intensity (Cluster 2)

Rank	Students in Cluster 2	Mean (SD)
1	Conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment	4.66 (0.63)
2	Stimulating students' interest	4.33 (0.70)
3	Promoting students' extrinsic motivation	4.15 (1.27)
4	Incorporating student-centered activities	4.14 (0.81)
5	Supporting student autonomy	3.86 (0.77)

Additionally, a *t*-test was employed to determine whether there was a difference in the perceived effectiveness of the MS factors between clusters 1 and 2. When a Bonferroni correction was used to set the significance level at 0.01, no significant differences were found for any of the factors, and effect sizes were also very small: for the first MS

factor, $t(303) = -0.07$, $p = .95$, $r = .00$; for the second, $t(305) = -0.04$, $p = .97$, $r = .00$; for the third, $t(298) = -0.29$, $p = .77$, $r = .02$; for the fourth, $t(306) = -1.14$, $p = .25$, $r = .07$; and for the fifth, $t(313) = .44$, $p = .66$, $r = .02$. Based on these findings, we can conclude that there is no difference in the perceived effectiveness of MS among students with different levels of L2 proficiency and motivational intensity.

Discussion

The current study has provided some significant findings regarding students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of MSs. First, the exploratory factor analysis we used to answer RQ1 yielded five factors, of which the third, "conducting classes that make it easy for students to feel a sense of accomplishment," had the highest mean in student and teacher groups. Meanwhile, in the setting targeted by this study, the strategies that included several activities for helping students achieve the set goals were perceived as the most effective for motivating students; this perception was shared by both groups of participants. Teachers seeking to incorporate many of the items included in this factor into their English classes—such as "Adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students' abilities" (item 38), "Keep the class goals achievable" (item 23), and "Design tests that focus on what learners can rather than cannot do" (item 39)—need to observe students on a regular basis, understand their situations, and present learning goals that they believe their students can achieve.

Large-scale surveys (e.g., Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux, 2013; Ruesch et al., 2012) have been used to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions of MSs. These large-scale surveys do help us understand general tendencies that apply to some extent to students and teachers in a variety of L2 learning settings. However, considering the primary aim of MS research, that is, to provide pedagogical implications, it becomes evident that there is a crucial need for small-scale surveys situated in a specific context like the one we conducted. What we have identified are the MSs perceived as effective by students and teachers in the specific EFL context. This means our findings can provide specific suggestions for implementing MSs to the English teachers in the context.

In addition to the finding above as to RQ1, analysis using Spearman's rank correlation showed that the students and teachers who

participated in this study perceived the efficacy of MSs extremely similarly.³ This result is inconsistent with Ruesch and colleagues (2012), as it suggests that teachers have a good understanding of the students' needs. This similarity in perceptions could be due to the setting of this study. Whereas we used a single particular learning environment for all students and teachers, Ruesch et al.'s (2012) research involved many different environments. In other words, the data in this study were collected in a more specific context, that is, the same target language in the same curriculum with teachers and students being familiar with each other, compared to Ruesch et al.'s (2012) research. The results indicate that there is no marked difference in the perception of the effectiveness of MSs between students and teachers who share the same L2 learning context. This suggests that the teachers who participated in this study have a good understanding of how to motivate the students. It should be noted, however, that similar perceptions between students and teachers do not necessarily mean that the teachers are successful in motivating their students to L2 learning. As mentioned earlier, teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of MSs are not always reflected in their actual use of the MSs (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux, 2013). Rather, a variety of internal and external constraints seem to determine whether teachers use MSs or not (Lee & Pun, 2021; Wong & Wong, 2017; Ye & Hu, 2024). To provide more concrete implications for the teachers who participated in this study, more research is needed on the extent to which teachers use the MSs they perceive to be effective and the factors that influence their use of these strategies.

Regarding the findings for RQ2, we found that there were no differences in perceptions of MS effectiveness between clusters with different levels of English proficiency levels and motivational intensity. These results can be interpreted in several ways. For example, this may be attributed to students in both groups having spent several years in the same school curriculum or to individuals with similar prior learning experiences gathering at the college. This result is interesting when combined with the findings of Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi (2014). In their intervention study with student groups classified by their English proficiency and motivational intensity, the L2 learning motivation of the student groups did not increase in proportion to the frequency of the teachers' use of MS for almost all the MSs employed. Based on this finding, Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi (2014) propose the possibility that whether an MS is motivational in practice depends on the complex

relationship between student factors (i.e., L2 proficiency and motivational intensity) and teacher factors (i.e., timing of using MS). This interpretation can also be applied to the current study.

Conclusion

This study has some limitations. Although it found no significant difference in the perception of the effects of MS between the two groups of students, “no difference in perception” does not necessarily mean that MS is “equally effective” for both groups, as noted above. To explore the extent to which MSs affect students’ motivation in respective groups, empirical research using an intervention or observation scheme with the MSs may be necessary. This should also consider when and how to use MS, as argued in Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi (2014). In light of Lee et al.’s (2020) findings, it would be necessary to examine learner behavior not only in the classroom, but also outside of it. Additionally, although we adopted students’ English proficiency and motivational intensity as factors of their individual differences, as in Sugita-McEown and Takeuchi’s study (2014), research that includes other individual factors—such as foreign language classroom anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) and learning styles (Dörnyei, 2005)—could identify differences regarding which MSs are perceived as effective. In this study, we also attributed the similarities in students’ and teachers’ perceptions of MSs’ effectiveness to the fact that this study was situated in a specific learning environment. However, to truly claim that the differences in the results of the current study and that of Ruesch and colleagues (2012) are due to the focus on a specific learning environment, further research that includes a comparison group of participants from other institutions in one study may be needed.

This study investigated students’ and teachers’ perceptions of MSs situated in the same EFL learning environment. The major findings are: (a) students and teachers had nearly the same perceptions regarding what MSs were the most effective, (b) the results were inconsistent with Ruesch et al.’s (2012) report, and (c) there was no difference in the perceived effectiveness of the MSs between the two clusters of students categorized in terms of English proficiency and motivational intensity. The results of this study suggest that there may be no difference in the perception of MSs between students and teachers when they share the same learning context. Ruesch and colleagues (2012) argue that for

future research, they need to include more institutions and a larger number of participants, which would be helpful for understanding the general trend of how MS is perceived. However, as the current study showed, situated research is more helpful in providing language teachers with precise information about the students in front of them.

Notes

1. Guilleaumeaux and Dörnyei (2008) define MSs as “(a) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation and (b) self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their own motivation.” (p. 57) The MSs discussed in the current study belong to type (a).
2. Owing to the limited space available in this article, results of the exploratory factor analysis are not reported here. However, they are available from the authors upon request.
3. It should be noted that the second and third places in the teachers' perception rankings were swapped with those in the student rankings, but this difference is considered marginal in view of the difference in mean scores.

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Appendix A: English Translation Version of the Questionnaire for Student Participants

The purpose of this survey is to use responses of this questionnaire and the TOEIC Bridge scores to clarify students' perceptions about the methods employed by teachers to motivate them in class.

We are planning to present the results of the survey at academic conferences and submit them for publication. However, the results of the responses we receive will be processed statistically, and we will not make an issue of or publish only one person's responses. In addition, your participation in this survey, the content of your responses, and your TOEIC Bridge score will not be used to disadvantage you with regard to your school performance.

We would like as many students as possible to cooperate to make this survey meaningful and improve our teaching. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Questionnaire 1 For each of the following 65 items, please think about whether you would be more motivated if the teacher incorporated them into the class and select the number that best matches your choice. The rating scale shows as below:

1. Not effective in the least
2. Not effective
3. Not effective if pushed I would say
4. Effective if pushed I would say
5. Effective
6. Very Effective

-
1. Share teacher's own personal interest in L2 learning (e.g., in learning strategies or target culture) with students
 2. Show students that teacher values L2 learning as a meaningful experience
 3. Show students that teacher cares about their progress
 4. Indicate teacher's mental and physical availability for all things academic
 5. Set a goal that is a bit challenging for students
 6. Help students accept the fact that they (will) make mistakes as part of the learning process
 7. Bring in and encourage humor in the classroom
 8. Create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere (for studying English) in the classroom
 9. Use icebreakers at the beginning of a course

10. Assign students to a small group during class to provide opportunities for all students in the group to interact
11. Use materials other than the textbook
12. Feedback to students
13. Associate learners with peers (e.g., in group or project work) who are enthusiastic about the subject
14. Highlight and demonstrate aspects of L2 learning that students are likely to enjoy
15. Include a socio-cultural component in language class
16. Quote positive views about language learning made by influential public figures
17. Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of the L2 is instrumental to the accomplishment of the valued goals
18. Reiterate the role the L2 plays in the world, highlighting its potential usefulness both for students and their community
19. Encourage students to apply their L2 proficiency in real life situations
20. Make sure that students did their preparation/review of the lesson
21. Make sure that students receive sufficient assistance
22. Make sure students know exactly what success in the task involves
23. Keep the class goals achievable
24. Use needs analysis techniques to find out about students' needs, goals, and interests, and then build these into curriculum as much as possible
25. Teach everyday expressions in English (including school life)
26. Positively confront the possible erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that students may have
27. Raise students' general awareness about the different ways languages are learned
28. Vary the learning tasks and other aspects of teaching as much as possible
29. Focus on the motivational flow in lessons
30. Occasionally do the unexpected
31. Select tasks that yield tangible, finished products
32. Select tasks that require mental and/or bodily involvement from each participant
33. Create specific roles and personalized assignments for everybody
34. Encourage students to select specific, short-term goals for themselves
35. Emphasize goal completion deadlines
36. Monitor students' process and make sure that the details of the contract are observed by both parties
37. Provide multiple opportunities for success in the language class
38. Adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students' abilities
39. Design tests that focus on what learners can, rather than cannot do
40. Include improvement options on tests
41. Tell students that they need to make efforts to improve their English abilities
42. Assess each student's achievement (improvement) not by comparing with other students but by its own virtue
43. Promote competition
44. Promote cooperation instead of competition

45. Make assessment completely transparent
 46. Teach students communication strategies to help them overcome communication difficulties
 47. Regularly include tasks that involve the public display of students' skills
 48. Avoid face-threatening acts such as humiliating criticism
 49. Avoid putting students in the spotlight unexpectedly
 50. Set up tasks in which teams of learners are asked to work together toward the same goal
 51. Take team products and not just individual products into account in assessment
 52. Include a specific "group rules" activity at the beginning of a group's life to establish the norm explicitly
 53. Hand over as much as teachers can of the various leadership or teaching roles and functions to students
 54. Raise students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation
 55. Share with each other strategies that students have found useful in the past
 56. Encourage students to adopt, develop and apply self-motivation strategies
 57. Encourage learners to explain their failures by the lack of effort
 58. Encourage learners to explain their failures by the lack of appropriate strategies applied
 59. Provide regular feedback about the areas on which students should particularly concentrate
 60. Make sure that even non-material rewards have some kinds of lasting visual representation
 61. Make sure that students do not get too preoccupied with the rewards
 62. Offer tangible rewards to students
 63. Make sure that grades also reflect effort and improvement and not just objective levels of achievement
 64. Apply continuous assessment that relies on measurement tools other than paper-and-pencil tests
 65. Encourage accurate students' self-assessment by providing various self-evaluating tools
-

Questionnaire 2 For each of the following 12 items, please think about how true it is for you, and select the number that best matches your choice. The rating scale shows as below:

1. Not true at all
2. Not true
3. Not true if pushed I would say
4. True if pushed I would say
5. True
6. Very True

-
1. Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard
 2. I often think about the words and ideas that I learn about in my English classes.
 3. If English were not taught at school, I would study on my own.
 4. I think I spend fairly long hours studying English.
 5. I really try to learn English.
 6. After I graduate from college, I will continue to study English and try to improve.
 7. When I have assignments to do in English, I try to do them immediately.
 8. I would read English newspapers or magazines outside my English course work.
 9. During English classes, I'm absorbed in what is taught and concentrate on my studies.
 10. I would like the number of English classes at school increased.
 11. I believe absolutely English should be taught at school.
 12. I find studying English more interesting than other subjects.
-

Appendix B:

English Translation Version of the Questionnaire for Teacher Participants

This survey is designed to investigate techniques to motivate students in the classroom from teachers' perspectives. Although we plan to present the results of the survey at academic conferences and submit papers in the future, the results of the responses we receive will be processed statistically, and individual responses will not be called into question or published. To make this a meaningful survey, it is essential to have the cooperation of as many people as possible, so we appreciate your collaboration.

For each of the following 65 items, please choose the number that matches your choice, while thinking of the classes you responsible for. The rating scale shows as below:

1. Not effective for students in the least
2. Not effective for students
3. Not effective for students if pushed I would say
4. Effective for students if pushed I would say
5. Effective for students
6. Very Effective for students

1.	Share teacher's own personal interest in L2 learning (e.g., in learning strategies or target culture) with students	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Show students that teacher values L2 learning as a meaningful experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Show students that teacher cares about their progress	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Indicate teacher's mental and physical availability for all things academic	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Set a goal that is a bit challenging for students	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Help students accept the fact that they (will) make mistakes as part of the learning process	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Bring in and encourage humor in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere (for studying English) in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Use ice-breakers at the beginning of a course	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Assign students to a small group during class to provide opportunities for all students in the group to interact	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Use materials other than the textbook	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Feedback to students	1	2	3	4	5	6

13.	Associate learners with peers (e.g., in group or project work) who are enthusiastic about the subject	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Highlight and demonstrate aspects of L2 learning that students are likely to enjoy	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Include a socio-cultural component in language class	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Quote positive views about language learning made by influential public figures	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of the L2 is instrumental to the accomplishment of the valued goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Reiterate the role the L2 plays in the world, highlighting its potential usefulness both for students and their community	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Encourage students to apply their L2 proficiency in real-life situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Make sure that students did their preparation/review of the lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	Make sure that students receive sufficient assistance	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	Make sure students know exactly what success in the task involves	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	Keep the class goals achievable	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	Use needs analysis techniques to find out about students' needs, goals, and interests, and then build these into curriculum as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	Teach everyday expressions in English (including school life)	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	Positively confront the possible erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that students may have	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	Raise students' general awareness about the different ways languages are learned	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	Vary the learning tasks and other aspects of teaching as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	Focus on the motivational flow in lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	Occasionally do the unexpected	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	Select tasks that yield tangible, finished products	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	Select tasks that require mental and/or bodily involvement from each participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	Create specific roles and personalized assignments for everybody	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	Encourage students to select specific, short-term goals for themselves	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	Emphasize goal completion deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	Monitor students' process and make sure that the details of the contract are observed by both parties	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	Provide multiple opportunities for success in the language class	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	Adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students' abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

39.	Design tests that focus on what learners can, rather than cannot do	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	Include improvement options on tests	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	Tell students that they need to make efforts to improve their English abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
42.	Assess each student's achievement (improvement) not by comparing with other students but by its own virtue	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	Promote competition	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	Promote cooperation instead of competition	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	Make assessment completely transparent	1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	Teach students communication strategies to help them overcome communication difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	Regularly include tasks that involve the public display of students' skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	Avoid face-threatening acts such as humiliating criticism	1	2	3	4	5	6
49.	Avoid putting students in the spotlight unexpectedly	1	2	3	4	5	6
50.	Set up tasks in which teams of learners are asked to work together toward the same goal	1	2	3	4	5	6
51.	Take team products and not just individual products into account in assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
52.	Include a specific "group rules" activity at the beginning of a group's life to establish the norm explicitly	1	2	3	4	5	6
53.	Hand over as much as teachers can of the various leadership or teaching roles and functions to students	1	2	3	4	5	6
54.	Raise students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6
55.	Share with each other strategies that students have found useful in the past	1	2	3	4	5	6
56.	Encourage students to adopt, develop, and apply self-motivation strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6
57.	Encourage learners to explain their failures by the lack of effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
58.	Encourage learners to explain their failures by the lack of appropriate strategies applied	1	2	3	4	5	6
59.	Provide regular feedback about the areas on which students should particularly concentrate	1	2	3	4	5	6
60.	Make sure that even non-material rewards have some kinds of lasting visual representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
61.	Make sure that students do not get too preoccupied with the rewards	1	2	3	4	5	6
62.	Offer tangible rewards to students	1	2	3	4	5	6
63.	Make sure that grades also reflect effort and improvement and not just objective levels of achievement	1	2	3	4	5	6
64.	Apply continuous assessment that relies on measurement tools other than paper-and-pencil tests	1	2	3	4	5	6
65.	Encourage accurate students' self-assessment by providing various self-evaluating tools	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you for your cooperation.