

**Motivational Strategy Use among First-Year EFL Students: A Mixed-Methods
Evaluation of Dörnyei's Classroom Framework Implementation**

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Abstract:

This study explores the implementation and perceived effectiveness of Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies among first-year EFL students at Biskra University, Algeria. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire administered to 118 students with qualitative insights derived from semi-structured interview conducted with six EFL teachers. The questionnaire was structured around Dörnyei's four-category framework while the interviews offered insights into pedagogical practices, challenges, and teacher roles. Findings highlight the framework's applicability in the Algerian university context, emphasizing the need for contextual adaptation and continuous professional development to ensure effective implementation. By integrating student and teacher perspectives, the study provides a multidimensional account of motivational strategies, contributing to broader understandings of motivational dynamics in EFL learning and informing pedagogical practices that foster engagement in similar educational settings.

Keywords: Dörnyei's framework; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); motivational strategies; teacher professional development



1. Introduction

Motivation has long been recognized as a central factor in second language acquisition (SLA) and a key determinant of students' persistence and success in language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Gardner, 2010). In English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, where exposure to the target language outside the classroom is often limited, the role of motivation becomes even more pronounced. For first year university students, who are navigating the transitional phase from secondary to tertiary education, the ability to sustain motivation can be the difference between long-term success and academic disengagement (Henry & Cliffordson, 2017).

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Fostering learner motivation remains a challenging issue in the field of language education. Motivational strategies in second language teaching have garnered considerable attention since Dörnyei's (2001) influential work, *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, provided a comprehensive framework for practitioners. The framework is grounded in process-oriented motivation theory offering a systematic approach to fostering and maintaining learner motivation through four key phases: creating basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging positive self-evaluation (Dörnyei, 2001). The framework's practical orientation and research-based foundation have made it influential in diverse EFL contexts worldwide (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007).

In recent years, English has occupied a progressively prominent role in Algeria, reflecting broader global trends that position the language as a key medium for academic mobility, scientific production, and professional advancement. Within the context of globalization and Algeria's gradual integration into international academic and economic networks, English is increasingly regarded as a strategic resource that extends beyond mere linguistic competence to encompass opportunities for global engagement and knowledge exchange. This shift has been particularly evident in higher education, where English is gaining recognition as a vehicle for academic, scientific, and professional development (Berrezoug, 2021).

At Algerian tertiary level, EFL teaching/learning programs are primarily structured to develop students' linguistic competence, while the enhancement of broader skills such as learner autonomy, critical thinking, and communicative confidence remains less systematically integrated into the curriculum. For first year students, this transitional stage is particularly formative shaping their long-term academic progression and influencing their capacity to engage with English beyond classroom instruction. These students often navigate the transition from secondary to tertiary education struggling with varied linguistic backgrounds, differing levels of proficiency, and diverse motivations for studying English, while also facing the challenges of limited exposure to the language outside academic settings (Tchouar, 2022). This diversity requires teachers to employ a range of motivational strategies tailored to learners' specific needs. Within this context, the systematic application of well-established motivational strategies becomes essential; not only to support linguistic development but also to address neglected dimensions of learning that are vital for sustained academic and professional success.

Dörnyei's (2001) framework encompasses 35 specific motivational strategies organized within four main categories. *Creating basic motivational conditions* involves fundamental prerequisites such as establishing teacher-student rapport, fostering supportive classroom atmospheres, and promoting group cohesiveness. Following this foundation, *generating initial motivation* includes strategies to

enhance students' interest and commitment to language learning, such as promoting language-related values and increasing success expectations. Subsequently, *maintaining and protecting motivation* focuses on sustaining engagement through stimulating tasks, building confidence, and promoting learner autonomy. Finally, *encouraging positive self-evaluation* involves helping students recognize their progress and maintain positive attitudes toward their learning achievements.

Motivational strategies are those instructional interventions and practices that teachers apply to improve their learners' motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). They encompass techniques such as providing constructive feedback, incorporating learners' interests into lesson content, fostering collaborative learning environments, and maintaining teacher enthusiasm. Research consistently demonstrates that the systematic use of such strategies can significantly improve learners' engagement, resilience, and overall performance (Alrabai, 2016; Moskovsky et al., 2013).

The Algerian EFL classroom presents specific challenges that can affect motivation, including large class sizes, limited technological resources, and curricula that may not always align with students' personal goals (Mansouri, 2020). These factors may hinder teachers' ability to employ individualized motivational strategies. Furthermore, the context may influence both students' expectations and teachers' approaches, making it essential to examine motivational practices within a locally relevant framework.

Addressing this identified gap, the present investigation seeks to bridge theory and practice by examining how Dörnyei's framework operates within the specific context of Algerian EFL education. Specifically, this research aims to:

1. Assess students' perceptions of the effectiveness of strategies within each of Dörnyei's four framework categories.
2. Examine potential gender differences in strategy preferences within the framework.
3. Investigate teachers' perspectives on the practical implementation of Dörnyei's strategies at university setting.
4. Identify contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the application of the framework.

By focusing specifically on Dörnyei's established framework, this study contributes to understanding how theoretically grounded motivational strategies translate into practice within specific educational contexts, while providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing motivational practice in similar EFL settings.

2. Literature Review

To fully understand the significance of this investigation, it is essential to examine the extensive research base that supports Dörnyei's framework and its applications across diverse educational contexts.

2.1 Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework

Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies framework emerged from extensive research in educational psychology and second language acquisition, offering a process-oriented approach to classroom motivation management. The framework synthesizes insights from various motivational theories, including self-determination theory, attribution theory, and goal-setting theory, to provide practitioners with a comprehensive toolkit for enhancing learner motivation. Central to this framework is the four-phase structure that reflects the temporal nature of motivation in educational settings. The framework begins with establishing fundamental conditions conducive to motivation, proceeds through initial motivation generation, focuses on maintaining engagement over time, and concludes with helping learners develop positive self-perceptions of their achievements. This sequential approach acknowledges that motivation is not a static construct but rather a dynamic process requiring continuous attention throughout the learning experience (Dörnyei, 2001).

2.1.1 Creating Basic Motivational Conditions

The first category encompasses eight fundamental strategies essential for establishing a motivational foundation. These include demonstrating teacher enthusiasm, taking students' learning seriously, developing personal relationships with students, creating pleasant classroom atmospheres, promoting group cohesiveness, and establishing explicit group norms (Dörnyei, 2001). Research consistently demonstrates that these foundational elements significantly influence student engagement and learning outcomes (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Teacher enthusiasm, in particular, has received extensive empirical support as a motivational factor. Studies indicate that enthusiastic teachers not only model positive attitudes toward learning but also create emotional contagion effects that enhance student motivation and achievement (Burić et al., 2022). Building upon this foundation, positive teacher-student relationships have been linked to increased student engagement, reduced anxiety, and improved academic performance across various educational contexts (Wubbels et al., 2016).

2.1.2 Generating Initial Motivation

Progressing from these foundational elements, the second category includes eight strategies designed to stimulate students' initial interest and commitment to language learning. These strategies focus on promoting language-related values, raising intrinsic interest in L2 learning, encouraging positive attitudes toward the target language and its speakers, highlighting instrumental benefits, and increasing success expectations (Dörnyei, 2001). Research in this area emphasizes the importance of helping students develop clear, personally meaningful reasons for language learning. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that students with well-articulated learning goals and strong value perceptions show greater persistence and achievement in language learning (Moskovsky et al., 2013). The integration of both

integrative and instrumental motivational appeals appears particularly effective in EFL contexts where direct contact with target language communities is limited (Al-Hoorie, 2018).

2.1.3 Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

Recognizing the challenges of constant engagement represents the most extensive component of Dörnyei's framework. These strategies address the ongoing challenge of maintaining motivation throughout the learning process, including making learning stimulating and enjoyable, presenting tasks in a motivating way, providing success experiences, building confidence, reducing anxiety, and promoting learner autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001). This category's emphasis reflects research findings which indicate that despite the importance of initial motivation, it is insufficient for sustained learning success. Consequently, students require ongoing motivational support through varied, appropriately challenging, and personally meaningful learning experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The inclusion of anxiety reduction strategies acknowledges the significant role of affective factors in language learning, particularly in contexts where performance evaluation creates stress (Horwitz, 2017).

2.1.4 Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation

Completing the motivational cycle, the final category includes five strategies focused on helping students maintain positive attitudes toward their learning progress and achievements. These strategies involve promoting effort attributions, providing positive feedback, increasing satisfaction, offering appropriate rewards, and using grades motivationally (Dörnyei, 2001). This phase addresses the critical importance of self-perception in sustained motivation. Research demonstrates that students who attribute success to effort rather than ability show greater resilience in the face of challenges and maintain motivation more effectively over time (Weiner, 2018). Similarly, appropriate feedback practices can significantly enhance both motivation and learning outcomes by supporting student self-efficacy and providing clear guidance for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

2.2 Empirical Research on Dörnyei's Framework

Several studies have investigated the implementation and effectiveness of Dörnyei's motivational strategies framework across diverse contexts. Most notably, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) landmark study in Korean secondary schools demonstrated significant positive correlations between teachers' use of motivational strategies and students' motivation levels, providing strong empirical support for the framework's practical utility. Building upon this foundational research, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) examined Taiwanese EFL teachers' perceptions of the framework's strategies, finding that teachers rated most strategies as important but reported varying levels of implementation frequency. Cultural factors emerged as significant influences on strategy selection and adaptation, highlighting the need for contextual

sensitivity in framework application. Further extending this line of inquiry, Guilloteaux (2013) investigated Korean secondary school teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies beyond Dörnyei's framework, identifying additional culturally-specific strategies while confirming the relevance of the original framework categories. This research emphasized the framework's utility as a foundation that can be adapted and extended based on local contexts.

2.3 EFL Motivation in the Algerian Context

Shifting focus to regional considerations, research on EFL motivation in North African contexts, while limited, reveals distinctive patterns influenced by the region's multilingual landscape and sociocultural factors. In Algeria, students typically encounter English as a third language after Arabic and French, creating unique motivational dynamics (Berrezoug, 2021). Studies indicate that Algerian EFL students demonstrate primarily instrumental motivation, viewing English as essential for academic advancement, career opportunities, and access to global information (Mansouri, 2020). However, integrative elements also emerge through exposure to English-language media and digital communication platforms (Zekri, 2020). Nevertheless, contextual challenges affecting motivation in Algerian EFL settings include large class sizes, limited authentic materials, teacher-centered pedagogical traditions, and varying levels of technological access (Tchouar, 2022). These factors may influence both the relevance and feasibility of specific motivational strategies within Dörnyei's framework.

2.4 Gender and EFL Motivation

Gender differences in language learning motivation have been extensively documented, though findings remain context-dependent. Meta-analytic research suggests that female students often demonstrate higher overall motivation levels and greater use of learning strategies, while male students may show stronger instrumental orientations (Oga-Baldwin et al., 2020). Particularly relevant to this study, in Middle Eastern and North African contexts, gender differences may be influenced by cultural factors affecting educational expectations and career opportunities. Some studies suggest that female students in these contexts show particularly strong instrumental motivation for English learning, viewing language proficiency as essential for professional advancement (Henry & Cliffordson, 2017).

2.5 Teacher Perspectives on Motivational Strategies

Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding motivational strategies significantly influence implementation effectiveness. Research indicates that teachers who view motivation as dynamic and context-dependent are more likely to actively employ diverse motivational techniques (Lamb, 2017). However, studies also reveal gaps between teachers' theoretical knowledge of motivational strategies and their actual classroom practices. Factors such as time constraints, large class sizes, curricular pressures, and limited training in motivational techniques can hinder effective

strategy implementation (Maeng et al., 2015). Specifically within the Algerian context, teacher preparation programs have traditionally emphasized linguistic and literary competencies with limited attention to motivational and psychological aspects of language teaching (Bouchenak, 2020). This gap may affect teachers' ability to systematically implement research-based motivational strategies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Given the complex interplay of theoretical frameworks, contextual factors, and implementation challenges identified in the literature, this study adopted a mixed-methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential design, to comprehensively investigate the implementation and perceived effectiveness of Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies framework. The quantitative phase provided a broad mapping of student perceptions across the framework's categories, while the qualitative phase added interpretive depth by exploring the lived experiences of teachers and identifying contextual factors that influence and shape strategy implementation. Together, these phases offered a complementary and integrated understanding of motivational strategy use within the Algerian EFL context.

3.2 Research Setting

Building upon the research design, the study was conducted at the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University, Algeria, during the academic year 2024-2025.

3.3 Participants

The selection of both first-year students and experienced EFL teachers was deliberate, aiming to gain a holistic view of motivational strategy engagement from both learners' and teachers' perspectives. A total of 118 first-year EFL students (82 females, 36 males), aged between 19 and 22, completed the questionnaire. Their prior English learning experience ranged from 7 to 10 years (including some who had repeated years of study). Alongside the student sample, six EFL teachers (3 males, 3 females) currently teaching first-year courses participated in a semi-structured interview. Their teaching experience ranged from 4 to 12 years, offering valuable insights into the pedagogical dimensions of motivational strategy implementation.

3.4. Instruments

To attain both quantitative patterns and qualitative insights, the study employed carefully designed instruments aligned with Dörnyei's framework structure. First, a questionnaire was specifically designed to assess student perceptions of motivational strategies within Dörnyei's (2001) framework and consisted of two sections:

Section A: devoted to collect demographic information including gender, age, and prior English learning experience.

Section B: comprised four main subsections corresponding to the framework categories. It includes 35 closed-ended items measuring frequency and perceived effectiveness of different motivational strategies:

- *Subsection 1:* Creating basic motivational conditions (8 items)
- *Subsection 2:* Generating initial motivation (8 items)
- *Subsection 3:* Maintaining and protecting motivation (14 items)
- *Subsection 4:* Encouraging positive self-evaluation (5 items)

Each item described a specific motivational strategy and asked students to rate its effectiveness on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not effective at all to 5 = Extremely effective). Items were carefully adapted from Dörnyei's original strategy descriptions to ensure clarity and contextual appropriateness. To ensure instrument quality, clarity and reliability, the questionnaire was piloted with 20 students who did not participate in the main study. Based on piloting feedback, minor modifications were made to improve clarity. The final instrument demonstrated good internal consistency across all sections yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of ($\alpha = .89$) for internal consistency.

Second, a semi-structured interview was conducted with teachers to explore their experiences and perspectives on Dörnyei's motivational strategies. The interviews were held online via Google Meet, lasted between 35 and 40 minutes, and were recorded with participants' consent.

The questionnaire was administered during regular class sessions. The completion process took approximately 20 minutes, and response anonymity was assured. Following initial analysis of questionnaire data, individual interviews were conducted with the six teacher participants. All interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data employed established methodological procedures to ensure rigor and validity in the interpretation of findings. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, confidence intervals) were calculated for each strategy and framework category. Inferential statistics included independent samples t-tests to examine potential gender differences in strategy perceptions, and a one-way ANOVA to compare mean effectiveness ratings across the four framework categories. Post-hoc Tukey tests were conducted to identify specific category differences.

In addition to the statistical analysis, interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Initial coding focused on teachers' experiences with specific strategy categories,

implementation challenges, and contextual adaptations. Subsequently, codes were organized into broader themes that illuminated the quantitative findings and provided insights into framework implementation in the Algerian EFL context.

4. Results

The comprehensive data collection and analysis procedures yielded rich insights into both student perceptions and teacher experiences with Dörnyei's motivational strategies framework.

4.1. Overall Framework Category Ratings

Analysis revealed significant differences in student perceptions across Dörnyei's four framework categories, $F(3,468)=12.47, p<.001, \eta^2=.074$. Table 1 presents mean effectiveness ratings for each category, revealing a clear hierarchy of student preferences.

Table 1

Student Perceptions of Motivational Strategy Categories (N = 118)

Framework Category	Mean	SD	95% CI	No. of Items
Maintaining and Protecting Motivation	4.51	0.43	[4.43, 4.59]	14
Creating Basic Motivational Conditions	4.36	0.51	[4.27, 4.45]	8
Generating Initial Motivation	4.28	0.48	[4.19, 4.37]	8
Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation	4.19	0.56	[4.09, 4.29]	5

Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed that *Maintaining and Protecting Motivation* was rated significantly higher than all other categories (all $p<.05$). *Creating Basic Motivational Conditions* was rated significantly higher than *Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation* ($p=.033$), but not significantly different from *Generating Initial Motivation* ($p=.247$).

4.2 Top-Rated Individual Strategies

Drilling down to specific strategies, Table 2 presents the ten highest-rated individual strategies across all framework categories, revealing consistent themes in student preferences.

Table 2

Top Ten Individual Motivational Strategies (N = 118)

Rank	Strategy	Category	Mean	SD
1	Teacher shows enthusiasm for English and teaching	Basic Conditions	4.73	0.52
2	Teacher creates a pleasant, supportive classroom atmosphere	Basic Conditions	4.68	0.58
3	Teacher provides regular encouragement to build confidence	Maintaining Motivation	4.65	0.51
4	Teacher makes learning stimulating through varied activities	Maintaining Motivation	4.63	0.55
5	Teacher presents tasks in motivating ways	Maintaining Motivation	4.61	0.53
6	Teacher takes our learning progress seriously	Basic Conditions	4.59	0.61
7	Teacher provides positive informational feedback	Self-Evaluation	4.57	0.59
8	Teacher helps reduce anxiety in the classroom	Maintaining Motivation	4.55	0.62
9	Teacher makes curriculum relevant to our needs	Initial Motivation	4.53	0.57
10	Teacher promotes group cohesiveness in class	Basic Conditions	4.51	0.64

4.3. Gender Differences

To examine potential demographic variations, independent samples t-tests were conducted for each framework category and overall perception. Results of independent t-tests revealed no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of Dörnyei's motivational strategy categories between male and female first year EFL students at Biskra University as shown in table 3:

Table 3

Independent Samples t-test Results for Gender Differences in Perceptions of Dörnyei's Motivational Strategy Categories

Category	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d	Interpretation
Creating Basic Conditions	1.42	116	0.158	0.26	No significant difference between male and female students. Small effect size.
Generating Initial Motivation	0.89	116	0.375	0.16	No significant difference between male and female students. Negligible effect size.
Maintaining and Protecting Motivation	1.23	116	0.221	0.23	No significant difference between male and female students. Small effect size.
Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation	0.67	116	0.505	0.12	No significant difference between male and female students. Negligible effect size.
Overall Framework Perception	1.23	116	0.221	0.23	No significant difference between male and female students. Small effect size. Males (M = 4.35, SD = 0.41), Females (M = 4.41, SD = 0.39).

The lack of significant difference was consistent across all four categories of the framework (*Creating Basic Conditions, Generating Initial Motivation, Maintaining and Protecting Motivation, and Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation*). Furthermore, no significant gender difference was observed in the overall perception of the motivational strategies framework.

The calculated Cohen's d values indicate small to negligible effect sizes across all comparisons. Specifically, the effect sizes for *Generating Initial Motivation* ($d = 0.16$) and *Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation* ($d = 0.12$) are considered negligible, suggesting that any observed differences are minimal and practically unimportant. The remaining categories and the overall perception showed small effect sizes ($d = 0.23$ to 0.26).

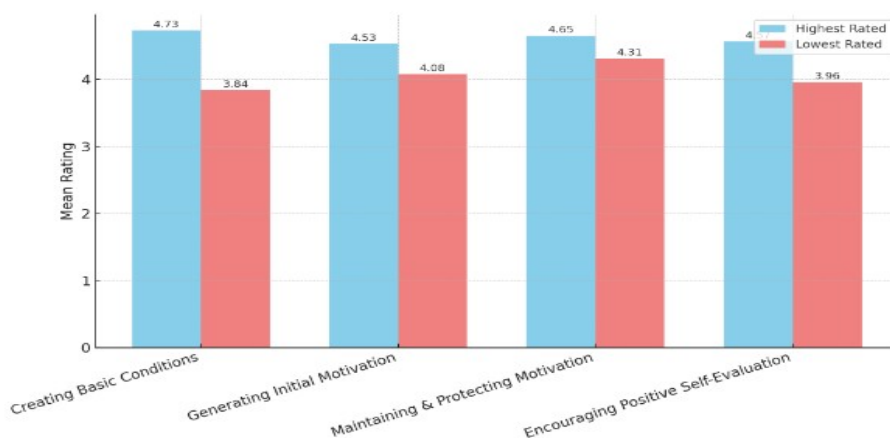
These findings suggest that both male and female students at Biskra University generally share similar perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Dörnyei's motivational strategies for language learning, and that gender is not a significant factor influencing these perceptions.

4.4. Category-Specific Analysis

Student ratings of motivational strategies by category are shown in figure 1. Bars show mean ratings on a 1–5 scale. Within *Creating Basic Motivational Conditions*, teacher enthusiasm received the highest rating ($M = 4.73$), followed by creating supportive atmospheres ($M = 4.68$) and taking student learning seriously ($M = 4.59$). Notably, the lowest-rated strategy was developing collaborative relationships with parents ($M = 3.84$), likely reflecting limited parent involvement in university-level education. For *Generating Initial Motivation*, Moving to initial engagement strategies, making curriculum relevant to student needs emerged as the highest-rated strategy ($M = 4.53$), while familiarizing students with target language culture received lower ratings ($M = 4.08$), possibly reflecting limited exposure to English-speaking cultures in the local context. *Maintaining and Protecting Motivation* is the most extensive category which showed consistently high ratings across most strategies. Building confidence through encouragement ($M = 4.65$) and making learning stimulating ($M = 4.63$) were particularly highly valued. Interestingly, promoting learner autonomy received a moderate rating ($M = 4.31$), suggesting some uncertainty about independent learning approaches. In *Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation* category, providing positive informational feedback was rated highest ($M = 4.57$), while using grades motivationally received the lowest rating in this category ($M = 3.96$), indicating student concerns about assessment practices.

Figure 1

Mean Ratings of Motivational Strategies



Building on the quantitative findings, thematic analysis of teacher interview revealed three major themes regarding the implementation of Dörnyei's framework in the Algerian EFL context. These themes provide critical insights into the practical realities of framework application.

Theme 1: Framework Alignment with Teaching Conceptions

All teachers expressed familiarity with motivational strategy concepts, though formal knowledge of Dörnyei's specific framework varied in extent. Overall, teachers found that the framework categories aligned closely with their underlying teaching conceptions and understandings of effective pedagogy. Teacher 2 explained:

"When I read through these categories, I thought, 'Yes, this is exactly what I try to do. Creating a good atmosphere, keeping students interested, helping them feel successful... these are the basics of good teaching'".

Building on this alignment, teachers emphasized the importance the framework places on fostering supportive environments and maintaining student engagement. Teacher 5 noted:

"The framework gives structure to what many of us do naturally. It's helpful to see it organized this way because it makes you more conscious of what you're doing and why."

However, teachers also identified strategies that felt less compatible with their teaching conceptions or their institutional context. Teacher 3 mentioned:

"Some of the strategies about involving parents or promoting target language culture; these don't fit as naturally into our university setting or cultural context."

Despite such limitations, the six teachers emphasized the importance of fostering supportive and stimulating classroom atmospheres. This was often achieved through humor, varied activity design, and the integration of real-life

examples. Teachers consistently highlighted the use of warm-up activities, ice-breakers, and games to establish rapport and reduce anxiety. Teacher 1 explained: *"First-year students come with a lot of apprehension about university-level English. Creating a welcoming environment from day one is crucial for their long-term motivation."*

Theme 2: Contextual Adaptation Challenges

Moving beyond theoretical alignment, teachers consistently identified contextual factors that required adaptation of Dörnyei's strategies. The most frequently mentioned challenges included large class sizes, limited resources, and cultural considerations.

A. Large Class Sizes: All teachers emphasized how class sizes (typically 40-50 students) limited their ability to implement individualized strategies. As Teacher 1 explained:

"With 45 students, it's nearly impossible to develop personal relationships with each one or provide the kind of detailed feedback that would be most motivating".

B. Resource Limitations: in addition to the class size challenge, teachers noted constraints in accessing varied materials and technology that would support strategy implementation. Teacher 4 shared:

"I'd love to make learning more stimulating with multimedia and authentic materials, but we're working with limited technology access".

C. Cultural Considerations: several teachers discussed the need to adapt strategies to fit local cultural norms and expectations. Teacher 6 noted: *"Students here are used to more teacher-centered approaches. Promoting too much autonomy too quickly can actually create anxiety rather than motivation"*.

D. Time Constraints: the pressure to cover required curriculum content within limited contact hours was mentioned by all teachers. Teacher 2 explained:

"There's tension between taking time for motivational activities and ensuring we cover all the required grammar and vocabulary. Sometimes motivation has to take a back seat to content coverage".

Theme 3: Professional Development Needs

Arising from the implementation challenges, teachers expressed interest in more systematic training on motivational strategy implementation. While most had received general pedagogical training, specific focus on motivation was limited. Teacher 3 reflected:

"I wish we had more professional development on how to use these techniques in our context. I'm sure I could implement some of these strategies more effectively with better training and examples of how they work in our contexts in particular".

Furthermore, teachers emphasized the value of collaborative learning about motivational strategies. Teacher 5 suggested:

“It would be helpful to observe colleagues who are particularly good at motivating students and to share successful techniques more systematically”.

Additionally, several teachers noted that institutional support would enhance their ability to implement motivational strategies effectively. Teacher 1 explained:

“The university could help by offering smaller class sizes, better materials, optimized classroom atmosphere, training workshops, access to modern technology, and reduced administrative workload to facilitate the effective implementation of motivational strategies.”

4.5. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Bringing together both data sources, the convergence between quantitative and qualitative results was notable in several areas. Students' high ratings for *Maintaining and Protecting Motivation* strategies aligned with teachers' emphasis on the ongoing challenge of sustaining engagement throughout courses. Both datasets highlighted the importance of teacher enthusiasm, supportive atmospheres, and varied activities. More importantly, the qualitative findings provided context for understanding why certain strategies received lower ratings. For example, students' moderate rating of *promoting learner autonomy* was explained by teachers' observations about cultural expectations for teacher-centered instruction. Most significantly, teachers' discussions of adaptation challenges illuminated the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation, suggesting that Dörnyei's strategies require contextual modification rather than direct application.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the applicability and effectiveness of Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies framework within the Algerian EFL context, while revealing important considerations for implementing research-based motivational approaches in diverse educational settings. The comprehensive examination of both student perceptions and teacher experiences offers a comprehensive understanding of framework translation from theory to practice.

5.1 Framework Category Effectiveness

The significant differences in student ratings across Dörnyei's four framework categories suggest a noticeable hierarchy of motivational priorities among first year EFL students at Biskra University. The highest rating for *Maintaining and Protecting Motivation* strategies aligns with research emphasizing the critical challenge of sustaining engagement throughout extended learning processes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This preference suggests that for these students, ongoing motivational support and the reinforcement of positive learning experiences are paramount once they have committed to their university studies.

In this vein, the prominence of *Creating Basic Motivational Conditions* as the second-highest rated category reinforces the foundational importance of teacher

enthusiasm, supportive atmospheres, and positive teacher-student relationships or rapport. This finding is consistent with extensive research demonstrating that positive learning environments are prerequisites for effective motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Significantly, the convergence between student preferences and teacher emphasis on these foundational elements suggests strong alignment between theoretical principles and contextual needs.

Conversely, the relatively lower ratings for *Generating Initial Motivation* and *Encouraging Positive Self-Evaluation* categories may reflect the specific characteristics of the participant population. First-year university students have already made significant commitments to English learning, potentially reducing the relevance of initial motivation generation strategies. Similarly, the lower rating for self-evaluation strategies might reflect cultural preferences for external evaluation and teacher-directed feedback rather than self-assessment approaches.

5.2 Individual Strategy Effectiveness

Examining specific strategy preferences, the strategies receiving highest ratings provide important insights into contextual motivational priorities. Teacher enthusiasm emerging as the top-rated strategy strongly echoes extensive research on the motivational impact of teacher affect (Burić et al., 2022). This is particularly salient in the Algerian context, where enthusiastic teaching may serve as a powerful counterpoint to potentially limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

Complementing teacher enthusiasm, the high ratings for supportive classroom atmospheres and confidence-building strategies reflect the anxiety-provoking nature of language learning, particularly in contexts where errors may be perceived as face-threatening. These findings align with Krashen's (1987) Affective Filter hypothesis and suggest that anxiety reduction remains a crucial motivational consideration in Algerian EFL classrooms.

Furthermore, the prominence of varied activities and motivating task presentation among top-rated strategies supports research on the importance of novelty and optimal challenge in maintaining engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). However, teachers' reports of resource limitations suggest a gap between student preferences and implementation feasibility that requires institutional attention.

The moderate rating for promoting learner autonomy requires further consideration. Qualitative findings suggest that students are only partially prepared for autonomous learning due to their prior exposure to mostly teacher-centered instruction. As first-year undergraduates, they may lack the requisite experience and confidence to assume full responsibility for their learning, indicating the necessity of scaffolded approaches that progressively promote autonomy rather than implementing it in an immediate and comprehensive manner.

5.3 Gender and Motivational Preferences

The absence of statistically significant gender differences in strategy perceptions is a notable finding. This suggests that, within this specific first-year EFL cohort at Biskra University, motivational needs and preferences are largely uniform across genders. This could be attributed to the strong instrumental motivation often reported for English learning in Algeria, where proficiency is widely recognized as crucial for both academic and professional advancement, irrespective of gender (Mansouri, 2020). The university context may also minimize some of the social and cultural factors that contribute to gender differences in motivation at earlier educational levels. Consequently, the similarity in gender perceptions supports arguments for implementing broadly applicable motivational strategies rather than gender-specific approaches in this context.

5.4 Contextual Implementation Challenges

The interview findings reveal important tensions between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation constraints. Teachers' enthusiasm for Dörnyei's framework principles, coupled with their identification of significant implementation barriers, highlight the complexity of translating research-based approaches into diverse educational contexts.

Most prominently, large class sizes emerged as the most significant constraint, limiting teachers' ability to implement individualized strategies such as developing personal relationships with students or providing detailed feedback. This finding reflects broader challenges in Algerian higher education, where resource limitations often result in overcrowded classrooms (Tchouar, 2022). The tension between framework ideals and practical constraints suggests the need for adapted strategies that maintain motivational effectiveness while accommodating large-group instruction.

Additionally, cultural adaptation requirements represent another important consideration. Teachers' observations about student expectations for teacher-centered instruction and their caution about promoting autonomy too rapidly reflect broader contextual values regarding authority, learning relationships, and educational processes. These findings support arguments for culturally responsive adaptation of motivational frameworks rather than direct implementation (Gay, 2018).

Moreover, resource limitations affecting strategy implementation highlight the importance of institutional support for motivational practice development. Teachers' desires to implement more varied and stimulating activities were constrained by limited access to materials, technology, and flexible learning spaces. This finding suggests that effective motivational strategy implementation requires systemic support beyond individual teacher development.

5.5 Professional Development Implications

Teachers' expressed interest in systematic training on motivational strategy implementation reveals important gaps in current professional preparation. While participants demonstrated conceptions of motivational principles, systematic knowledge of research-based approaches and techniques for contextual adaptation may still be required. The interest in collaborative learning about motivational strategies suggests opportunities for institutional professional development initiatives. Peer observation, strategy-sharing sessions, and action research projects focused on motivational practice could enhance implementation effectiveness while simultaneously building local expertise in framework adaptation.

Furthermore, teachers' requests for institutional recognition of motivation's importance alongside content delivery reflect broader tensions in educational priorities. The integration of motivational strategy training into formal teacher development programs and institutional evaluation criteria could signal commitment to holistic language education approaches.

5.6 Theoretical Implications

This study's findings contribute to understanding how established motivational frameworks translate across diverse educational contexts. The general applicability of Dörnyei's categories combined with the need for specific strategy adaptations supports arguments for flexible framework implementation that maintains theoretical coherence while accommodating local conditions. The hierarchy of category effectiveness identified in this study suggests that motivational needs may vary systematically across different stages of language learning and educational contexts. The prominence of maintenance and foundational strategies among first-year university students provides insights into developmental patterns in motivational priorities. Moreover, the convergence between student preferences and teacher intuitions regarding effective motivational practices supports the ecological validity of Dörnyei's framework while highlighting the importance of practitioner knowledge in implementation processes. This finding suggests that effective framework application requires collaboration between research-based principles and contextual expertise.

5.7 Limitations and Methodological Considerations

Several limitations should be acknowledged in interpreting these findings. The study's focus on a single institutional context may limit the generalizability of findings to other Algerian institutions or to other EFL contexts with significantly different linguistic or cultural characteristics. Future research could benefit from a multi-site approach. The reliance on self-reported data, while providing valuable insights into perceptions, does not offer direct observation of strategy implementation. Future studies could incorporate classroom observations or analysis of student performance to provide a more triangulated understanding of strategy effectiveness. In addition to that, longitudinal research would be highly valuable to

track changes in student motivation and the efficacy of different motivational strategies throughout students' academic progression. This would provide a dynamic understanding of how motivational needs shift. Finally, the focus on Dörnyei's framework, while providing theoretical coherence, may have limited exploration of additional motivational strategies that could be particularly relevant in the Algerian context. Future research incorporating both framework-based and emergent approaches to motivational strategy identification could provide more comprehensive understanding.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for multiple stakeholder groups, each addressing specific aspects of framework implementation and support:

6.1. For EFL Teachers

- **Prioritize Maintenance Strategies:** Given students' high evaluation of ongoing motivational support, teachers should systematically incorporate confidence-building activities, varied instructional approaches, and anxiety-reduction techniques into regular classroom practice.
- **Emphasize Foundational Relationship Building:** Invest significant attention in establishing an enthusiastic teaching presence, creating supportive classroom atmospheres, and developing positive rapport with students as prerequisites for other motivational strategies.
- **Adapt Strategies to Context:** Adapt strategies wisely to accommodate the realities of large class sizes, prevailing cultural expectations regarding teacher-student interaction, and resource limitations, all while preserving the core motivational principles.
- **Seek Collaborative Learning:** Engage with colleagues to share successful motivational techniques, observe effective practices, and collectively develop context-appropriate strategy implementations.

6.2. For Decision and Policy-Makers

- **Address Structural Constraints/barriers:** Systematically address structural constraints such as large class sizes, lack of resources, and limited access to technology. Creating more conducive learning environments is fundamental to enabling teachers to effectively implement a broader range of motivational strategies.
- **Provide Professional Development:** Establish ongoing training programs focused specifically on motivational strategy implementation, including both theoretical foundations and practical adaptation techniques.
- **Promote Research-Practice Integration:** Establish mechanisms for connecting educational research findings with classroom practice through professional

development funding, research dissemination initiatives, and practitioner-researcher collaboration programs.

7. Conclusion

Effective motivational practice in language education depends not only on established theoretical frameworks but also on contextual adaptation and institutional support. The findings demonstrate that Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies framework provides a valuable foundation for enhancing student motivation, while highlighting the critical importance of adapting strategies to the Algerian EFL context and reinforcing them through systematic institutional support. The high level of alignment between student preferences and teacher conceptions about effective motivational practices suggests optimism for improving classroom motivation through systematic attention to both research-based principles and local contextual realities. Moving forward, the challenge lies in developing sustainable approaches to professional development, institutional support, and policy frameworks that enable teachers to implement effective motivational practices within their specific educational contexts. By building on the strengths identified in this study while addressing the implementation challenges revealed, EFL education in Algeria and similar contexts can move toward more motivational, engaging, and ultimately more effective language learning experiences for all students. The framework's proven adaptability, combined with contextual sensitivity and institutional commitment, provides a pathway for enhancing language education quality across diverse educational environments. At its core, the challenge of motivation in EFL classrooms reflects the larger task of making language education more meaningful, reasonable, and transformative for students in diverse learning settings.

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